

# Teaching Statement

Aaditya Dar

[www.aadityadar.com/teaching](http://www.aadityadar.com/teaching)

In my teaching I strive to encourage students to develop skills that foster critical thinking. My teaching goals differ depending on the level of the class but, overall, my primary objective is to motivate students to truly understand the course material so that when they walk outside the classroom door they can apply concepts learned to issues of the world around them. For example, in an introductory class my aim is to help students master the basic toolkit so that they have a working knowledge of key ideas in economics and can analyze various economic phenomenon that they encounter on a daily basis. In advanced classes, I focus more on students' ability to think through a problem carefully because here it is important to train students to be able to reason independently without the relying on textbooks or lecture notes.

For me, an effective pedagogy in economics comprises of learning both the intuition and the technical aspects. While teaching I try to emphasize the key ideas behind concepts so that students don't lose sight of the big picture while solving a problem. I always tell my students that in order to be an economist one needs three key ingredients: clarity in thought and reasoning, mathematical aptitude and ability to draw a picture. Accordingly, when I teach a topic I try to provide students with the verbal logic, algebra/calculus and a graph. Presenting a topic from different perspectives simultaneously, instead of separately, in my experience, also aids student learning.

At GW, I have taught classes in intermediate microeconomics which attracted students with different levels of academic preparation. One of my biggest learning experiences has been in understanding how to balance the mathematical intensity in our courses, between econ and non-econ majors, without compromising on overall quality. I have led discussion sections in several introductory courses, a PhD-level sequence in econometrics and also taught a short review course on probability and statistics for post-graduate students. Being a teaching assistant (TA) for Irene Foster's principles of microeconomics and principles of macroeconomics and the 'head TA' for Kaushik Basu and James Fos-

ter's game theory (these courses attracted almost 200 students every semester) have not only given me some of my most fulfilling moments in class, but also trained me in the logistics of managing large classes and dealing with student issues.

In addition to my teaching experiences at George Washington University, I have also taught a short summer course to students in India. Having taught in different contexts where student aspirations are diverse, I know that pedagogical goals must be tailored to fit the variety of student goals and interests in the topic. All of my courses are aimed at developing students' analytical skills to express their arguments both orally and in writing. I also frequently experiment with new approaches in classroom. For example, in a principles of macroeconomics class one semester, I created student groups and assigned them to conduct research on a Nobel Laureate (depending on the topic that was being covered in class that week). At the end of every class, the group would make a brief 5-10 minute presentation about the economist and their prize winning idea.

My passion for teaching stems from the joys (and struggles) I have experienced while encountering new ideas and topics. I can teach both introductory courses (principles of microeconomics, principles of macroeconomics and econometrics) and upper level courses (intermediate microeconomic theory, development economics and game theory), including electives such as GIS for economists. With some preparation I could also teach undergraduate students international trade, labor economics and specialized courses like economics of crime, environmental and natural resource economics and data science. At the graduate level, I would be happy to teach development economics, applied econometrics and political economy. While I am eager to teach courses that intersect with own my interests, I can also easily adapt to the needs of the department and complement courses already taught by faculty. My past experience in a market research firm has also trained me in the practical aspects of fielding surveys (budgeting, designing questionnaires, selecting sampling strategies, training enumerators, working with mobile data collection platforms etc.) and I will be happy to conduct workshops for graduate students on various operational issues.

Growing up, many of my role models, including my mother, have been teachers and I understand well the value of teaching and the lasting impressions great teachers can have. I am committed to ensuring that my students are exposed to the highest levels of rigor and teaching quality that I was fortunate enough to receive.