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Teaching Statement

I am passionate about economics and feel thankful for the opportunity to work as a professor. For me, being able to work with students is a privilege and responsibility.

Being passionate about a certain subject is probably the most important factor of effective teaching. When I was a student, my favorite professor gave the worst lectures, seemed never prepared, was constantly all over the place, made mistakes on the board, but when he did so, could laugh about himself. I also had another teacher who was the exact opposite. He gave perfect lectures, never made a mistake on the board, prepared useful handouts, and organized the entire semester with Swiss clockwork precision.

Yet my favorite teacher was the one I described first, and the explanation is simple: I learned more from him. His passion more than compensated for all his didactical deficiencies. The first teacher made me want to understand and learn more, the second teacher made me want to get done with the subject and forget about it.

No, my teaching philosophy is not to emulate the first teacher.

Passion is surely a necessary condition for teaching effectiveness, but not sufficient. My favorite professor probably could have won over many more students' hearts and minds, if he had been not only passionate, but well organized as well.

I accordingly take class preparation very seriously. In practice this means that I write all my lecture notes and problem sets myself. Beginning with the pandemic, I also started to make videos in which I go over the lectures and problem sets. Making those videos has proven to be a useful exercise to organize my lectures. In addition, I realized that certain topics which require the use of software (such as Excel for statistics) can be more effectively taught when students see a video that they can pause.

I generally design my classes such that conceptual and applied passages are balanced. Especially in economics and statistics, students become more quickly interested into a specific concept, if, for example, I visit in class the World Bank Development Indicator Database, download real world data, and link theory to real world applicability.

Another important aspect in my field is problem solving as an important vehicle of learning. I often reserve some time for students to work as a group on a problem set and then present their solution on the board to the class.

In sum, I strive to use my passion to motivate students. By connecting theory and practice, I try to illustrate the relevance of the material. With problem solving, I hope to stimulate group work and inclusiveness. Lastly, by employing online technology, I aim to provide flexibility and alternative learning formats.