Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Ayal Chen-Zion
Department of Economics
University of California, San Diego

The past four years, I served as a teaching assistant for 10 undergraduate courses at the University of California, San Diego with an additional 2 courses as a grader. I focused primarily on our introductory and intermediate microeconomics sequences. I also served as a teaching assistant for upper level microeconomics courses, like Game Theory and Operations Research, and intermediate econometric courses.

The discipline of economics helps every student frame and analyze problems they will face in their academic and professional careers. My goal as a teacher is to give them the necessary tools to succeed, both in my course and professionally. I relate the material to their experience and show how it will be useful after the final. For example, when covering producer theory, I relate the problems to a student organization producing shirts for incoming freshman. I use a similar example in operations research when discussing optimization techniques. By focusing on the motivation of the question the students are better able to understand the problem, which is a difficult aspect of economics to teach.

At the undergraduate level, I am comfortable teaching microeconomics and introductory econometrics. My best student evaluations are from our game theory and econometrics courses. In upper division material, I am comfortable teaching any of the courses in my main research fields of labor economics and microeconomics.

There are three upper-division undergraduate courses that I would like to help develop:

The first is an Applied Game Theory course; merging a standard game theory curriculum with a sequence of case studies and projects, making the content more accessible to the students. At UCSD, game theory has been entering the core undergraduate curriculum and is vital to any student of economics. It teaches them to think carefully about incentives; a skill that will be useful to them regardless of their future career.

The second is a course in Data Analysis with Modern Tools. This will cover the range of open-source tools available for data analysis. Economic researchers are not limited to Stata, Matlab and other licensed programs any longer. With the introduction of tools like R and Python, new opportunities for students to learn how to conduct rigorous analysis arise with a tool they can bring with them to any project or company. This course substitutes or supplements the econometrics sequence, and will introduce them to a suite of powerful tools to show them how to implement fundamental techniques, like linear regression, in each environment. Additionally, we would focus on developing the student's ability to independently research and implement methods by showing them the on-line resources.

Finally, I would like to develop a course in Social and Economic Networks which would

highlight the importance of non-market interactions in economic behavior. This course would use "Social and Economic Networks" by Matthew O. Jackson as a textbook and study the roles that networks play in economics. This elective would introduce this sub-field to the broader undergraduate audience through problem sets, a literature report, and a research project.

Appendix: Sample Student Comments from Evaluations

- "Problems presented were helpful and applicable to course material.
  Punctual.
  Loud, clear voice.
  Approachable.
  Good handwriting.
  Thank you!"

- "He is really clear and on point with his answers. He was really helpful for making me understand some critical points in course. I really recommend him as a TA."

- "Explained material well and made section and review sessions very lively. Tried to give us a bigger picture of what we were actually learning which was very helpful. Sometimes would take a little too much time explaining/reiterating lecture material, so would've appreciated if he did actual problems from the problem sets more and spent more time on that."

- "Ayal is fantastic. He is very helpful, and knowledgable about the material. What makes him a great TA is that he presents the material in a clear and concise manner that is easy to understand and retain the information. He should definitely consider becoming a professor; I think he would be great at it."

Academic Status: Good Standing

Applicant Assignment History

Term	Unit	Position	Percent Time	Compensation	Course	% Students Recommend
FA11	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 2 - Market Imperfections & Policy, Hamilton, James D. (A06)	N/A
WI12	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 2 - Market Imperfections & Policy, Tang, Yuan Emily (A04)	N/A
FA12	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 120C - Econometrics C, Candido, Maria Teresa (A00)	85.7 %
WI13	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 173B - Corporate Finance, Ramey, Garey (A02)	0.0 %
SP13	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 100B - Microeconomics B, Tang, Yuan Emily (A01)	100.0 %
FA13	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 109 - Game Theory, Newhouse, Herbert S (A01)	88.2 %
WI14	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 109 - Game Theory, Watson, Joel Christopher (A01)	84.6 %
SP14	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 172B - Operations Research B, Newhouse, Herbert S (A02)	90.5 %
FA14	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.25	Pay	ECON 100B - Microeconomics B, Tang, Yuan Emily (A02)	72.7 %
WI15	Economics	Reader	0.25	Pay	ECON 100A - Microeconomics A, Famulari, Melissa	N/A
SP15	Economics	Reader	0.25	Pay	ECON 120A - Econometrics A, Tang, Yuan Emily	N/A
FA15	Economics	Teaching Assistant	0.5	Pay	ECON 172A - Operations Research A, Newhouse, Herbert S	N/A

Please note: Until a formal offer has been made to the applicant by the hiring unit, any assignments listed above should not be considered final.

Position Details

Unit: Economics