Teaching Statement

Ryan Walch

I am passionate about finding engaging and effective ways to explain economic concepts to students from a diverse range of backgrounds and with a variety of career goals. During graduate school, I enjoyed the opportunity to teach eight courses as an independent instructor and look forward to continued teaching in the future.

Teaching Philosophy

Developing Critical Thinking – My goal is for students to leave my class with the problem-solving skills and economic intuition necessary to apply economic models to real world situations. In each course, I constantly return to a small set of overarching concepts to encourage students to draw connections across topics and to help them remember the key concepts after the term is over. For example when teaching industrial organization, I emphasize the need to consider a firm's incentives to distinguish pro-competitive and anti-competitive policies, and when teaching environmental economics I attempt to connect everything to the difference between social and private costs in environmental market failures.

I wish to help my students develop a fluency with the mathematical aspects of the undergraduate economic curriculum. But, I always stress, that just solving equations is a useless exercise without a solid understanding of the broader economic principles in the setting of interest. I emphasize that mathematics is a complement and not a substitute for more-qualitative approaches. Therefore, I seek to motive mathematical models with real world policies drawn from current events. I present mathematical models in several ways—graphically, mathematically, and verbally—to help students with a variety of mathematical backgrounds and learning styles to master the material.

Economics in an Interdisciplinary World – As an environmental economist studying climate change, I have an appreciation of the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to solve important policy problems. While many of my students have been economics majors, many have also been from other backgrounds such as environmental studies, political science and business. It is important to me that my class is valuable to these students. I hope to instill in all of my students an appreciation of the wide variety of topics and problems that can be analyzed using economic tools and show them that economics offers important insights about topics that they are interested in. In the future, I would be interested in teaching, perhaps in coordination with an environmental studies department, an environmental economics class

designed to help non-economics majors understand how economists think so they are better able to engage in discussion or debate about environmental policy in an interdisciplinary setting.

Diversity and Equity – Promoting diversity and inclusion in the classroom is an important goal in my teaching. In addition to establishing a classroom environment where students feel comfortable contributing in class, I work to ensure that I give proper coverage to issues related to diversity and equity in my instruction. In addition to teaching standard efficiency analysis, I make sure to emphasize that distributional questions are important to policy makers and that issues of equity are becoming an increasingly common topic of economic research. When relevant and appropriate to the topic on hand, I make sure to discuss the effects of policies on historically marginalized groups. I draw examples of policies and concepts from a variety of different countries besides the United States to make sure my course touches on issues of importance to international students who often were thirty to fifty percent of my class.

Teaching Experience

I have been able to teach as a primary instructor, a total of eight undergraduate courses across three different applied fields in economics at the University of Oregon.

EC 340 Public Economics (Summer 2016, Summer 2017): The goal of public economics is to give students a detailed understanding of what economists mean by efficiency and well being. We begin the course by discussing models of preferences and establishing the two fundamental welfare theorems. This framework is then used to analyze various examples of market failures. In addition to discussing efficiency issues, I include a unit on *inequality and distribution*. The course discusses several real-world examples of government programs to improve market outcomes, such as cap-and-trade, methods of public good provision, and anti-poverty programs such as Medicaid and SNAP. The course concludes with an overview of the economics of taxation.

EC 360 Issues in Industrial Organization (Winter 2017, Winter 2018, Spring 2018, Summer 2018): Economics 360 covers the economics of antitrust policy. Throughout the course, I seek to emphasize that good antitrust policy rarely has a one-size-fits all solution, but instead requires careful analysis of a firm's incentives in order to distinguish pro-competitive and anti-competitive behavior. I

pair the teaching of various economic models of firm behavior with an examination of U.S. antitrust case law. Besides giving students a greater understanding of the institutional detail of U.S. antitrust enforcement, I find that these cases serve as excellent settings to apply the economic models we learn in class to actual situations.

EC 333 Resource and Environmental Economics (Fall 2018, Spring 2019): Economics 333 provides an overview of the main models and concepts of natural resource policy and environmental regulation. I focus the class on the goal of understanding how environmental concerns can be modeled using tools from welfare economics in order to allow their inclusion in benefit-cost analysis. I also make sure to point out that the economic toolkit only addresses certain positive questions related to the environment and that perspectives from other disciplines are needed.

Teaching Assistant Experience: I have been a teaching assistant for econometrics at both the *graduate* and *undergraduate* levels, where I have run discussion sections and taught hands-on labs where students learned how to use Stata to answer statistical problems. Additionally, I have taught discussion sections for principles of macroeconomics, and have served as a grader for a wide variety of economics classes.

Future Teaching and Potential New Course

I would be interested in teaching environmental economics, public economics, industrial organization, econometrics and principles of economics classes at the undergraduate level. I would also be interested in teaching an environmental economics class to non-majors, perhaps in coordination with the environmental studies program. At the graduate level, I would like to teach environmental economics and a variety of econometric classes. This could include the standard graduate econometric sequence, or more specialized classes such as a class focusing specifically on discrete-choice modeling or a class on quasi-experimental methods.

Additionally, I am interested in developing a course on the economics of climate change policy. The course could explore topics such as the social cost of carbon (including the importance of discount rates and uncertainty), the economics of carbon pricing (such as quantities versus prices, co-pollutants, leakages to non-regulated areas, and existing climate programs), the economics of the energy transition in the electricity sector (for example: policies to encourage renewables such as subsidies and quotas, the structure of the grid, and economics of energy efficiency), and adaptation to climate change (e.g. policies to increase resiliency to natural disasters, adjustments in agriculture, and climate caused migration).