

# STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Anna Nesterenko

Stony Brook University

As an educator, my objective is to instill in students a way of thinking rather than just a series of facts, definitions, and models. I believe that effective teaching results not only from teaching core concepts, but also from actively coaching students in utilizing these concepts, developing their critical and analytical perspectives, and motivating them to make an effort to learn more. Students should never have to struggle to understand a lecture, but rather spend their time considering the relationships among the concepts presented and how they are related to the real life problems we face. The challenge to students should come from the ideas instead of the presentation of the ideas.

Students come from a range of backgrounds, levels of preparation, motivations, and skills. To ensure that as many of them as possible really understand the key concepts and ideas, I present new material in different ways to appeal to a heterogeneous body of students in terms of ways of learning: giving them more intuitive verbal explanations in addition to providing graphic illustrations and algebraic proofs when necessary. I welcome the use of the technology in the classroom as it helps the students to better organize their notes or get a hands-on training in quantitative techniques. I also encourage students to familiarize themselves with the new material prior to the lecture (read chapter outline or introduction), so that we can engage into a discussion of the new topic, fostering students' desire and ability to ask questions and actively think about the concepts during class.

One key element of effective teaching is to maintain students' interest and challenge them to understand the concepts outside of the classroom. Well-thought out and timely homework assignments and problem sets give the students the opportunity to learn on their own or in groups, and develop their analytical skills. Additionally, I find that preparing small projects on broader topics within a subject allows the students to not only structure and systematize acquired knowledge, but also improves their writing and presentation skills. I also teach and encourage students to work collaboratively, so that they can benefit from learning from each other.

I have taught intermediate macroeconomic theory and upper level electives such as international economics to undergraduate students at Stony Brook. I also worked as a teaching assistant for various undergraduate courses (introduction to economics, labor economics, business cycles, and experimental economics). I always find the challenge of developing new courses extremely rewarding, while I also enjoy teaching the courses in which I already have some experience and can improve my teaching skills based on the feedback from the students. I also have extensive tutoring experience of both small groups and individual students, as I worked as a tutor for the Stony Brook Student-Athlete Development Center. I believe that one-to-one interactions with students are essential not only to their understanding of the key concepts but also for the development of their confidence and motivation to study more actively and enthusiastically. The composition of students at Stony Brook has always been highly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and age. I understand the needs of students with different backgrounds and I adjust my teaching accordingly. My effort has been recognized. I have received excellent evaluations from students in all of my courses.