

TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Including Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

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This portfolio is adapted from an application packet created for the E.J. Ourso College of Business 2024-2025 College Teaching Awards, for which I have been nominated.

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Part I: Self Report

1. Statement of Teaching Philosophy

My name is Mary Peshoff. I am an economics PhD student at LSU, and since I first began considering a PhD program, I have wanted to teach. I found tutoring other students as an undergraduate at Louisiana Tech so rewarding that I tutored many students in economics for free. My passion for teaching has only grown while teaching students at LSU. In 2023, I was honored with a department award for excellence in teaching, and I am a candidate for the LSU 2024-2025 E.J. Ourso College of Business Teaching Awards. I will graduate in May with 5 years of teaching experience—two as a recitation instructor, and three as instructor of record for two different economics courses.

When I think about teaching philosophy, a few key desires come to mind: I want my students to know I care about their academic, professional, and personal success. I want students to feel they are treated fairly, that I respect their time, and that the goals I set for them are reasonable and achievable. I want students to feel that they can come to me with any questions or concerns and to discuss their academic interests and goals. To cultivate that kind of environment, I attempt to do the following: (1) *Set reasonable deadlines and expectations.* I keep the due dates of homework assignments consistent and promise my students ample time to complete homework sets. Whenever possible, I hold review sessions prior to exams. Many of my students have told me in person that review sessions have been extremely helpful in planning their studying. (2) *Ask for feedback and proactively offer support.* I emphasize to students on the first day of class that I value their feedback—whether it comes in the form of questions or answers to questions I’ve asked or nonverbal feedback like shaking heads. I tell my students their response is valuable whether they have answered correctly or not, because it helps me gauge the class’s level of understanding and helps other students who may be too shy to speak up. I encourage my students to make use of office hours and I ask students who come to my office hours how homework sets are going and how I can improve lectures. (3) *Be kind and avoid pre-judgements.* I avoid making assumptions about why a student has displayed poor academic performance. There are dozens of reasons students might fall behind, from mental and physical health issues to family troubles to learning disabilities to money troubles. While I always follow department policy regarding late work, I do not shame students who come to me for help after falling behind. We work together to see how we can get them back on track. (4) *Adapt explanations to students learning styles, backgrounds, and disabilities.* It is important to me that every student feels they have the tools to learn in a welcoming environment. I have had the opportunity to teach economics to the blind as a tutor and college instructor and welcomed the opportunity to grow my communication skills. As a tutor, I created tactile graphs that my students could manipulate themselves

using push pins, cork boards, and rubber bands. As an instructor, I improved digital accessibility and stepped away from using graphs as a crutch to convey ideas. I now supplement every graph I encounter in required texts with a non-graphic explanation of the same concepts.

One of my overarching goals as a teacher is to emphasize topics and skills that students would do well to carry with them for the rest of their lives. Since I've been teaching macroeconomics courses, I have ended each semester with a final exam that focuses on topics that help my students understand financial news and economic aggregates. I also like to provide supplementary examples and data that interested students can explore on their own or that I can show in class when we have extra time. For example, when I taught "Principles of Macroeconomics", I liked to create and share interactive graphs of economic aggregates using the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis's data visualization tool, FRED. While teaching "Money, Banking, and Macroeconomic Activity" last semester, I posted a video about the Theranos scandal after we discussed the principal-agent problem faced by shareholders. I hope using recent examples helps students put the importance of the topics we're covering in perspective and anchors those topics in their memories. Economics is ripe with opportunities to develop cross-discipline skills like reading data, understanding statistical concepts, and critically analyzing research and policy. I try to help my students develop these skills further. Thinking in systems instead of memorizing is challenging for many students at the early college level, but I hope that introducing my students to these skills plants a seed that helps them learn more efficiently and effectively going forward.

Two students who took ECON 2035 "Money, Banking, and Macroeconomic Activity" with me in Fall 2024 have this to say about the effectiveness of my teaching philosophy in reaching stated goals:

Ms. Peshoff was one of the most well-structured professors I've ever had. Her PowerPoints were clear and concise. Her explanations translated economics into English. Her exams actually tested our knowledge on what she was teaching us. Highly recommend her course.

Honestly, I think she did an amazing job. She made economics so interesting and if she taught every Econ course, I'd change my major to study economics.¹

As I continue to develop my teaching skills, I hope for opportunities to merge my love of teaching with my research areas by teaching microeconomics courses. I would also love to teach courses that introduce students to economic research and challenge them to develop statistical skills that grow their passion for economics and help them gain an edge in the job market.

¹ I present student comments from my Fall 2024 teaching evaluations in full in my summary of student evaluations.

2. Summary of Courses Taught

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. ECON 2035 “Money, Banking, and Macroeconomic Activity” | Fall 2024 – Spring 2025 |
| 2. ECON 2010 “Principles of Macroeconomics” | Fall 2022 – Spring 2024 |
| 3. ECON 2030 “Economic Principles” (Recitation) | Fall 2020 – Spring 2022 |

3. Statement of Objectives for Continued Teaching Effectiveness

There are three main improvements I’d like to make in my teaching throughout the coming semester and beyond based on self-assessment and student feedback:

1. *Cultivate student passion.* Student evaluation forms at LSU ask respondents, “What was your level of interest in this course before you entered the class?” responses demonstrate that many students start required economics courses with medium to low interest in the subject. One way I plan to try and stimulate more interest in economics is by incorporating more interactive examples and current events into my lectures. These make the topics we’re covering feel more culturally relevant, personal, and timely. I also try to keep lectures lively by asking questions and making occasional jokes.
2. *Continue to improve pacing.* One challenge I have faced as a teacher and communicator is a tendency to speak quickly when I get excited. Greater awareness of this tendency in of itself has helped me slow down considerably and lecture at a pace that is more comfortable for my students. More recently, I have incorporated more pauses into my lectures. This gives students time to process what we’ve just covered and put any questions they have into words. This also gives me time to survey the room, gauging expressions. Teaching new courses, it is also sometimes a challenge to see in advance how quickly we’ll get through lecture material. Sometimes lectures were much shorter or longer than anticipated. With one semester of a new course under my belt, I have a chance to refine presentations based on previous experience and anticipate topics that students find challenging better.
3. *Improve exam construction.* I want exams I write to feel appropriately challenging, but fair. Teaching a new course this past semester, one exam I gave was more challenging for students than I anticipated, while another did not challenge them enough. I polled the room for feedback on what made one exam more challenging than the other and will incorporate that feedback into lectures and exam writing.

4. *Work more examples in class.* Related in a sense to pacing, there were moments this semester where I realized I had time to incorporate more examples in class that students likely would have found beneficial. This was also reflected in anonymous feedback from a few students at the end of the semester. Following concepts with an immediate test of understanding really helps students retain knowledge better and find identify holes in their understanding.

4. Summary of Teaching-Related Activities

1. *Course Instructor, Department of Economics, Louisiana State University* 2022-2025
Currently teaching two sections of ECON 2035 per semester, and previously taught two sections of ECON 2010 each semester for four semesters.
2. *Supplemental Instruction Host, Louisiana State University* 2022-2023
Served as the host for ECON 2010's supplemental instructor (SI), answering questions and providing feedback and advice on supplemental instruction.
3. *Recitation Instructor, Department of Economics, Louisiana State University* 2020-2022
Taught recitation sessions for four sections of ECON 2030 each semester for four semesters. Sessions once per week covered test-relevant examples.
4. *Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, Louisiana State University* 2019-2020
Assisted with grading and exam proctoring for two professors for two semesters.
5. *Tutor, Freelance and for Louisiana Tech Athletics, Louisiana Tech University* 2006-2018
Tutored students in economics and sustainable supply chain management courses for Louisiana Tech Athletics and freelance with referrals from the Department of Economics and Finance.

5. Teaching Innovations and Recent Course Syllabi

Contributions to accessibility in economics. Making economics accessible to the blind has been a goal of mine since my time as an undergraduate tutor at Louisiana Tech University. As a tutor at Tech, I created portable tactile graphs for two visually impaired students with push pins, cork board, and rubber bands. The students were able to manipulate the graphs themselves, and the professor of their course ended up having the students use the boards for exams and to help explain concepts in office hours. At LSU, I have improved alternative text in publisher materials and supplement graphs with alternative non-visual explanations that benefit all students.

Sample Syllabi

- ECON 2035 [sample syllabus](#)
- ECON 2010 [sample syllabus](#)
- ECON 2030 (recitation) [sample syllabus](#)

6. Response to Student Evaluations

My Statement of Objectives for Continued Teaching Effectiveness covers some larger areas where I'd like to improve, some of which are related to student evaluations or feedback students were comfortable enough to give in person. My student evaluations are generally positive. Some examples from this past semester include:

Ms. Peshoff was one of the most well structured professors I've ever had. Her PowerPoints were clear and concise. Her explanations translated economics into English. Her exams actually tested our knowledge on what she was teaching us. Highly recommend her course.

You could tell the teacher truly connected and cared about her students.

[Ms.] Peshoff's lectures are engaging and she explains the material very well. She simplifies hard economic concepts into manageable forms that we understand.

Honestly, I think she did an amazing job. She made economics so interesting and if she taught every Econ course, I'd change my major to study economics.

I have had Ms. Peshoff for two semesters now, and I absolutely love her teaching style! She gives you what you need to know and explains things to where an average student can understand tough concepts. Further, she provides plenty of visuals (graphs!) and examples to go along with problems. She always makes content-related jokes and commentary that is really funny, and knows how to capture the attention of the students who come to learn. She is always prompt in responding to emails, and is happy to schedule office hours. I really appreciate her and have enjoyed the time I've had with her as my professor.

She was engaging and personable yet effective and still professional.

These statements and other in person feedback give confidence that I am heading in the right direction when it comes to being approachable and communicating effectively. In addition to course evaluations, a highlight at the end of this last semester came when one of my students gave me a letter telling me how much she had enjoyed my courses and wishing me good luck as I approach graduation. However, there is

always room for improvement. Some examples of areas students suggested could improve this semester include:

I just don't think this material is interesting and the exams were kind of tough.

Peshoff is known for going fast in lectures, and this makes it hard for most students to keep up in real-time. I feel like if she slowed things down a little, and make the exam review days Zoom/online, that it would greatly help students in the future. I recall a number of times where I walked out of class with the feeling of whiplash.

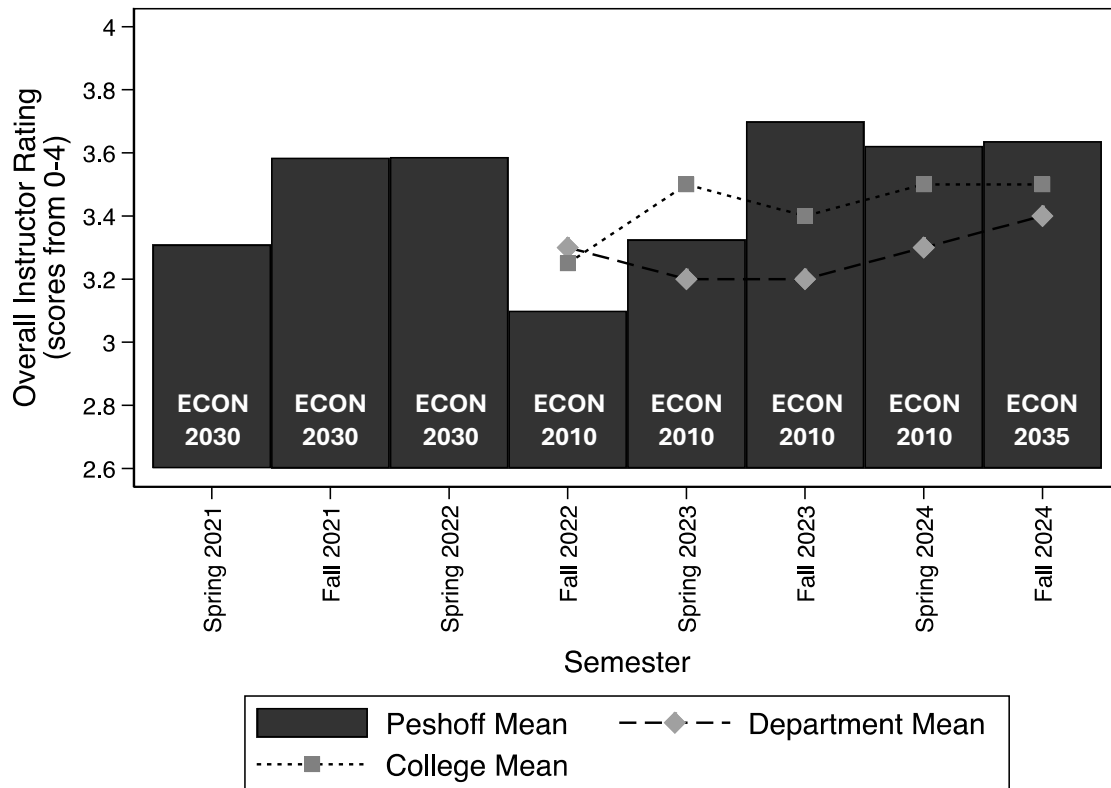
I address my plans for cultivating student passion and improving pace and exam construction in my Statement of Objectives for Continued Teaching Effectiveness. A few students also asked for more in-class examples, which has been on my mind as well as an area of improvement and is a primary goal for the coming semester. Some students also asked for changes to the points structure of the course, such as adding attendance points or offering additional assignments. As a graduate student teacher, these structural elements are not within my authority to alter, but they do sometimes give me other ideas on how to make the course better for students who want to succeed. For example, substituting requests for bonus assignments with a practice test, exam reviews, or more practice problems.

Part II: Information from Others

7. Summary of Student Evaluations

Trends in evaluations over time

In the table below, you can find my overall instruction scores based on weighted mean student evaluation results (where the highest possible score is a 4) from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024.

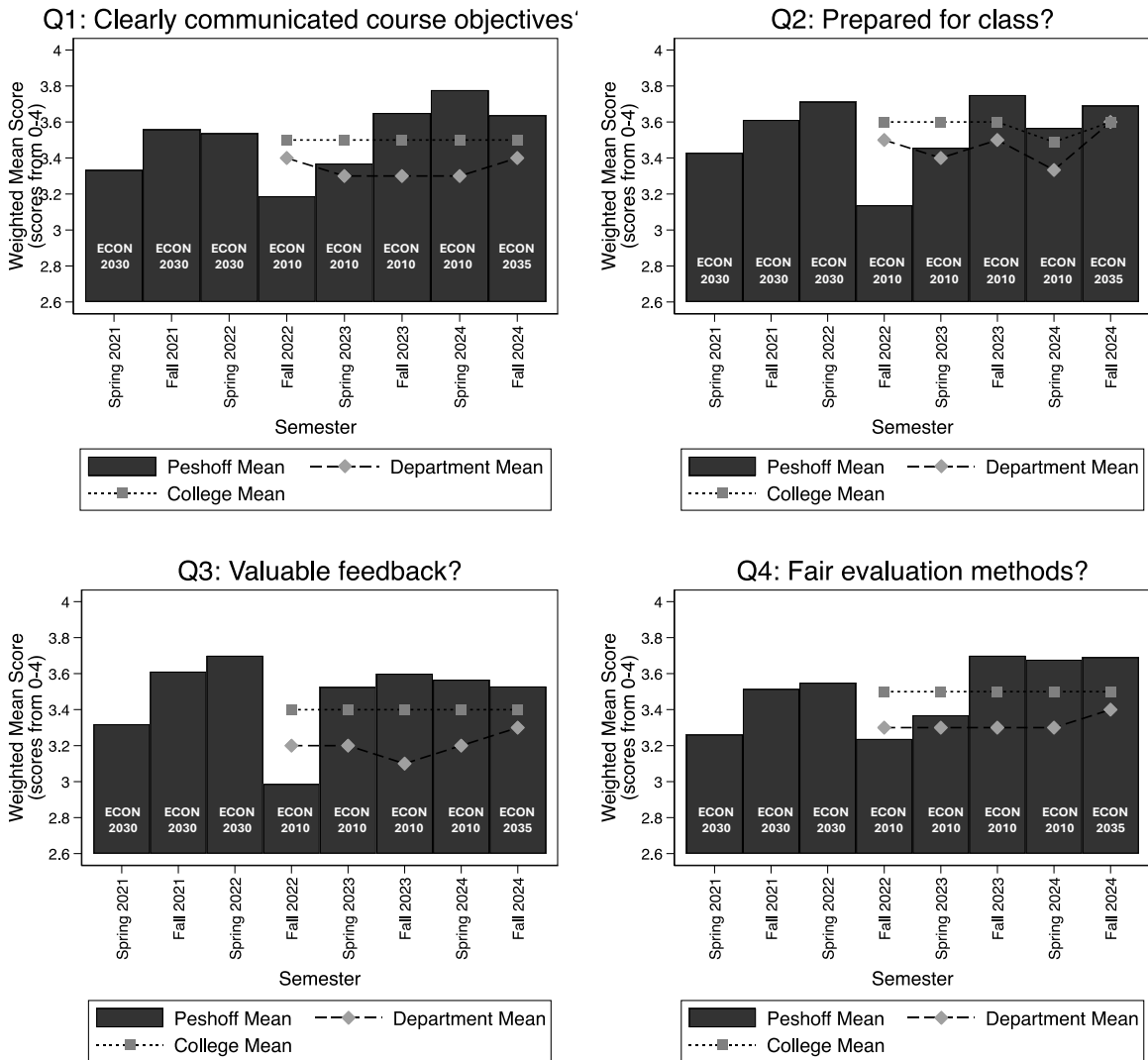


Note: The figure above shows my student evaluation score as an instructor overall for three different courses from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024. The highest possible instructor score is 4 and the lowest is 0. Scores are determined by anonymous, optional student evaluations where students can “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with the following prompts: (1) The instructor clearly communicated course objectives (2) The instructor was prepared for class (3) The instructor provided valuable feedback. (4) The instructor’s evaluation methods were fair (5) The instructor’s method of presentation facilitated learning (6) The instructor stimulated interest in the subject (7) The instructor was an effective teacher. Means provided are weighted by the number of respondents in each section of each course each semester. Sample sizes each semester vary between 16 and 34 students. Department and college instructor means were only made available to me in teaching evaluations starting in Fall 2022.

I taught three different economics courses over this period. The first course listed, ECON 2030, was a recitation course. You can see improvement in students evaluations of my teaching of the course over the following semester as I refined my communication skills in the classroom. Student evaluations drop in Fall 2022 when I transition to teaching a new course (now as instructor of record for the first time) but

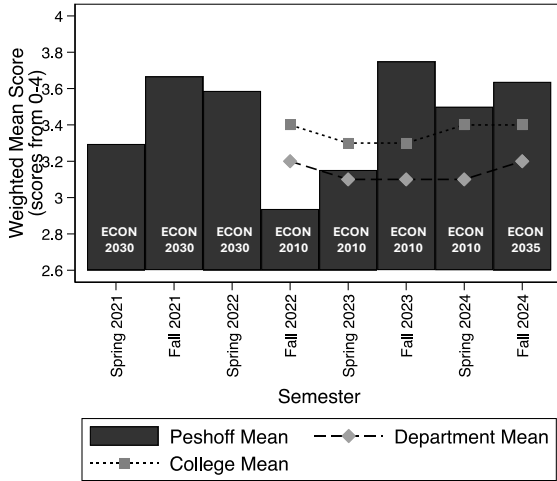
student evaluations of my teaching steadily rise over the following semesters as I improve based experience, student feedback, and self-assessment. I transitioned to teaching a new course (ECON 2035) in Fall 2024, and mean student evaluations remained relatively stable at a score of 3.6 out of 4.

The following figures show results for each of the seven questions students are asked in course evaluations.

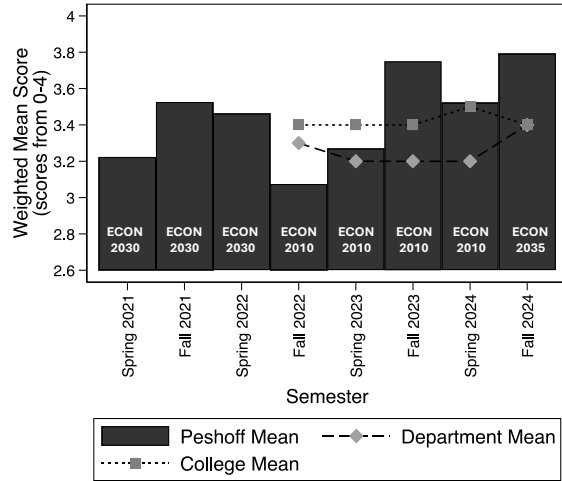


Note: The figure above shows my student evaluation scores as an instructor in four different areas for three different courses from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024. The highest possible instructor score is 4 and the lowest is 0. Scores are determined by anonymous, optional student evaluations where students can “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with the following prompts from left to right: (Q1) The instructor clearly communicated course objectives (Q2) The instructor was prepared for class (Q3) The instructor provided valuable feedback. (Q4) The instructor’s evaluation methods were fair. Means provided are weighted by the number of respondents in each section of each course each semester. Sample sizes each semester vary between 16 and 34 students. Department and college instructor means were only made available to me in teaching evaluations starting in Fall 2022.

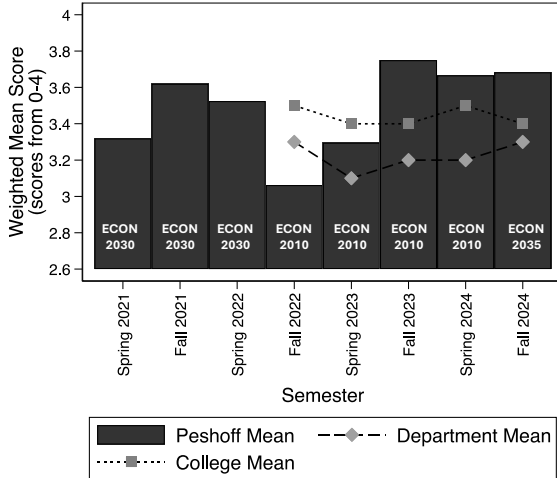
Q5: Presentation method facilitated learning:



Q6: Stimulated interest in the subject?



Q7: Effective teacher?



Note: The figure above shows my student evaluation scores as an instructor in three different areas for three different courses from Spring 2021 to Fall 2024. The highest possible instructor score is 4 and the lowest is 0. Scores are determined by anonymous, optional student evaluations where students can “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” with the following prompts from left to right: (Q5) The instructor’s method of presentation facilitated learning (Q6) The instructor stimulated interest in the subject (Q7) The instructor was an effective teacher. Means provided are weighted by the number of respondents in each section of each course each semester. Sample sizes each semester vary between 16 and 34 students. Department and college instructor means are only made available to me in teaching evaluations starting in Fall 2022.

Results remain largely the same as overall trends, with small declines in student evaluations of my performance when I take on new courses, but improvement with subsequent semesters. Over the last three semesters, fairness of evaluation methods and effectiveness are rated more highly by students. Stimulated interest is rated highly by students in some semesters but less so in others. This is one of the reasons this is an area of focus for me going forward. Results also show students may desire more feedback from me throughout the semester. While exams are available for review in office hours, one way I can potentially

communicate more feedback to students next semester is by reviewing some of the exam questions students found most challenging after exams are given.

Selected Student Evaluation Comments from ECON 2035

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
How she was very passionate about the subject
Very clear, direct, and concise. Very knowledgeable about the concepts and able to explain and demonstrate for our understanding!
Professor Peshoff's lectures are engaging and she explains the material very well. She simplifies hard economic concepts into manageable forms that we understand.
I liked how we had unlimited attempts on the homework, it helped relieve the stress of having to get everything right and I can sit there and learn the homework.
I liked that professor Peshoff made sure that we really understood the concepts we were going over
Mrs. Peshoff was one of the most well structured professors I've ever had. Her PowerPoints were clear and concise. Her explanations translated economics into English. Her exams actually tested our knowledge on what she was teaching us. Highly recommend her course.
great professor, engages with the material and explains well
I appreciated her use of examples throughout the course to help us understand concepts, and I got a lot out of the review sessions we would do for each exam.
I liked her examples in class and her ability to simplify the material in a way that made it easier for students to understand.
The teacher was well informed and provided all the necessary information.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
Maybe have a curve for the exams or go over some questions on the exams
Maybe offer additional assignments to boost grades so its not so test heavy.
I just don't think this material is interesting and the exams were kind of tough.
Honestly, I think she did an amazing job. She made economics so interesting and if she taught every Econ course, I'd change my major to study economics.
I understand that there is a lot of content in this course, but occasionally we covered slides too quickly and I was unable to fully process the information. I think this course could be improved by focusing on the most important topics in class to ensure that the information is not overwhelming.
I have no complaints.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
Very thorough and willing to help outside of class. 100% recommend
You could tell the teacher truly connected and cared about her students. She wanted to make sure we didnt feel to much pressure while also giving us all the tools to preform in the class. I definitely enjoyed taking this course with this instructor.
I liked how the instructor posted Homework Questions and Presentation Slides to help me prepare for the exams.
she explained everything very well and in depth
She was engaging and personable yet effective and still professional.
very detailed
n/a
I have had Ms. Peshoff for 2 semesters now, and I absolutely love her teaching style! She gives you what you need to know and explains things to where an average student can understand tough concepts. Further, she provides plenty of visuals (graphs!) and examples to go along with problems. She always makes content-related jokes and commentary that is really funny, and knows how to capture the attention of the students who come to learn. She is always prompt in responding to emails, and is happy to schedule office hours. I really appreciate her and have enjoyed the time I've had with her as my professor.
I liked how she presented the material compared to other 2035 professors.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
There is nothing that the instructor could improve the way the course is taught.
more real world examples
More examples in class.
very complicated, made test questions very weirdly worded so it was hard to understand. didn't provide extra study methods
n/a
Peshoff is known for going fast in lectures, and this makes it hard for most students to keep up in real-time. I feel like if she slowed things down a little, and make the exam review days Zoom/online, that it would greatly help students in the future. I recall a number of times where I walked out of class with the feeling of whiplash.
I wish she would have made attendance necessary, I feel that because she doesn't take attendance, it makes me not want to go to class.

Selected Student Evaluation Comments from ECON 2010

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
The teacher was very thorough in explaining the topics of the course, with examples to help us understand homework and exam problems. The review before exams were especially helpful, as well as reviewing homework and slide examples to prepare for the exam.
She really made things easy to understand through her style of teaching. She kept things interesting and constantly connected our lessons to real world examples, making the lessons more understandable. She was funny, smart, and engaging!
I loved the way Mary taught this class. in the past I have taken two different Econ classes and I struggled in both of them and didn't think either of those teachers I had was very good, then I came to this class with Mary as my teacher. I still struggled but she is definitely the better Econ teacher I have had. I liked how she did all the examples with us and would go above and beyond to provide other examples if we needed them.
Very straight to the point and explained it to us in a manner that was simple.
I liked that she was open for office hours and knew how to teach.
Peshoff is super spunky and energetic, and loves what she teaches

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
Give more study materials. Maybe a practice exam or study guide before tests would help a lot.
N/A
I think that the instructor could improve by including more engagement within the class.
she did a great job, not need for improving

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
I like the reviews we do before the test so we know what to focus on while studying.
She was a very interesting professor and she always had my attention. Very well spoken and always explained the material well.
Very straightforward with what you need to know for exams and gave extensive examples of how to solve problems in class.
Ms. Peshoff was very verbal about everything and she always asked if anyone had any questions about what she just discussed. She made sure you understood and gave you the opportunity to speak up if you didn't.
I enjoyed how passionate Peshoff was about the content. This motivated me.
She explained the material very well. It was tough, but she made it easy.
She does a great job at explaining the notes, rather than just reading off the PowerPoint. I love how she works out problems in class and makes sure we all understand it.
She solves and explain each example problem throughly on the board. Make sure we understand what she is talking about before moving on to the next topic.
Her energy and teaching methods were great.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
none
She maybe can post practice tests for exams but overall she was a great teacher.
The class did not take attendance, but if you are unable to make it to class there is no way of being able to get answers to example problems that help you study for the exams. More accessibility to those example problem answers to help study for exams.
Nothing!
n/a
N/A
N/A
It's alot of info all the time all at once.

Selected Student Evaluation Comments from ECON 2030 (Recitation)

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
Very insightful and helped me alot.
Everything
Very effective in understanding the subject and made it interesting
I thought Ms. Peshoff understood the needs of the students and was always willing to help. If it wasn't for the recitations, I would not have done well in the class.
she was strictly about business
her way of teaching
went over the material so we could understand and ask questions
Because this was in a smaller group, it was much easier to stay focused on the material being presented. It was presented in a concise and clear way that furthered my understanding of the topics.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
Just have multiple labs a week.
No way
Nothing, keeping it how it is
n/a
I'm not sure of anything I thought she needed to improve.
n/a
I think the course is taught very well the way it is.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments
knows how to explain/ dumb things down to understand concepts
She is very good at explaining everything that was missed in class.
Was clear and understandable in explaining. She made an effort to ensure everyone understood the lessen.
Explains topics in a simple way that is easy to understand

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments
none
Peshoff does a great job! She should be a professor herself!
Not much change needed not going to lie
Amazing! One of the best TA ever, so keep continuing how they have been teaching it.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments

Ms. Peshoff is a brilliant instructor.

Mary did a great job. If any questions were asked, Mary answered them fully. I think they did a really nice job.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments

N/A

I don't see any areas where Mary could improve.

(BUS-10) Describe what you liked about the instructor's Mary Peshoff teaching of the course.

Comments

Mary did a wonderful job teaching the recitation portion of this course. She broke down the concepts really well and helped me to better understand the material!

She knew what she was teaching about in the recitation sessions

I thought the recitation class was very well taught , but it didn't really help when it came to the test.

Ms.Peshoff was very knowledgeable about the coursework and taught examples in multiple ways. Often giving multiple variations of the same question in order to make sure that everyone completely understood what was being taught. Her recitation sessions were indispensable.

She broke the lesson down far enough so that I could understand it and without her I would've failed this class.

(BUS-11) Describe how the instructor Mary Peshoff could improve the way the course is taught.

Comments

She is perfectly fine

I think the powerpoints should have more questions that are similar to what is going to be on the test or questions a little but more similar to what Charles would ask.

8. Teaching Awards and Honors

Outstanding Student Teaching Award 2023

Department of Economics, Louisiana State University

Candidate: 2024-2025 College Teaching Award

E.J. Ourso College of Business, Louisiana State University