



January 15, 2020

Shengyang (Travis) Cao
Social Science Building

Dear Travis:

The Department of Economics Teaching Assistant Review Committee has examined student and faculty evaluations of your teaching performance during the Fall 2019 semester. Your average score on the “rate performance” question (#6) was **4.35**. I am delighted to say that your evaluations were Excellent. The Committee concluded that you were one of the outstanding TAs in the fall semester. Being a successful TA involves considerable effort and dedication. This level of achievement involved a considerable commitment on your part. You have made a substantial contribution to the quality of our teaching program. We extend our congratulations and believe that your performance augurs well for your future, especially in the classroom.

The Committee thought it might be helpful for each TA to have the following information:

Fall 2019 Question (#6) Frequency Distribution of Average Scores on “Rate Performance”	
Range	Number of TA’s Receiving this Average Score
4.7 – 5.00 (Distinguished)	13
4.3 – 4.69 (Excellent)	28
3.5 – 4.29 (Good)	22
3.0 – 3.49 (Satisfactory)	6
Below 3.0	0

Average TA rating on this question was 4.29

Copies of this letter, the faculty evaluation, and student evaluation summary will be included in your file.

Sincerely yours,




Marzena Rostek
Julie Plant Grainger Distinguished Chair of Economics
Chair, TA Review Committee


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ECON 101 359 : Principles of Microeconomics





 2019-2020 Fall /  , Travis Cao

Letters and Science / ECONOMICS

Survey	Term	Start Date	End Date	Students	Responses	Response Rate
Econ TA evaluation Fall 2019	2019-2020 Fall	 Nov 27, 2019	 Dec 11, 2019	23	11	

Course Learning Outcomes	Before	After	% Change
 No Course Learning Outcomes Questions			

Metric Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
We know that how the professor conducts the course often influences what a TA is able to do in a course. Given the professor's role and the structure of this course, how would you evaluate your TA's performance? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 3.82	5,5	1.11

All Other Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
How many of the discussion or lab sections led by the TA have you attended so far? Scale (-): 1 = None 5 = 11 or more	 4.82	5,5	0.39
How would you rate the TA's ability to lead discussion or present material in your section? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 4.09	5,5	1.16
Of those sections you have attended, what proportion were interesting and/or thought-provoking? Scale (-): 1 = Almost none 5 = Almost all	 3.45	4,4	1.30
Overall, what is your assessment of the TA's knowledge of the material related to this course? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 4.55	5,5	0.89

How responsive and helpful did you find your TA during office hours?	4.20	0,0	1.17
Scale (-): 1 = Not at all helpful 5 = Extremely helpful			

Open Ended Feedback / Comments Provided By Students

Question: Please comment on any aspects of the section which you consider particularly satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Since this information will be given to the TA for improvement in his or her teaching, be as specific as you can in discussing and evaluating any phase of the section: presentation, responsiveness to questions, command of material, organization, mannerisms, teaching aids, etc.

I feel like there could have been more of going over problems rather than have us do it together.

I wish we had more time to go over things as a class. The worksheets have too much on them to complete. This is not my TA's fault though.

My TA did a great job adjusting in the middle of the semester. In the middle of the semester he realized that the section problems were to long and difficult for students to complete during the allotted time, so he started to walk us through them and do the problems in section together with the class. He explained things and did a great job at helping the students understand the material.

I think the group work sheets at times were confusing and did not help my understanding of the material. When in more of a larger group discussion however, I was better able to gain further understanding.

I thought the discussion was more helpful to me when Travis started explaining the problems more thoroughly because he gave himself more time. That was better than working through the problems with a group since sometimes my group would get stuck and sit there and not learn as much as we could have.

Not enough time, I felt like the material was very rushed and we rarely could get through everything we needed to in section.

I liked going over the discussion sheets as a group more than doing them individually. He did not walk around while we were working on the sheets which I think could be useful to start doing this. Overall I think the discussion sheets were too long which falls on the part of the professor so the TAs did not have enough time to allow us to first work on the problem and then explain in a whole class setting.

Question: What, if anything, limited your participation in section? (TA's style, other students, course structure, time of section, lack of preparation, etc.)

Nothing, me not liking econ

Time of section

Sometimes Travis would explain the problems and review lecture material for the majority of the discussion time so no one was able to participate a ton. However, him reviewing the material so thoroughly was arguably more helpful than being confused while working through the practice problems.

I think there was not the opportunity to participate in discussion as much as I wished.


The amount of time allotted for the discussion sections

His notes on the board were super helpful.


The lack of participation in the class itself






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Letters and Science / ECONOMICS

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Econ TA evaluation Fall 2019	2019-2020 Fall	📅 Nov 27, 2019	📅 Dec 11, 2019	24	9	

Course Learning Outcomes	Before	After	% Change
<p>🚫 No Course Learning Outcomes Questions</p>			

Metric Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
<p>We know that how the professor conducts the course often influences what a TA is able to do in a course. Given the professor's role and the structure of this course, how would you evaluate your TA's performance?</p> <p>Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent</p>	 4.50	5,5	0.71

All Other Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
<p>How many of the discussion or lab sections led by the TA have you attended so far?</p> <p>Scale (-): 1 = None 5 = 11 or more</p>	 4.56	5,5	0.68
<p>How would you rate the TA's ability to lead discussion or present material in your section?</p> <p>Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent</p>	 3.78	4,4	0.92
<p>Of those sections you have attended, what proportion were interesting and/or thought-provoking?</p> <p>Scale (-): 1 = Almost none 5 = Almost all</p>	 3.44	3,3	0.68
<p>Overall, what is your assessment of the TA's knowledge of the material related to this course?</p> <p>Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent</p>	 4.22	5,5	0.92
<p>How responsive and helpful did you find your TA during office hours?</p> <p>Scale (-): 1 = Not at all helpful 5 = Extremely helpful</p>	 4.40	0,0	0.49

Open Ended Feedback / Comments Provided By Students

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The organization of the worksheets was very bad. There was no space to do work on the sheet, and the paragraphs tended to have long, run-on sentences. It would help if the sheet could be re-formatted for discussion.

I would recommend immediately going through the answers of the worksheet. There is usually not enough time to try it on our own and then go over the answers, which results in not knowing the correct answers.

Travis was good at re-capping the important parts from lecture form homework and test problem solving. This was probably not the TA's responsibility, but I'll put it here since it relates to the discussion: The discussion worksheets are not well designed. Although the questions on them are good, the layout of the sheets is frustrating. Please revise them so the questions jump out from the background material and leave more space for us to work on them. (For example, if you want us to draw a graph, leave a chunk of blank page so we have space to do that.) We were always running out of time in discussion and streamlining the worksheets might help us work faster and therefore cover more material.

I thought my TA was more than qualified to be teaching the section. He was extremely knowledgeable on all the material and was able to present the material in a simplified way.

Question: What, if anything, limited your participation in section? (TA's style, other students, course structure, time of section, lack of preparation, etc.)

The length of the discussion made me feel as though I was never really getting out of it. We would work on the section assignment for about 15 minutes and then we would go over some of the answers to the questions. I personally did not feel that I was gaining out of attending these discussions, but that is no reflection on my TAs ability.


N/A

Having section end at 5:25 on Thursday was not great.

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Letters and Science / ECONOMICS

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Course Learning Outcomes	Before	After	% Change
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🚫 No Course Learning Outcomes Questions

Metric Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
We know that how the professor conducts the course often influences what a TA is able to do in a course. Given the professor's role and the structure of this course, how would you evaluate your TA's performance? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 4.22	5,5	1.23

All Other Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
How many of the discussion or lab sections led by the TA have you attended so far? Scale (-): 1 = None 5 = 11 or more	 4.89	5,5	0.31
How would you rate the TA's ability to lead discussion or present material in your section? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 4.00	5,5	1.15
Of those sections you have attended, what proportion were interesting and/or thought-provoking? Scale (-): 1 = Almost none 5 = Almost all	 3.56	5,5	1.34
Overall, what is your assessment of the TA's knowledge of the material related to this course? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 4.33	5,5	1.05
How responsive and helpful did you find your TA during office hours? Scale (-): 1 = Not at all helpful 5 = Extremely helpful	 4.13	5,5	1.05

Open Ended Feedback / Comments Provided By Students

Question: Please comment on any aspects of the section which you consider particularly satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Since this information will be given to the TA for improvement in his or her teaching, be as specific as you can in discussing and evaluating any phase of the section: presentation, responsiveness to questions, command of material, organization, mannerisms, teaching aids, etc.

Understanding was excellent and help to answer questions and clear up confusion.

Everything was great

His ability to explain course material was very confusing, quickly paced, and not interesting.

When he went over the material shown in the lectures that week, it was extremely helpful when it came to understanding the lectures and material. However, the handouts did not help much since it was hard to follow as there was multiple in-depth questions in one entire question.

Very available and helpful

Very helpful and willing to help.

I think his teaching of the graphs was really well done. He explained Nash equilibrium well.

Question: What, if anything, limited your participation in section? (TA's style, other students, course structure, time of section, lack of preparation, etc.)

Nothing

Lack to time in section.

His teaching style was very confusing and on many occasions made the course material more confusing than before.


Nothing

It was hard at moments to follow the instruction because it was so fast-paced. Was unable to complete section handouts in time given.

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Letters and Science / ECONOMICS

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Econ TA evaluation Fall 2019	2019-2020 Fall	📅 Nov 27, 2019	📅 Dec 11, 2019	23	10	

Course Learning Outcomes	Before	After	% Change
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🚫 No Course Learning Outcomes Questions

Metric Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
We know that how the professor conducts the course often influences what a TA is able to do in a course. Given the professor's role and the structure of this course, how would you evaluate your TA's performance? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 5.00	5,5	0.00

All Other Questions	Average	Mode	St. Dev
How many of the discussion or lab sections led by the TA have you attended so far? Scale (-): 1 = None 5 = 11 or more	 4.70	5,5	0.64
How would you rate the TA's ability to lead discussion or present material in your section? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 4.80	5,5	0.40
Of those sections you have attended, what proportion were interesting and/or thought-provoking? Scale (-): 1 = Almost none 5 = Almost all	 4.00	5,5	1.00
Overall, what is your assessment of the TA's knowledge of the material related to this course? Scale (-): 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent	 5.00	5,5	0.00
How responsive and helpful did you find your TA during office hours? Scale (-): 1 = Not at all helpful 5 = Extremely helpful	 4.86	5,5	0.35

Open Ended Feedback / Comments Provided By Students

Question: Please comment on any aspects of the section which you consider particularly satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Since this information will be given to the TA for improvement in his or her teaching, be as specific as you can in discussing and evaluating any phase of the section: presentation, responsiveness to questions, command of material, organization, mannerisms, teaching aids, etc.

Travis was very good at explaining the material and answering any and all questions. I liked how he gave us time to work in groups on questions then would go over the question a few minutes later, making sure we have the right answers and understand it.

When we discuss answers to section worksheets you often go fast and I dont understand what is happening You are great during office hours

Very good at explaining and organized during lecture.

Very open to questions

Travis was excellent

The sections were very useful and most times cleared up questions I had about the content

Question: What, if anything, limited your participation in section? (TA's style, other students, course structure, time of section, lack of preparation, etc.)

The only thing might be the length of the worksheets, they made my group rush at points, otherwise very useful

Time of discussion and length held back our ability to do full worksheets to understand a concept.

Time of section

N/A

I didn't like section worksheets I also felt like the class didnt know each because I only talked to 2 people

I often don't do readings according to the schedule of the course material so I don't feel as confident with the material when I come to discussion, making it hard to complete the worksheets

