

Teaching Evaluations

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As of November 2021, I have been a Teaching Assistant for 12 evaluated classes spanning 6 undergraduate courses and two Ph.D courses. [Table 1](#) summarizes my quantitative evaluations for all of my classes followed by the unprocessed official evaluations. The summary I have constructed does not hide critical comments or relatively low scores. On the contrary, I emphasize the weaknesses and reflect on them as a means of improvement. All of these evaluations are compulsory end-of-term evaluations. The evaluations include quantitative and qualitative questions. The quantitative questions address questions such as “Teaching Assistant was competent in course material” and allow for responses on a scale of 1 (among worst) to 7 (among best). The qualitative questions, such as “What were the strongest points of the TA in discussion section or office hours?” allow for free responses.

Following are some of the responses to the qualitative questions, which helped me build and improve upon my teaching style.

1. What were the strongest points of the TA in discussion section or office hours?

“taught us from the beginning and didn’t assume that we understood everything.”
(*Probability and Statistics II, Fall 2016*)

“The TA walked through examples in class and made sure everyone was on the same”
(*Principles of Micro, Winter 2017*) page.

“The TA’s explanations were very clear and she always came in prepared to teach the material.” (*Principles of Macro, Spring 2017*)

“Nishtha was very clear in explaining how to solve some of the problems when asked and she gives good study tips.” (*Economics of Strategy, Fall 2017*)

“She was extremely kind and patient with the students. Was extremely responsive to the class and tailored it to class needs. Also loved how she would go over the midterms and the most missed problems.” (*Probability and Statistics I, Winter 2018*)

“She has sense of humor and is willing to help.” (*Managerial Economics, Spring 2018*)

“Took into consideration students concerns and addressed them during discussion instead of simply going through a set of preassigned problems.” (*Microeconomics Theory I, Fall 2018*)

“Nishtha was well versed with the material and clearly understood the concepts well” (*Microeconomics Theory II, Winter 2019*)

“She was very good at explaining harder concepts in language we can all understand” (*Probability and Statistics II, Spring 2019*)

“Explained the techniques in a clear and organized fashion. Explained expectations.” (*Microeconomics Theory I, Fall 2019*)

“She knows the material very well, understands our questions, and answers them clearly.” (*Microeconomics Theory II, Winter 2020*)

“Good in summarizing and re explaining the main points in lecture. Very flexible in what the lesson in discussion is about. Good at drawing graphs ! Very comfortable and friendly in discussion. Engages participation.” (*Intermediate Microeconomics, Spring 2020*)

2. Do you have any recommendations for your TA that would help that person be a more effective TA in the future?

“concentrate on examples rather than concepts” (*Probability and Statistics II, Fall 2016*)

“Maybe go a little slower with the explanations at the start of discussion section” (*Principles of Micro, Winter 2017*)

“Make your writing more legible because it’s hard to read it sometimes since it’s in cursive.” (*Principles of Macro, Spring 2017*)

“Please be more clear on your grading for how points are assigned and what correct answers needed to be.” (*Microeconomics Theory I, Fall 2018*)

"It's good to show every step of the problem, but sometimes it takes too much time for each problem, and it gets boring. You can move on more quickly and do more problems." (*Probability and Statistics II, Spring 2019*)

"Dont engage with the people who consistently make distractions. While sometimes the questions asked have some meaning, it oftentimes seems like some students want to argue about why their perspective is correct. This is distracting and ultimately unproductive. It also distracts focus from the actual material." (*Microeconomics Theory II, Winter 2020*)

Overall, I found that students appreciated my willingness to help in and outside of class. While time is always a binding constraint, I try to host frequent office hours and align it with my students' schedule for optimization. Being well prepared with the material was always very helpful and it clearly showed. Moreover, I will continue to use analytical and graphical methods wherever possible as it makes the learning much more efficient and interesting for the students. I learnt early on that some students struggled because of my cursive style of writing, which was easy to fix. I started using printing style and that was a small but effective change. The numerical evaluations for me have mostly been above 5 out of 7 except, Microeconomic Theory II (Ph.D), which disappointed me a little at first. But, I reached out to some of the students and recognized that Game Theory is especially challenging for many students as it builds heavily on both Mathematics and intuitive logical reasoning. These abilities are not uniform even across graduate students. I addressed that with the next cohort, by teaching the relevant mathematical methods to bring everyone at the same level. Students appreciated those sessions and it also improved the efficiency of the remaining discussion sections of the quarter (also improving my evaluations score). Two challenges that I faced in a few of the discussion sections but had no control over but reflected negatively on my evaluations were (1) timing and location of my discussion sections, which would sometimes make me late by a couple of minutes, (2) because I used to grade the exams, the students thought those were my *harsh* rubrics while I was just following the main instructor's advice. However, I learnt from that experience and in the future, I will be cautious about scheduling classes to optimise everyone's time and design my grading style transparent when I have more control as an instructor.

Table 1: Numerical Evaluations

| | T.A. was competent in course material | T.A. was able to make presentations clearly | T.A. was responsive to students | T.A. was able to integrate the lecture and discussion material | I would expect another course with this T.A. to be |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Prob & Stats II (Fall 2016) | 5 | 4.3 | 5 | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| Principles of Micro (Winter 2017) | 5 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.8 |
| Principles of Macro (Spring 2017) | 6.3 | 5.1 | 5.8 | 6 | 5.9 |
| Econ of Strategy (Fall 2017) | 5.1 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 5.1 | 4.4 |
| Prob & Stats I (Winter 2018) | 5 | 4.9 | 5.00 | 5 | 5.1 |
| Managerial Econ (Spring 2018) | 7.8 | 6.4 | 7.6 | 5.2 | 5.6 |
| Micro I (Ph.D) (Fall 2018) | 6.1 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 6.1 | 5.9 |
| Micro II (Ph.D) (Winter 2019) | 4.9 | 4.3 | 4.6 | 4.4 | 4.8 |
| Prob & Stats I (Spring 2019) | 5.2 | 4.8 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 4.8 |
| Micro I (Ph.D) (Fall 2019) | 6.3 | 6.1 | 6 | 6.2 | 6 |
| Micro II (Ph.D) (Winter 2020) | 5.1 | 4.6 | 5.3 | 4.9 | 4.9 |
| Intermediate Micro (Spring 2020, Virtual) | 6.2 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 6.2 |

Notes: Cells contain mean scores from final evaluations for one discussion section in the specified course/term. Scores range from 1 (among worst) to 7 (among best). Some terms have more than one discussion section.