Teaching Statement

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Over the last several years, I’ve had the privilege of serving as an instructor for a number of courses at both Duke University and Elon University. My teaching philosophy springs from these roles, and the many different students I’ve encountered in the classroom, and emphasizes respect for the diversity of my students and connecting economics to the real world. From Fall 2018 to Spring 2019, I taught principles of economics at Elon University. This course is a broad introduction to both microeconomics and macroeconomics in a single semester, and is a required course for students across many majors. In Summer of 2019, I taught an introduction to game theory course that I designed at Duke University. This class was an in-depth examination of many game theoretic topics, with substantial emphasis on applying the tools learned in class, and was attended by students from around the world. I additionally served as a head teaching assistant for both graduate-level (2015-2016) and intermediate undergraduate (2019) microeconomics courses at Duke.

I believe that students learn best when their instructor has an appreciation for them as individuals. No two students have the same backgrounds or learning styles, and my background is unlike that of my students. As an instructor I’ve come to appreciate how students’ diverse backgrounds require an open mind and the ability to adapt. For example, when teaching game theory, I had some students who had only high-school algebra as their most recent mathematics, while others had taken calculus at the university level. In designing the course, I provided extra material and help to those who needed to catch up, and offered more advanced material to students who wished for it. Some students inevitably will come into a course with less preparedness than others; I have found it is of paramount importance to build trust with students early in the term so that both the students understand where their efforts should be focused, and so that I can ensure that each student can meet course objectives.

Being a good teacher means far more than teaching facts. Factual knowledge is useless without the ability to apply that knowledge. In order to help students move beyond memorization, I set goals for students that emphasize critical thinking, and I achieve this in the classroom by treating the concept and facts discussed as means to an end rather than ends themselves. When introducing a new concept, for example, I regularly ask students to come up with multiple ways of applying that concept in areas they are themselves interested in, rather than providing

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examples for them. This way, each student has an anchored link between the new material and something they feel comfortable with, and can develop a sense of application together with knowledge. A favorite assignment of mine for achieving this goal is to have students analyze the economic incentives behind recent stories from their student newspaper, such as asking students to suggest why housing costs might be rapidly increasing in their community.

I have sought out numerous opportunities to improve my abilities as a teacher, frequently guest-lecturing for Masters’ and Ph.D. microeconomics courses at Duke, tutoring students of all levels, and holding review sessions in addition to my experience as the main instructor for several classes. I carefully review feedback from students’ evaluations, and have worked hard to improve. It is important to me to continually refine my skills with each and every teaching opportunity, and I look forward to further opportunities to teach as my career progresses. Based on my background and my classroom experience, I am qualified to teach courses at the graduate and undergraduate level in microeconomics, game theory, mathematical methods, industrial organization and labor economics, and at the undergraduate level in macroeconomics. I would be particularly excited to teach courses in model-writing and on applied microeconomic theory for advanced undergraduates should the opportunity be made available.