

In my current role as Assistant Instructional Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago, I have developed and teach a varied set of courses: the intermediate microeconomics sequence, econometrics, and development economics, receiving excellent student course evaluations. I have mentored numerous undergraduate and Master's students, supporting their academic success and guiding them toward placements in top-tier pre-doc positions and graduate programs, as well as competitive industry positions. The following statement discusses my approach, experience, and impact in teaching and mentoring.

1 Teaching Philosophy, Experience, and Evidence of Excellence

My teaching philosophy centers on fostering analytical thinking, engaging students through active learning, and creating an inclusive classroom environment. Below, I discuss my teaching philosophy, pedagogical practices, and provide evidence of teaching excellence.

1.1 Course Design

One of my unique value-added as an instructor, which students cannot get from just reading a textbook, is to learn to think clearly in a structured and concrete way, which is at the core of rigorous empirical and theoretical economic analysis, which I believe is the hallmark of learning to be a good economist. My approach to course design is iterative and student-centered. Over the years, I have continuously refined the content and exposition to include more real-world applications and contemporary issues.

In my intermediate microeconomics course sequence, I guide students through complex concepts such as consumer theory, producer theory, partial and general competitive equilibrium, various market failures, welfare analysis, government policies to promote both efficiency and equity, foundational concepts of game theory, and game-theoretic models related to oligopoly, matching markets, and asymmetric information. In this sequence, I rigorously connect calculus-based analysis with precise verbal reasoning. Student evaluations consistently highlight my ability to explain challenging concepts clearly, using intuitive examples that connect theory to applications.

In my econometrics course, I focus on both model-based and cutting-edge quasi-experimental methods for causal inference. I emphasize hands-on data analysis using Stata, ensuring that students are equipped with practical skills that are highly valued in both academia and industry. Students work with real-world datasets to learn advanced techniques like two-way fixed effects (TWFE) models, instrumental variables (IV), difference-in-difference (DiD), and regression discontinuity designs (RDD). By blending theory with practical applications using Stata, I aim to equip students with both the intuition as well as the technical skills needed to conduct rigorous empirical analysis.

As a component of the course, students conduct and present a group empirical research project, under my direction, on a question, and using an appropriate dataset and a suitable econometric technique of their choosing to answer their question. I spend significant time advising each group (during office hours, including on weekends) on their choices of questions, datasets, and empirical strategies, while honoring and cultivating their pre-existing interests and curiosities. The empirical project acts like a capstone project that consolidates their mastery of the content of the entire course. In past iterations of the course, these empirical projects have turned into valuable samples for students for job and graduate school applications.

In my development economics course, an elective for the economics major, we dive into one of the most pressing

global challenges: global poverty. Through a microeconomic and empirical lens, I teach students to understand and analyze the economic lives of the poor, examining why global poverty persists and which interventions have been effective in sustainably improving the lives of poor people in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).

In the course, I employ economic theory and econometric methods to analyze consumption, health, education, access to credit, entrepreneurship, and migration. I place these microeconomic issues in the macroeconomic context of economic institutions, e.g., security of property rights, and political institutions, e.g., electoral empowerment and political accountability. Using both historical perspectives and contemporary studies, students gain knowledge at the frontier of development economics, emphasizing empirical research and data analysis. In the course, I prioritize close reading of accessible articles from top economics journals and include hands-on data analysis exercises using Stata. In class discussions, we apply the frontier state of knowledge to real-world cases so students are prepared for further study and for careers as researchers and/or practitioners in international development.

1.2 Thoughtful Assessment

Thoughtful assessment is a critical component of my teaching methodology, serving both as a measure of student learning and as a tool for continuous improvement. In all my courses, I work with the teaching assistants to provide detailed feedback on all assignments to help students understand their errors and improve their analytical and articulation skills. I also prioritize transparency in grading. For example, I post all answer keys on the course website. In certain courses, I allow students to use notes during exams to reduce anxiety. I also provide practice exams to clarify assessment expectations and serve as an additional study resource. These measures have helped create a fair and supportive assessment environment.

1.3 Future Teaching Goals

Looking ahead, I am excited to further expand my teaching portfolio. I plan to develop a new elective course titled “Economics of Contemporary Issues,” which will assess pressing policy issues such as immigration, climate change, and automation and the future of work through an empirical lens. This course aims to complement the rigorous theoretical and empirical training that the students in the economics major receive, preparing them to contribute meaningfully to the public discourse on critical issues.

In addition, I intend to incorporate more digital tools, such as Python and R, into my econometrics and development economics courses to better prepare students for the evolving demands of data analysis in both academia and industry. I am also exploring opportunities to integrate experiential learning into my development economics course, such as fieldwork projects or collaborations with non-profit organizations. This approach would allow students to apply their classroom learning to real-world challenges.

2 Evidence of Teaching Excellence

Below, I present evidence of my teaching excellence based on my most recent student course evaluations. The data summarized below highlights my effectiveness in creating a challenging yet supportive learning environment that stimulates intellectual growth and fosters an inclusive classroom culture. The table below summarizes students’ average response (median in parentheses) to the statements related to the title of the column with options, “Strongly Disagree” (1), “Disagree” (2), “Neutral” (3), “Agree” (4), and “Strongly Agree” (5) in the course

evaluations for the latest iteration of each course.

Course	Quarter	Resp./ Enrolled	Challenged Intellectually	Felt Respected	Stimulated Interest	Motivated Think Indep.	Created Inclusive Env.	Sig. Cont. to Learning
Dev. Econ.	Spr. 2024	17/40	4.50 (5.00)	4.85 (5.00)	4.92 (5.00)	4.92 (5.00)	4.85 (5.00)	4.92 (5.00)
Econometrics	Spr. 2024	16/48	4.36 (5.00)	4.43 (5.00)	3.92 (5.00)	4.46 (5.00)	4.50 (5.00)	4.15 (5.00)
Int. Micro. II	Wint. 2024	4/9	4.50 (4.50)	4.25 (4.00)	4.33 (4.00)	4.33 (4.00)	4.33 (4.00)	4.67 (5.00)
Int. Micro. I	Aut. 2021	28/62	4.70 (5.00)	4.63 (5.00)	4.08 (4.00)	4.50 (4.50)	4.58 (5.00)	4.23 (5.00)

Below, I present quotes (italicized) of a selection of the positive comments from these recent student course evaluations, highlighting students' impactful learning experiences.

ECON 15500 - Introduction to Development Economics (Spring 2024):

- *Professor Vasudevan is a fantastic lecturer; you can tell he is extremely interested in the topic. He took the time to hear out people's opinions, encouraged debate, and opened the floor for discussion.*
- *I really liked the course content and Professor Vasudevan's teaching style. He is very supportive of any further research into development economics and was helpful when I reached out for guidance on my own study in this field.*
- *Lectures were extremely interesting and effectively complemented the readings and assignments. One of my favorite economics electives!*

ECON 11020 - Introduction to Econometrics (Spring 2024):

- *Lectures were incredible; this was the first STEM class at UChicago where I feel like I really learned the material. The lectures were well thought out and directly applied to the problem sets, which mirrored the midterm and final.*
- *Srini's real-life examples and interactive teaching style made the class both enjoyable and educational.*
- *The problem sets were incredibly helpful and allowed me to understand the material deeply.*

ECON 20100 - The Elements of Economic Analysis II (Winter 2024):

- *Engaged students in discussion during class a lot. His real-life examples of economic theories were helpful at contextualizing the content.*
- *Very well-prepared and knowledgeable professor. Lectures were well-planned and highlighted the key points to take away.*
- *The professor's availability and willingness to provide one-on-one help made a significant impact on my learning.*

ECON 20000 - The Elements of Economic Analysis I (Autumn 2021):

- *Srini is an absolutely fantastic professor. He introduced the content in a very fair and intuitive way. The structure of the course felt very rewarding and Srini provided a lot of help and insight throughout it.*
- *Great class with a great professor. Very informative and intellectually stimulating.*

3 Mentoring and Advising Approach

Mentoring and advising students is an integral and deeply fulfilling aspect of my role. My mentoring philosophy is rooted in a student-centered approach that prioritizes personalized guidance, skills development, and long-term career planning. The success of my advisees, as evidenced by their placements in top-tier pre-doc positions, graduate programs, and competitive industry positions, is validation of my mentoring and advising approach. Below, I discuss my approach in more detail.

3.1 Supporting Academic and Research Development

My advising work spans both undergraduate and Masters' students, and also a few PhD students. Over the past several years, I have advised undergraduate and Masters' students on their coursework and theses, with many of them going on to secure prestigious placements in PhD programs (and become co-authors on my research projects), pre-doctoral positions, and industry roles. For instance, recent advisees have been placed in top-tier PhD programs at institutions like UCLA, UC-Berkeley, UW-Madison, UChicago, as well as pre-doctoral roles at MIT Sloan, UPenn Wharton, UChicago Economics, Booth, and Harris, and industry positions at Analysis Group, Citibank, and Credit Suisse.

In advising students on their Master's theses, undergraduate theses, and research projects, I provide the structure for students to systematically engage with current academic literature, explore appropriate data sources, and choose suitable empirical methods to answer research questions they are passionate about. In my role as an organizer of the weekly Master's Thesis Workshop, I work closely with students to develop and refine their research proposals and provide feedback throughout the analysis and writing process. Additionally, I provide regular ongoing one-on-one feedback and support during my office hours.

I believe in the value of collaborative learning. By connecting students with peers and faculty members who share similar interests, I facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote a collaborative research environment. For example, I have actively involved students in my own research projects and connected them with other professors to learn from hands-on experience in data collection and analysis.

Through my association with the Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) over the last twelve years, I have recruited, supervised, and mentored several research assistants (RA) for both data processing and analysis well as field-based roles. These RAs, many of whom I wrote recommendation letters for, have gone on to top-tier PhD programs at Cornell University, London School of Economics, Trinity College Dublin, and University of Maryland at College Park, as well as working in leadership roles at J-PAL South Asia.

3.2 Professional and Career Guidance

One of the most rewarding aspects of advising is helping students navigate their career paths. I provide tailored advice to students who are interested in pursuing careers in academia, economic consulting, government, or in the non-profit sector. From my experience working with organizations such as the World Bank, J-PAL, and American Institutes for Research (AIR), I have derived insights into the skills and qualifications that are valued in these fields, which I help my advisees develop. A significant part of my advising involves writing recommendation letters for students applying to graduate programs and professional positions. I ensure that these letters are personalized, highlighting each student's unique strengths and contributions.

3.3 Inclusivity in Mentoring and Advising

I am committed to making economics more inclusive. I actively participate in initiatives aimed at increasing diversity in the field, such as the Jeff Metcalf Internship Program at UChicago, which provides mentorship to students from underrepresented backgrounds. In my role as the coordinator for the College Core Tutor Program for Economics, I help bridge gaps in students' prior preparation for the economics major with ongoing support as they progress through the major so that all students get the resources they need to succeed in the major and beyond. I am particularly sensitive to barriers faced by students with disabilities. Overall, I persevere to serve as a role model as a diverse economist to inspire the next generation of economists.

3.4 Future Mentoring and Advising Goals

Looking ahead, I am eager to expand my advising efforts by developing new resources and programs that can better support students in their academic and professional journeys. I am interested in organizing workshops on topics such as conducting effective literature reviews efficiently and learning to make impactful presentations. These workshops would be designed to complement the skills students acquire in their coursework and enhance their readiness for their future careers.

4 Conclusion

As I continue to grow as an educator and researcher, I remain committed to refining my teaching practices, exploring innovative methods, and fostering a learning environment where all students can thrive. I am excited to mentor and support the next generation of economists and empower them to excel in their chosen fields.