

Teaching Statement: **Silviya Nikolova**

As a graduate student at the Carolina Department of Economics, I have taught Principles of Economics and Microeconomics Theory courses on a regular basis. In my classes I encourage students to always remember why they are studying the subject. The goal is to develop understanding and critical thinking about the economic dimensions of any given problem. My teaching philosophy is geared to achieve this goal and it builds on the following four main principles:

1. **Any student can learn.** An instructor just has to find the right way to present material so that students engage. The key components are the instructors passion and enthusiasm for the subject in conjunction with the right pedagogical techniques. The next three principles are about these techniques.
2. **Move from real life examples to abstract concepts** and from simple to advanced. I start teaching a new topic by talking about a real life example. For example, I would begin my class on “Moral hazard” with an example on healthy lifestyles and medical insurance availability.
3. **Active learning.** I encourage students to form groups to participate in preparation and presentation of case studies based on media stories and related to material studied in class. Examples of presentation topics are “Natural Monopolies and Utilities” or “Oligopoly and Strategic Interaction”. Students are also asked to participate in the discussion of presented cases and examples studied in class and in a brief review of the previously studied material at the beginning of each class. During these discussions, students should feel that their opinions are taken seriously and are respected and that by expressing their views they do not only master the concepts, but also help their classmates do so.
4. **Problem solving.** “Learning by doing” cannot be underestimated in the process of studying economics. It may take some time to develop a sound intuition about many of the economic concepts, e.g. marginal cost, marginal benefit and why they should be equal. Working through numeric examples and graphs will expedite the process significantly. I always emphasize to my students that I am looking for the logic in their answers rather than simple, mechanic number manipulation. On the other hand, essay type questions about institutional details or economic policy implications like questions about the real-world examples of different types of markets, are very important as well and help to keep students motivated and interested.

To summarize, learning Economics can be fun. It is almost surely going to be fun if teaching Economics is fun as well. A dynamic and energetic instructor, with a passion for the subject, will be able to convey the knowledge with the help of the principles described above.