

My academic enthusiasm is reserved in equal measure for pedagogy as it is for research. In Ken Bain's seminal book "What the Best College Teachers Do," he highlights two core values that the best teachers believe: *teaching matters* and that *students can learn*; both are principles that I share and aim to demonstrate as an instructor. My decision to pursue a doctoral degree and desire to work in academia is attributable to the quality of instruction I received throughout my life and the interest in economics my professors inculcated via good teaching practices and genuine concern for my learning. I hope to carry this forward as I transition from student to teacher. In the rest of this teaching statement, I provide an overview of my teaching style and a brief history of my teaching experience, along with some selected positive testimonials from students. You may find many more positive reviews from students as well as my entire history of teaching evaluations from my website.

Teaching Philosophy and Methods

In regard to the key characteristics common to the best instructors, Ken Bain's book finds that such professors are meticulously informed of their subjects and routinely challenge students in ways so as to provoke passionate engagement with their material. Of course, there are no shortcuts to being an informed and well-versed economist; I have consistently maintained a high academic standard for myself as a student. I went above just the base requirements of any class I took and pushed myself to achieve a deep understanding of the subject both mathematically and intuitively. This approach to education has helped me provide effective instruction by being able to accurately communicate lecture material and address questions and comments that not only provide clarification but also foster critical thought.

My primary objective as an instructor is to have my students critically and emotionally invest in course material. To this end, my lesson plans usually do not just stop at the how/when/what questions regarding economics but also probe further to understand *why* systems exist in a certain way or economic entities act in a particular manner. To achieve this, I begin lessons (or a week of lessons) by introducing some big idea or economic event that requires explanation. I subsequently introduce economic concepts that allow for systematic analysis and have my students apply these tools to explain our big idea of the day or week. When explaining mathematical concepts, I demonstrate a benchmark numerical exercise and then have students solve a similar problem with minor modifications to cement their understanding of basic concepts as well as to begin the process of independent thinking. To keep my students engaged and develop their enthusiasm for the subject, I routinely connect theoretical material with practical examples and ask them to think through the material out loud by asking and answering questions. Lectures are followed by assignments that first solidify class material and then require students to apply the same techniques to explain other economic phenomenon. Further, the process of effective instruction culminates with effective feedback, which I provide through detailed comments, in office hours, or by revising commonly occurring errors in a subsequent class. A personal favorite is teaching the Malthusian trap in this manner. After explaining what the trap is, I teach students about diminishing returns to production, with the mathematical rigor dependent on the level of the class. I have them apply this concept to food production to explain the trap and then throw it open to discussion as to how we finally broke through via technological advancement, at each step connecting theory with empirical evidence. Finally, to have my students invest in the material, I ask them to think about future Malthusian traps that society may face, how long economic systems may remain stuck in them, and how they may break free again.

Teaching Experience and Commendations

The majority of my teaching experience stems from my time as a doctoral student at UC Irvine, although I have been instructing since my undergraduate program at the College of Wooster. At college, I was employed at the Math Center to tutor students through intermediate calculus. I also served as a teaching assistant for a course on the Underground Economy where I helped first-year undergraduates transition to writing at a college level. At UC Irvine, I have worked as a TA in every quarter and every summer of my academic tenure, both in-person as well as online during the COVID-19 pandemic. In recognition of my teaching efforts, I received an *Honorable Mention* for the *Outstanding Teaching Assistant* award by the Dept. of Economics. I have mostly taught the intermediate economics sequence that covers material ranging from markets and equilibrium through basic macroeconomics. Additionally, I have assisted with instructing several advanced courses such as Risk and Uncertainty, Money and Banking, International Business, and Managerial Economics. I have also assisted numerous times with a writing intensive course called Financial Markets and the Macroeconomy where I provided students with weekly feedback on their drafts and econometric methodology, helping them to communicate research effectively. As is evident from my positive reviews, I feel comfortable teaching all such (and similar) classes as a full-time instructor. While I have not explicitly taught a class on econometrics, I have covered various econometric techniques as part of my lectures during other classes and would be able to instruct an entire class on this subject, if required. Here is one review submitted by an intermediate economics student:

"Jai was one of the greatest TAs I've had. He genuinely cares about his students and their comprehension of the material. He guides us step by step. He also goes beyond the material he was expected to teach so that he could provide us some insight and help for the homework we have due the next week . . . He's made economics clear and as interesting as he could. I think he'll make a really good Econ Professor one day."

My favorite TA experience came when I was twice afforded the opportunity to assist with teaching the Graduate Macroeconomics course for first-year PhD students. I enjoyed teaching the graduate class not only because the material forms the basis of my own research but also due to the unique challenges of teaching graduate students. Other than the obviously increased cognitive load, student interactions helped me better understand my own work and sharply increased my technical skills as I had to provide instruction in creating and solving complex VAR and DSGE macro models on MATLAB. Owing to this, I am confident in my ability to teach graduate classes in the future whether as part of a first-year curriculum or as field courses in empirical, behavioral, or financial macro. Here is testimony from a graduate student:

"He is simply amazing. He dominates class material and explains it in a very clear way. He is really understanding. Taking classes from abroad without the complementarity of studying with my classmates has been very difficult. [B]ut Jai's help during discussions has made things much easier. I've learned even more from labs than from lectures, I am sure this guy will be an amazing professor."

In the summer of 2022, I was afforded the opportunity to teach my own class as a full-time instructor. Along with fulfilling a life-long dream, the course was an incredible learning experience; I believe that it adequately prepared me for a future in academia where I will routinely have to create lesson plans and provide thorough instruction to students. The course was entitled the "Global Economy" and served as an introductory course to economics and its nexus with global events. While I used an online textbook to provide a base for my instruction, I supplanted this material with several of my own slides, lecture notes, and self-designed assignments and exams. I was pleased by the feedback I received from the students and was happy to know that my teaching style helped them to engage with the material at a deeper level as evidenced by this review:

"He does a great job at making sure that everyone gets a chance to participate. If you have questions, he explains them so well that a student can understand a concept with a single explanation. He also encouraged students to have conversations about the economy that apply to our lives rather than just making sure that we have the material memorized."