

# TEACHING STATEMENT

---

**LAURA KARPUSKA**

<https://www.laurakarpuska.com>

[laura.karpuska@stonybrook.edu](mailto:laura.karpuska@stonybrook.edu)

---

As an undergraduate student, I experienced the impact that good professors had on my development not only as a student but also as a person. Every student has different goals and one cannot know a priori how one's teaching will influence them. However, I do know that a good and passionate teacher who shows his or her commitment to students in the classroom can make a difference. In every course that I have taught during my time as a Ph.D. student I have striven to be a good instructor to my students. One of the most rewarding experiences is to see the sense of wonder and clarity in the students when a simple economic concept or a model is able to elucidate a complex aspect of human behavior. I was fortunate that the Department of Economics at Stony Brook put their trust in me to teach ten courses as a full instructor. These courses spanned the whole range of the undergraduate courses offered by the department. Among the most relevant courses that I have taught, include Principles of Economics and the core courses of Intermediate Microeconomic Theory and Econometrics, both of these during several semesters. I have also taught several upper division courses in game theory and economic demography. Because of my experience both teaching and in research, I am quite interested in teaching foundational economics courses, particularly in Microeconomics and courses in quantitative methods. As a result of my successes as a lecturer in these core and advanced undergraduate courses, I was funded through a grant from the Office of the Provost to develop an online version of a course titled Thinking Strategically, whose subject matter is applied Game Theory. The current generation of undergraduates grew as digital natives, with technology being ubiquitous in their daily lives. Therefore, I am sure that online education will play a significant role in how we approach education. In a diverse environment in which students come from different backgrounds, it is extremely important to take into consideration their needs and goals. A class that does not balance its challenge with the goals of the student is bound to fail. Therefore, in my courses I also strive to understand where the students are coming from so that I can find a way to engage them with the material. These reasons together with my experience teaching across the whole spectrum of the undergraduate economics curriculum lead me to develop different teaching strategies for courses at different levels. For introductory courses, I had to take into consideration that they had a very diverse pool of students in terms of their interests and majors. For example, the course Principles of Economics is taken by many international students in their freshman years and by students from majors like Health Sciences that are about to graduate but wanted to experience a class in Economics. Therefore, in such courses I like to engage the students with the material by emphasizing the connections of the concepts presented in class to the daily problems they observe in the world.

On the other hand, in advanced courses the needs and objectives are different. In such courses I emphasize a hands-on approach in applying the concepts learned to real-world problems. I try to confront the theoretical concepts with the

empirical evidence and my overarching goal is that the students are able to analyze real-world data critically and in a logically consistent manner. I also aim to provide them with critical skills that will be highly marketable at the time they go to the labor market. For example, in my Econometrics courses, I do not only emphasize the need to learn the theoretical concepts but also to be able to apply them by encouraging the students to do an empirical project whose implementation is done in statistical software. My goal in the project is to introduce them to data-analysis skills and to develop some familiarity with programming, two skills that will be very valuable when they leave college. As a teaching assistant, I have lead sections in the same core courses from the major. I also had the opportunity to lead a graduate section in Microeconomic Theory under my advisor, Prof. Pradeep Dubey, in which he offered me considerable freedom to lead the section and give guest lectures, in addition to helping with constructing the assignments, exams and revamping the course content. I believe that all of my experiences have prepared me to be an effective instructor both at the undergraduate and graduate level.