

Teaching Dossier

Joseph Whitman

Teaching Statement

I have been privileged to study under a diverse group of skilled and inspiring teachers. From them, I have developed skills to effectively communicate in the classroom. While a doctoral candidate, I have had many opportunities to develop my teaching skills – as both a teaching assistant and a lecturer. I have built on these skills to foster intuition, problem solving skills, and critical thinking in my students.

Most students find economics daunting and difficult. Some struggle with the mathematical and analytical aspects, while others find the concepts challenging to grasp. Lectures are crucial to make the material accessible to students with a diverse range of learning styles and address the variety of difficulties students may have with learning economics. These difficulties can be addressed with an organized and dynamic lecture. I present each topic by first motivating and explaining the economic model or problem we are studying. I then explain how this relates to previous material. Next, I use figures and discussion to give the students some intuition about the topic. Then I present the solution and results followed by some examples that are connected to real world issues. This engages students and helps them form a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

This method of teaching often sparks in-class discussion, which I help along by encouraging students to ask questions. I have found that students are initially reluctant to participate, but most eventually get more comfortable after a few lectures. Many students seem to fear asking a “stupid question”. As often as possible, I tell my students that any questions they have are surely shared by several of their classmates who are also feeling shy about asking. This helps students overcome their fear of looking foolish and encourages others to participate.

Along with an organized lecture, carefully crafted assessments are powerful learning activities that give students the opportunity to engage with the material in a “hands-on” way. I assign frequent problem sets that extend the topics discussed in lecture. This gives students the opportunity to test their knowledge on a new type of problem and deepen their understanding of the material at the same time. I typically grade and return these assignments to the students the class period after the due date. This frequent and quick feedback helps students stay on track and builds confidence in their problem solving skills.

My job as a teacher does not end in the classroom. I have had many former students stop by my office for advice, letters of recommendation, or help with undergraduate research. Sometimes, students stop by just to chat or tell me how they have applied material learned in my class. One student later told me she had used what she learned in my Intermediate Microeconomics class to make her small business more profitable. I find these student interactions are the most satisfying aspect of teaching. More importantly, I find that students are more likely to ask questions during class and seek help during office hours because I have built a reputation for being approachable.

Organized and engaging lectures, combined with frequent assessments, are crucial for providing a fruitful learning environment. This helps students fully realize their academic potential. I look forward to becoming more proficient as an instructor so I can better serve my students.

Evaluations of Teaching Performance

At the end of each semester, students complete an online faculty evaluation form in which students rate their professors on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1 = poor, 2 = below average, 3 = average, 4 = above average, and 5 = excellent. Students can also write text comments. I have omitted these comments here for brevity but they are available upon request. The tables below summarize these evaluations.

Intermediate Microeconomics

2015 Spring

Term: 2015 Spring College: Liberal Arts and Sciences Department(s): Economics (Is) Course(s): ECO3101 Section(s): 9277 Instructor: Whitman, Joseph I (1996-1979) Response Rate: 61.54% (responded: 24, enrolled:39)												
Question	Percentages						Mean	StdDev	Median	Course Mean	Dept Mean	College Mean
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Omitted						
1 Description of course objectives and assignments	0.00%	4.17%	16.67%	25.00%	54.17%	0.00%	4.29	0.91	5.00	4.46	4.49	4.29
2 Communication of ideas and information	4.17%	0.00%	41.67%	20.83%	33.33%	0.00%	3.79	1.06	4.00	4.08	4.34	4.14
3 Expression of expectations for performance in this class	0.00%	8.33%	16.67%	41.67%	33.33%	0.00%	4.00	0.93	4.00	4.17	4.41	4.24
4 Availability to assist students in or out of class	0.00%	4.17%	4.17%	29.17%	62.50%	0.00%	4.50	0.78	5.00	4.69	4.45	4.23
5 Respect and concern for students	0.00%	4.17%	0.00%	33.33%	62.50%	0.00%	4.54	0.72	5.00	4.67	4.58	4.31
6 Stimulation of interest in course	4.17%	12.50%	25.00%	25.00%	33.33%	0.00%	3.71	1.20	4.00	4.00	4.31	4.15
7 Facilitation of learning	8.33%	4.17%	41.67%	12.50%	33.33%	0.00%	3.58	1.25	3.00	3.94	4.32	4.12
8 Enthusiasm for the subject	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	66.67%	0.00%	4.50	0.78	5.00	4.58	4.57	4.4
9 Encouragement of independent, creative, and critical thinking	0.00%	12.50%	16.67%	29.17%	41.67%	0.00%	4.00	1.06	4.00	4.29	4.27	4.21
Averages for questions 1-9							4.10	0.97	4.33	4.32	4.42	4.23
10 Overall rating of the instructor	0.00%	4.17%	16.67%	29.17%	45.83%	4.17%	4.22	0.90	4.00	4.32	4.42	4.19
11 Amount learned	4.17%	0.00%	20.83%	37.50%	33.33%	4.17%	4.00	1.00	4.00	4.19	4.19	4
12 Amount of effort required	0.00%	4.17%	12.50%	45.83%	37.50%	0.00%	4.17	0.82	4.00	4.15	4.02	4
13 Difficulty of the subject matter	0.00%	4.17%	25.00%	29.17%	41.67%	0.00%	4.08	0.93	4.00	3.96	3.92	3.83
14 The educational value (relevance) of this course	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	45.83%	29.17%	8.33%	4.14	0.71	4.00	4.37	4.35	3.98
15 Expected grade	0.00%	0.00%	29.17%	41.67%	29.17%	0.00%	4.00	0.78	4.00	4.15	4.15	4.14
Averages for questions 11-15							4.08	0.85	4.00	4.16	4.13	3.99

2015 Fall

Term: 2015 Fall College: Liberal Arts and Sciences Department(s): Economics (Is) Course(s): ECO3101 Section(s): 0168 Instructor: Whitman,Joseph I (1996-1979) Response Rate: 34.15% (responded: 14, enrolled:41)												
Question	Percentages						Mean	StdDev	Median	Course Mean	Dept Mean	College Mean
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Omitted						
1 Description of course objectives and assignments	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	28.57%	57.14%	0.00%	4.43	0.76	5.00	4.48	4.57	4.31
2 Communication of ideas and information	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	35.71%	35.71%	0.00%	4.07	0.83	4.00	4.35	4.49	4.15
3 Expression of expectations for performance in this class	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	50.00%	42.86%	0.00%	4.36	0.63	4.00	4.52	4.56	4.27
4 Availability to assist students in or out of class	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	85.71%	0.00%	4.79	0.58	5.00	4.68	4.53	4.25
5 Respect and concern for students	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%	0.00%	4.86	0.36	5.00	4.77	4.68	4.35
6 Stimulation of interest in course	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	21.43%	50.00%	0.00%	4.14	1.03	4.50	4.40	4.53	4.17
7 Facilitation of learning	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	21.43%	50.00%	7.14%	4.31	0.85	5.00	4.31	4.42	4.13
8 Enthusiasm for the subject	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	35.71%	57.14%	0.00%	4.50	0.65	5.00	4.67	4.73	4.41
9 Encouragement of independent, creative, and critical thinking	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	42.86%	28.57%	0.00%	4.00	0.78	4.00	4.27	4.39	4.22
Averages for questions 1-9							4.38	0.72	4.61	4.49	4.54	4.25
10 Overall rating of the instructor	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	28.57%	42.86%	0.00%	4.14	0.86	4.00	4.44	4.57	4.21
11 Amount learned	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	35.71%	42.86%	0.00%	4.21	0.80	4.00	4.47	4.36	4.02
12 Amount of effort required	0.00%	7.14%	14.29%	57.14%	21.43%	0.00%	3.93	0.83	4.00	4.13	4.13	4.04
13 Difficulty of the subject matter	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	35.71%	35.71%	0.00%	4.07	0.83	4.00	4.23	3.96	3.84
14 The educational value (relevance) of this course	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	21.43%	64.29%	0.00%	4.43	0.94	5.00	4.49	4.48	4.01
15 Expected grade	0.00%	7.14%	28.57%	28.57%	35.71%	0.00%	3.93	1.00	4.00	4.22	4.07	4.12
Averages for questions 11-15							4.11	0.88	4.20	4.31	4.20	4.01

2016 Spring

Term: 2016 Spring College: Liberal Arts and Sciences Department(s): Economics (Is) Course(s): ECO3101 Section(s): 2C84 Instructor: Whitman,Joseph I (1996-1979) Response Rate: 27.03% (responded: 10, enrolled:37)												
Question	Percentages						Mean	StdDev	Median	Course Mean	Dept Mean	College Mean
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Omitted						
1 Description of course objectives and assignments	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	40.00%	50.00%	0.00%	4.40	0.70	4.50	4.29	4.56	4.32
2 Communication of ideas and information	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%	0.00%	4.50	0.71	5.00	3.73	4.44	4.19
3 Expression of expectations for performance in this class	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%	4.40	0.84	5.00	4.10	4.50	4.29
4 Availability to assist students in or out of class	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%	0.00%	4.50	0.71	5.00	4.50	4.52	4.29
5 Respect and concern for students	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	90.00%	0.00%	4.80	0.63	5.00	4.61	4.69	4.37
6 Stimulation of interest in course	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	70.00%	0.00%	4.40	1.07	5.00	3.89	4.47	4.2
7 Facilitation of learning	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	40.00%	50.00%	0.00%	4.40	0.70	4.50	3.69	4.41	4.17
8 Enthusiasm for the subject	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%	4.70	0.48	5.00	4.10	4.71	4.44
9 Encouragement of independent, creative, and critical thinking	0.00%	0.00%	30.00%	20.00%	50.00%	0.00%	4.20	0.92	4.50	3.95	4.43	4.27
Averages for questions 1-9							4.48	0.75	4.83	4.10	4.53	4.28
10 Overall rating of the instructor	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	60.00%	0.00%	4.40	0.84	5.00	3.97	4.52	4.24
11 Amount learned	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%	0.00%	4.50	0.71	5.00	4.05	4.34	4.04
12 Amount of effort required	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	40.00%	50.00%	0.00%	4.40	0.70	4.50	4.42	4.12	4.07
13 Difficulty of the subject matter	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	40.00%	50.00%	0.00%	4.40	0.70	4.50	4.29	3.98	3.89
14 The educational value (relevance) of this course	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	90.00%	0.00%	4.80	0.63	5.00	4.39	4.44	4.04
15 Expected grade	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	40.00%	50.00%	0.00%	4.40	0.70	4.50	3.98	4.10	4.14
Averages for questions 11-15							4.50	0.69	4.70	4.23	4.20	4.04

2016 Fall

Term: 2016 Fall College: Liberal Arts and Sciences Department(s): Economics (Is) Course(s): ECO3101 Section(s): 21BC Instructor: Whitman, Joseph I (1996-1979) Response Rate: 32.56% (responded: 14, enrolled:43)												
Question	Percentages						Mean	StdDev	Median	Course Mean	Dept Mean	College Mean
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Omitted						
1 Description of course objectives and assignments	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	92.86%	0.00%	4.86	0.53	5.00	3.83	4.64	4.33
2 Communication of ideas and information	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	21.43%	64.29%	0.00%	4.50	0.76	5.00	3.29	4.53	4.2
3 Expression of expectations for performance in this class	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	14.29%	71.43%	0.00%	4.50	0.94	5.00	3.69	4.62	4.3
4 Availability to assist students in or out of class	0.00%	7.14%	28.57%	7.14%	57.14%	0.00%	4.14	1.10	5.00	3.91	4.58	4.28
5 Respect and concern for students	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	71.43%	0.00%	4.64	0.63	5.00	4.13	4.71	4.38
6 Stimulation of interest in course	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.71%	64.29%	0.00%	4.64	0.50	5.00	3.58	4.56	4.21
7 Facilitation of learning	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	28.57%	64.29%	0.00%	4.57	0.65	5.00	3.38	4.51	4.18
8 Enthusiasm for the subject	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	78.57%	0.00%	4.79	0.43	5.00	4.13	4.77	4.44
9 Encouragement of independent, creative, and critical thinking	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	42.86%	50.00%	0.00%	4.43	0.65	4.50	3.90	4.52	4.26
Averages for questions 1-9							4.56	0.69	4.94	3.76	4.60	4.29
10 Overall rating of the instructor	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	71.43%	0.00%	4.71	0.47	5.00	3.54	4.60	4.24
11 Amount learned	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	7.14%	78.57%	0.00%	4.64	0.74	5.00	3.74	4.40	4.05
12 Amount of effort required	0.00%	0.00%	21.43%	35.71%	42.86%	0.00%	4.21	0.80	4.00	4.00	4.08	4.03
13 Difficulty of the subject matter	0.00%	7.14%	21.43%	35.71%	35.71%	0.00%	4.00	0.96	4.00	3.98	3.92	3.84
14 The educational value (relevance) of this course	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	14.29%	78.57%	0.00%	4.71	0.61	5.00	4.23	4.53	4.05
15 Expected grade	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	42.86%	50.00%	0.00%	4.43	0.65	4.50	4.25	4.18	4.15
Averages for questions 11-15							4.40	0.75	4.50	4.04	4.22	4.02