

Teaching Portfolio

1. Course Overviews

Intermediate Micro Theory: Advanced (Econ1011a).

Semesters Taught: Fall 2019, 2020

Instructor: Prof. Edward Glaeser

My Role: Head Teaching Fellow

Students: Primarily Sophomores and Juniors

Course Overview:

Economics 1011a is similar to Economics 1010a, but more mathematical and covers more material. The course teaches the basic tools of economics and to apply them to a wide range of human behavior. Prerequisites for this course include Mathematics 21a or permission of the instructor.

Micro Theory I (Econ2020a).

Semesters Taught: Fall 2021

Instructor: Prof. Arda Gitmez

My Role: Head Teaching Fellow

Students: First-Year Doctoral Students

Course Overview:

A comprehensive course in economic theory designed for doctoral students in all parts of the university. Topics include consumption, production, behavior toward risk, markets, and general equilibrium theory. Also looks at applications to policy analysis, business decisions, industrial organization, finance, and the legal system. Undergraduates with appropriate background are welcome, subject to the instructor's approval.

Micro Theory II (Econ2020b).

Semesters Taught: Spring, 2020, 2021, 2022

Instructors: Prof. Chris Avery, Prof. Elon Kohlberg, Prof. Giuseppe Lopomo

My Role: Head Teaching Fellow

Students: First-Year Doctoral Students

Course Overview:

A continuation of Economics 2020a. Topics include game theory, economics of information, incentive theory, and welfare economics.

PhD Math Camp Instructor.**Semesters Taught:** Summer, 2019, 2020, 2021**My Role:** Instructor**Students:** First-Year Doctoral Students**Course Overview:**

A week-long refresher of math required for doctoral students in all parts of the university pursuing an economics-related degree. I taught the second half of the course, covering probability theory, mathematical statistics, and optimization.

2. Evaluations

	Econ1011a		Econ2020a		Econ2020b	
	2019	2020	2021	2020	2021	2022
Gives effective lectures or presentations	3.78	4.22	4.59	4.29	4.73	4.67
Facilitates discussion	3.83	4.41	4.65	4.71	4.67	4.67
Is accessible outside of class	4.08	4.50	4.76	4.4	4.71	4.78
Generates enthusiasm for subject matter	3.74	4.06	4.41	4.86	4.50	4.55
Gives useful feedback on assignments	3.73	4.08	4.41	4.43	4.53	4.56
Returns assignments in a timely fashion	3.94	4.20	4.41	N.A.	4.33	4.64
Evaluate your Section Leader overall	4.08	4.39	4.59	4.43	4.67	4.73
Respondents	24	18	17	7	15	11
Certificate of Teaching Distinction			✓		✓	✓

All scores are out of 5. Not all respondents answered every question. In these cases, I record the number of respondents for the "overall" criterion. There were no evaluations for Math Camp. For Econ2020b in 2020, the evaluations requested different feedback. I have cross-walked the questions where possible.

3. Feedback

This section contains *all* student comments reported in the teaching evaluations.¹ The feedback is structured reverse chronologically within each course.

3.1. Micro Theory II (Econ2020b)

2022:

- Wonderful TF. It was a pleasure having him for Math Camp and Micro the last two semesters. Kind, helpful, responsive, knowledgeable. He has a great reputation that is well-deserved. Good luck to you Robert in whatever you do!
- Robert is an outstanding TA. I believe that he will become a very successful professor if he decides to follow that path. Robert is patient, clear, articulate, brilliant, and thoughtful with the students struggling to understand the concepts of the class. If there were any questions that he couldn't answer during our section or office hours, he would always reach out to us later that day to answer our questions or clarify concepts. I'm glad we had the chance to have him in both microeconomic courses during our first year of the Ph.D. and in the math camp during the summer before starting the program. I hope more students have the chance to learn with him in the future.
- Robert is great, very patient, extremely smart, he definitely helped me understand the material better and worked with me on every question I brought to him. Thank you Robert!
- Robert was great at going through the problem sets with us each week in "section" (ie office hours). Sometimes it would have been nice if he had worked out the problems ahead of time to facilitate more effective discussion of the problems.
- Robert is a wonderful TA. He teaches really well and elaborate the complicated concepts step by step.

2021:

Strengths:

- Good explanations.
- Robert clarified a lot of the material from the course. I particularly appreciated the rigor of the sections and his patience explaining notation carefully. A wonderful TF overall.

¹I redacted two comments due to personally identifying information being revealed.

- Robert was great at explaining concepts, clarifying class material, and explaining problem sets.
- Robert was an unbelievable TF! He displayed mastery of the class material and taught it brilliantly! His lecture style of first outlining the theory of interest: presenting definitions, introducing notation, and providing both theory and intuition; then going step-by-step on how to solve the type of game; and finally working through examples, was an amazing approach. He was also just a really cool guy to talk with/get to know, he was amazingly accessible in OH and on Slack, did a great job of encouraging participation in his sections. Robert and Connor have been by far the best TAs I've had!
- Robert was well-organized, patient, and extremely clear in all of his sections. I thought he did a terrific job explaining course content, and I learned almost as much in sections as in the lectures. He was excellent.
- Great pairing with lectures. Approached the concepts with a greater degree of mathematical formalism which was a good complement to the more intuition based approach used in lectures. Section agenda's seemed well thought out each week and section notes were excellent.
- Review sections were extremely helpful and a big factor in allowing me to understand the course material enough to complete the homework assignments. Robert is very clear in his explanations and made it easy for us to follow along. He was always very patient and answered questions as we went along with review sections. He also answered questions through our class slack channel. Overall, Robert was an amazing TF and made this class manageable for a lot of us who were struggling to keep up with lectures.
- Robert is a great teacher and like the way he teaches by writing out all his thoughts on pad so that students could follow. Also, he has great handwriting! :)

Feedback:

- Timely and high quality
- The only possible complaint is that HWs took a long time to be graded, so we did not always get timely feedback on our work.
- The quality is very good, though a little bit slow (which is understandable given how long the problem sets are).
- Problem set feedback was useful and timely.
- Robert's feedback was always helpful, thorough, and timely.

- Timely and complete
- Written feedback was concise and good. Robert and Connor were both fairly timely in getting our assignments back to us on time. They would always refer us to sections of the solution key if we made conceptual errors on assignments.

Suggestions:

- No.
- No, Robert's sections were perfect - a great mix of teaching and going through examples. I wouldn't change anything.
- Honestly Robert's sections are amazing as is.
- Recording TA sessions would have been really helpful for international students. Otherwise, Robert was amazing!
- None!
- The part of review sessions that was most helpful for me is working through example problems together. I appreciated being able to work through a problem or two from the problem sets and hope that would be something that is continued for future courses.

2020:*Strengths:*

- Robert is very good at explaining difficult concept in simple terms. The pacing of the sections is very well managed. The section slides are very effective in helping students learn the material.
- The sections helped to explain concepts covered in lecture with greater rigor and also they helped solidify understanding by working through problems.
- They were so critical to this class - they made concepts a lot clearer and helped a lot with strategies to answer problem set questions. It was clear that the TF's put so much effort into preparing sections. The section notes were great. Robert was very generous with his time answering questions over email. I'm very grateful to his work.
- Examples with good level of mathematical rigor.
- Robert was incredibly helpful, both in section and over email. He wanted to make sure we understood the material.

Feedback:

- Generally very helpful feedback, very timely.

Suggestions:

- No, it was great that the teaching staff sent a survey midway through the semester asking about how sections could be improved.
- It was great! Thank you for your work!
- Focusing on more practice problems similar to the problem sets would be helpful during section.

3.2. Micro Theory I (Econ2020a)**2021:**

- Robert was a terrific section leader. He presented the most important course material more slowly than in lecture, and with opportunities to ask questions. He made himself very available to students via office hours and email. His command of the material was motivating! I really appreciate Robert's hard work this semester.
- Robert was an effective teacher but as mentioned before sometimes there was an assumption that all of us understood some of the more basic concepts but for those of us who did not then it was sometimes hard to follow what math was being worked out on the board. I think sections could be improved in the future by focusing on a bit more review of the concepts without the math first, then adding the math. But also I can't expect them to teach to the lowest denominator (me) so I imagine others were better able to follow what was going on.
- TA sessions were excellent and he was very nice to answer any questions.
- Just the canonical 'great TF'. Robert was excellent in Math Camp and I was glad that he stayed with us through micro. Knowledgeable, organized, (very) responsive and kind. Thank you Robert
- Robert taught with authority, always seemed open to clarify concepts and answer students' questions. Having office hours immediately after section made him very accessible. I appreciate his help on problem sets.

3.3. Micro Theory: Advanced (Econ1011a)

2020:

- I really appreciated Robert's section because of his emphasis on helping us build intuition. I really felt that sections were an important bridge between the overwhelming nature of lecture and having to apply what we learned on psets and always left section better equipped to think about the questions we'd see on the psets.
- Robert is an excellent section leader who consistently led engaging overviews of the subject matter covered in the previous week!
- Sections were well designed. I think it may have been better for some math to be pre-prepared (as I believe another TF did in slides); this would save time over hand-writing in the moment, allowing us to get further into the practice problems.
- Clear, to the point, good.
- Robert is a great section leader – his materials are fun and comprehensive, and his sections are always very helpful. Beyond his teaching, Robert shows clear dedication to his students, and he is always open to have a conversation during office hours or through email.
- Great review sessions before the midterm and final!
- Robert did an excellent job.
- Robert is one of the best section leaders I have had at Harvard.
- He offers more graphical approach to topics, which can help. However, the sections were a bit slow and did not cover all the important topics. Also, it might just have been the remote setting, but the questions asked in section were good, but still made the section worse overall as we could not cover all the topics that needed to be covered, so I would have to go to office hours just to learn what other sections had learned in the same time. Maybe a better time management would help with this section a lot.
- Robert is always very helpful and does his best to explain topics thoroughly.
- You were a great TF Robert!
- I appreciated Robert's approach to mostly going over practice problems, but it seemed he was unprepared for certain weeks' material - we would spend a decent amount of time during section (which was shorter than the normal section) waiting for him to think of answers to our questions.

- Robert did really well to summarize the concepts we learn in succinct ways. His sections did a lot to facilitate my understanding of the material.

2019:

- Responded quickly to any inquiries.
- Robert is very helpful and sweet. I used to go to his office hours every Monday and he gave extremely apt guidance. Honestly, could not have asked for a better section leader. I hope he continues his role in this course.
- Robert always came very prepared to section with a lesson plan and was always available for discussions afterward. He would discuss advanced topics with those who were interested and dive deep into the theory and mathematical definitions as a result. I found his teaching ability superb and believe he is an excellent person on top of that.
- Definitely my saving grace in this class - thanks to Robert, the way too fast concepts became bearable and I had an inkling as to what was going on. Highly recommend.
- I feel like Robert was just as lost as us for some parts of his sections. Super nice guy though.
- He does a good job of walking through important practice problems in section.
- I really enjoyed Robert as a section leader. He was very accessible and always helped me with the tons of questions I had.
- He's very nice.
- Robert teaches the material very well and helps solidify the concepts - it was often at his section that I would have a breakthrough moment about some topic I was struggling with. He is also very willing to answer students' questions and slow down when he reaches a topic that is especially challenging.
- Robert was very sweet and passionate about the course. I appreciated all his help in and outside of the classroom.
- Very accessible outside of class and responsive to emails, which was great!
- A few of the sections were useful but most of them were not very useful: it felt like a repetition of what Prof. Glaeser said and did but with a little less precision. The Monday morning office hours w/ no flexibility was not my favorite.