

Teaching Statement

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My passion for teaching goes back to before my academic career. As an undergraduate, I spent a lot of afternoons tutoring high school students, enthusiastic about building a relationship with them, and seeing them overcome their difficulties and achieve their goals. That early experience is still with me: for me, teaching is fundamentally about that relationship, and about helping someone grow.

That conviction has held through several years of university teaching, across two institutions, two countries, and student groups ranging from eighteen-year-old undergraduates to Master's and MBA participants. The format of my courses has changed considerably, but my approach has not: meet students where they are, push them further than they believe they can go, and always keep in mind what I found hardest when I sat on the other side of the room as a student.

I started teaching at the university level before my PhD, as a graduate teaching assistant at Politecnico di Milano. Between September 2020 and February 2021, I ran the exercise sessions for International Economics, reviewing the theory covered by the course professor and working through problem sets with the class, for about thirty Master's students in Management Engineering, over 42 hours across the semester. The course was built around [Krugman et al. \(2012\)](#). Teaching through the pandemic added its own difficulties: I ran sessions in hybrid and fully remote formats, learning to manage a camera, a live chat, and a live classroom at the same time, all while trying to keep a small, prepared group engaged with fairly dense material on trade theory, open-economy macroeconomics, and international monetary policy.

A few months later, from February to July 2021, I taught Microeconomics to a very different group: around 120 first-year undergraduates, mostly eighteen years old and encountering economic reasoning for the first time. The course, built around [Besanko and Braeutigam \(2020\)](#), covered consumer theory, production and costs, and market structures. Here the challenge wasn't depth but scale, keeping a large classroom's attention and discipline without letting it slide into passivity or noise, while making sure every student left with a solid grasp of the basics. Full student evaluations for both the International Economics and Microeconomics courses at Politecnico di Milano are available [here](#).

My teaching continued through my PhD at HEC Paris, where I've twice served as lead instructor for the compulsory first-year Microeconomics course (18 hours/semester, textbook reference [Cabral \(2024\)](#)) taken by every incoming Grand École (equivalent to a Master's degree) student, and also ran my own tutorial sessions (4.5 hours/semester). These were sizable groups, around sixty students per session, coming out of a very selective admissions process and with high expectations. The challenge here was different: motivating students who are already strong, without the material feeling redundant or boring. I dealt with this by pushing the course beyond the pure theory, bringing in empirical methods, causal inference, and results from my own research to stimulate students' curiosity and interest, showing them how the theory they were learning was alive and used to explain economic phenomena and inform public policy.

In 2025 and 2026 I also served as teaching assistant for Managerial Economics in the HEC Paris MBA program, where I graded group assignments and the final exams. The audience there was made up of professionals with substantial work experience. Engaging with their business-oriented mindset shifted my own perspective from the academic to the applied, and taught me to teach fundamental economic concepts as instruments for managerial settings, strategic decisions, and the interpretation of business scenarios.

I would welcome the opportunity to teach innovation and entrepreneurship at the BSc or MSc level. I would like to bring into the classroom the results of two strands of my research: work on early-stage venture evaluation, which identifies what distinguishes ventures that go on to survive, hire, and raise capital, and how accurately human experts and AI models recognize those characteristics; and work on entrepreneurial training, which shows how such programs contribute to venture creation and what this implies for the design of public policy in support of entrepreneurship. My background as an economist makes me equally comfortable with the quantitative core of a business or economics curriculum, and I am prepared to teach microeconomics, causal inference, and applied econometrics at both the undergraduate and Master's levels. I would also be glad to develop an elective on the use of large language models in empirical research, building on the methods and applications I have developed in my current work.

A few habits have stayed constant across all my teaching experiences. I'm quite pedagogical: I repeat key concepts on purpose, trying hard to make sure every student in the room, not just the quickest ones, actually understands the material. I also try to experiment with new approaches. In my most recent course for example, I proposed a no-laptop policy, to understand whether it would help students stay focused longer in class. I did not just impose it: I showed students the existing evidence on how laptops can affect attention and retention in class and let them decide, and they adopted it on their own, because it made sense to them. That's a good example of how I try to work with students more generally: I treat them as adults who chose to come to class to learn, and I'd rather convince them than just tell them what to do.

It's also how I think about technology in the classroom: I want digital and AI tools to support learning rather than get in the way of it. More broadly, I think we need to rethink how we structure curricula, classroom activities, and exams, so that students keep learning the material we teach and the critical thinking skills that come with it, while also becoming genuinely comfortable with AI tools. I don't see this as a trade-off: I want students to come out from my courses smart, knowledgeable, and able to use AI critically and mindfully to get real productivity gains from it. I'm genuinely interested in finding new ways to get there in my own teaching.

I always encourage students to reach out to me with questions, whether by email or in office hours, and I always make time to address them. That effort has been recognized by my university, and, more importantly, by my students: in 2024 I was rated the best lecturer among all instructors in the microeconomics course at HEC Paris in [students' evaluations](#), two students have asked me to write their recommendation letters, and one former student is now doing a PhD in economics, partly, as he told me later, because of a course I taught. Nothing in teaching satisfies me more than that, seeing a student succeed, sometimes because of one conversation, and knowing I had some small part in it. That's what I teach for, and it's why teaching will stay a core part of who I want to be as an academic, wherever my research career takes me.

References

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Krugman, P. R., Obstfeld, M., Melitz, M. J., and Obstfeld, M. (2012). *International economics: Theory and policy*.