

Teaching Statement

by Javier Parada

My goal teaching in the field of development economics is to enhance my students' ability to analyze the causes and potential remedies for a wide range of problems related to poverty and inequality in developing countries. Students often have experience traveling around the world, and have witnessed first-hand what life is like in poor and remote rural communities where access to basic services is a daily challenge. A course in development economics is meant to provide them the analytical skills necessary to formulate concepts and hypotheses related to pressing humanitarian issues through a formal framework. This requires reviewing classical models of economic development to explain, for example, how credit constraints, missing insurance markets, and imperfect information can all result in households' inability to escape subsistence poverty traps. It also requires incorporating into the course the latest developments in methodologies and technological advances that are transforming our field, such as the use of satellite-based imagery to monitor rural development and mobile-based platforms connecting farmers to agricultural information on prices, insurance, and banking.

I am also comfortable teaching microeconomics and econometrics due to my previous experience as a teaching assistant at UC Davis. Teaching these subjects usually involves following a textbook closely. The key to engaging students is to challenge them through examples and applications that require putting concepts from the textbook into practice. The complex abstract concepts presented in lecture become intuitive only once they are supplemented with plenty of exercises that force students to get their hands dirty and closely and carefully evaluate, for example, the assumptions of regression analysis or the real world implications of monopolistic competition. Participating in seminars and introducing journal articles into the syllabus are strategies that I would use to spark students' interest in conducting their own research in applied microeconomics.

The theoretical and empirical economic analysis presented in any of my classes will be supplemented with the necessary mathematical, programming, and communication skills. This includes illustrating the many applications of calculus in economics. It also includes introducing students to statistical packages, which can vary in complexity from introductory Excel to programming in Stata, R, and MATLAB. Students will be mentored and supervised in the conduction of their own quantitative analyses to improve the formulation of public policy. They will also be guided on how to communicate their research findings and translate them into policy-relevant recommendations through proper writing and public presentation skills.

As a part of this community, I look forward to engaging in strong reciprocal partnerships, especially with graduate students, guiding or collaborating with original research papers. My current experience as a Career Discovery Program fellow at UC Davis is allowing me to provide transfer students from undergraduate majors in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences with experience and guidance to help them successfully transition into the research university setting. Through this training I am currently striving to improve my performance as a mentor, not only as an instructor.