

**Robert O. Munk\***  
**Teaching Effectiveness and Evaluations**  
**Ohio State University**

At Ohio State, students complete formal evaluations at the end of every semester. These evaluations (which are optional) contain both a quantitative and qualitative assessment of an instructor's effectiveness. The quantitative assessment ranks the instructor from one to five (with five being the highest) in a number of attributes. In the qualitative portion, students enter comments about the quality of instruction and ways to improve the course.

I explicitly encourage students to complete their evaluations and enter comments in the hopes of receiving constructive feedback. Students' comments have been invaluable in improving my teaching. For example, my first time teaching a principles of microeconomics course, I received comments that I paced my lectures too quickly and did not actively engage students with enough frequency. In response, I have subsequently allocated more time for course preparation, been more flexible in my teaching style, frequently paused to ask if students need additional clarification, and re-phrased key portions of my lectures. In addition, I also moved away from a pure lecture format in recitations and began incorporating in-class worksheets. As students complete these worksheets in pairs, I walk around the classroom and provide direct assistance. This allows me to provide individual attention to students in class and to better identify areas in which they struggle.

I encourage students to visit with me during office hours, talk with me before or after class, email, and/or stop by my office whenever they have questions. I thoroughly enjoy these exchanges and view the opportunities to mentor students individually as the most rewarding part of instruction. Moreover, I am committed to answering adequately *every* question asked in class, even if it means sending an email after class is over. My students greatly appreciate my flexibility and dedication to answering questions, and it is extremely rewarding when I get comments explicitly mentioning my willingness to help.

I also encourage direct feedback at any time. Whenever I meet with students, I try to find out which portions of the course they find interesting, if they would like to discuss other related topics, or if they have any suggestions for improving my teaching. For example, while teaching a course on current economic issues, my students expressed an interest in analyzing my area of study, the economics of entrepreneurship. In light of this feedback, I inserted an entrepreneurship module into the course that allowed us to discuss issues related to my job market paper, the determinants of a firm's success, and whether peer effects encourage entrepreneurship.

In my time at Ohio State, my overall teaching effectiveness has increased dramatically; however, I know there is further room for improvement. I view teaching as a craft that I must continually strive to perfect. To do this, I plan to continue to seek feedback from students, experiment with course formats, and continue to be a willing mentor. I know that I can help my students develop the analytical tools necessary for their future studies and careers, and I know that they can teach me to be a better instructor. I continue to work hard to improve the quality of my instruction, and I embrace the challenge of teaching new courses.

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\* Email: munk.19@osu.edu; Department of Economics, Ohio State University, Arps Hall 410, 1945 N. High St., Columbus, OH, 43210-1172

I have included excerpts from my students' end-of-semester comments below.

- “Robert did a good job teaching the course. A suggested improvement would be to spread out the due dates of papers over the course of the semester and also pick a different topic to replace the discussion of taxes. Grading was fair, and the pop quizzes were a good way to make everyone read the articles before coming to class. I think an improvement to the course would be to have students sit in a circle so that way everyone, or at least more people, can participate in group discussions.” (Econ 2367.02 Autumn 2014)
- “Rob is willing to work with his students, that's easily his best aspect. He has a well-structured course that he laid out for us at the beginning of the semester, so I knew where we were headed the whole time; but still, he was flexible and understanding enough to make sure his students got the best out of his class” (Econ 2367.02 Autumn 2014)
- “I originally went in to this class dreading it, only taking it as the least-bad option among many bad 2nd-writing course choices. I quickly found this to be my favorite class this semester. Rob did a great job of keeping the material interesting and relevant, as well as always being willing to help out any students who needed it. I feel like I learned a lot more about economics than I knew before and I feel that my writing has greatly improved. Thanks for a great semester.” (Econ 2367.02 Autumn 2014)
- “Rob brought a good amount of information to the class everyday. When he didn't know the answer to a question he said so, instead of making something up, or giving some vague and useless answer. He also didn't conduct class the exact same way every day. He experimented with including more discussion on certain days” (Econ 2367.02 Autumn 2014)
- “Rob was a great TA. He was very well-prepared for recitation and always asked if anyone was confused/needed a new explanation or any clarification. Super nice guy, and seemed genuinely interested in the subject matter” (Econ 2002.01 Spring 2015)
- “Robert Munk might be the best TA I've ever had. I saw him in every lecture and he came to class prepared everyday. He taught in a way that was easy to understand and really clarified what we learned in class. That describes a good TA, but he was a great TA. If someone asked a question and he wasn't 100% sure what the answer was or if he thought his answer was lacking, he would research it and send out an email to the whole class with the answer. He also made worksheets to help us study, and brought our third midterm to class when we just took it that morning. This gave him the chance to answer any of our questions and prep if for the final. I appreciate all your hard work Rob!” (Econ 2002.01 Spring 2015)
- “Did a nice job hitting the important points from lecture. The in class practice worksheets were also very beneficial.” (Econ 2002.01 Spring 2015)

## **Course Key**

### **Independent Instructor**

#### **Economics 2001.01 – Principles of Microeconomics**

Spring Semester 2014: In this course, I served as an independent instructor, teaching approximately 80 students for 55 minutes three times a week. Course content focused on providing an introduction to microeconomic theory. Students were evaluated using short answer problem sets and multiple choice exams of my own composition.

#### **Economics 2367.02 – Current Economic Issues in the US**

Autumn Semester 2014 and 2015: In this course, I served as an independent instructor, teaching approximately 30 students for an hour and 48 minutes twice a week. This course was a requirement for Economics majors and also served as a “Second-Level Writing Course,” satisfying a general education requirement for a variety of majors. The course required students to apply their principles-level knowledge of Economics to real world issues. There were six modules to the course: (1) inequality, poverty, and the middle class; (2) the returns to schooling; (3) trade, technology, and immigration; (4) entrepreneurship; (5) prohibition and black markets; and (6) health economics. Students were evaluated using two short analytical essays, a six page research paper, and a presentation of their research paper.

### **Recitation Leader**

#### **Economics 2001.01 – Principles of Microeconomics**

Spring Semester 2013: In this course, I served as a teaching assistant. My primary responsibility was to lead a 48 minute recitation once a week for each of three recitation sections. My secondary duty was to hold office hours to answer students’ questions. I also attended lecture twice a week and assisted the instructor with managing student grades and proctoring exams.

#### **Economics 2002.01 – Principles of Macroeconomics**

Spring Semester 2015: In this course, I served as a teaching assistant. My primary responsibility was to lead a 48 minute recitation once a week for each of three recitation sections. My secondary duty was to hold office hours to answer students’ questions. I also attended lecture twice a week and assisted the instructor with managing student grades and proctoring exams.

# Robert Owen Munk

## Cumulative Student Evaluation of Instruction Summary

Report generated on 10/01/2015

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: Mark the "Multi Inst" box for course sections that were team taught or had more than one instructor.

"Web" is "Y" if student ratings were collected electronically.

Comparison groups are based on class size (Small, Medium, Large) and electivity (Required, Free, Choose). See individual reports for more details.

### SEI Item Descriptions

1. Well organized
2. Intellectually stimulating
3. Instructor interested in teaching
4. Encouraged independent thinking
5. Instructor well prepared
6. Instructor interested in helping students
7. Learned greatly from instructor
8. Created learning atmosphere
9. Communicated subject matter clearly
10. Overall rating

### ECON 2001.01 College: ASC Campus: COL

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Item 10 Comparison
Multi Inst	2013 Spr	Class Num:	9883											4.3
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 48	#Resp: 12	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	3.4	3.0	3.4	2.8	2.8	3.7	2.8	2.9	2.7	
				Instructor SD	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.3	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2
Multi Inst	2013 Spr	Class Num:	9886											4.3
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 43	#Resp: 13	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	3.3	3.1	3.8	3.7	3.3	4.0	3.3	3.5	3.1	
				Instructor SD	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1
Multi Inst	2013 Spr	Class Num:	9893											4.3
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 42	#Resp: 15	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.9	
				Instructor SD	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.8	1.2	0.9
Multi Inst	2014 Spr	Class Num:	33830											4.1
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 80	#Resp: 37	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.2	4.0	3.1	3.5	3.0	
				Instructor SD	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.9	1.4	0.9	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.4

### ECON 2002.01 College: ASC Campus: COL

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Item 10 Comparison
Multi Inst	2015 Spr	Class Num:	17889											4.2
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 45	#Resp: 32	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.2	
				Instructor SD	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.9
Multi Inst	2015 Spr	Class Num:	17890											4.2
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 42	#Resp: 34	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	3.8	3.7	4.1	4.0	3.7	4.3	3.7	3.9	3.7	
				Instructor SD	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9
Multi Inst	2015 Spr	Class Num:	17892											4.2
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 40	#Resp: 34	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	3.7	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.7	4.1	3.7	3.9	3.7	
				Instructor SD	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.1	0.9

### ECON 2367.02 College: ASC Campus: COL

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Item 10 Comparison
Multi Inst	2014 Autmn	Class Num:	18649											4.3
<input type="checkbox"/>	#Enrolled: 34	#Resp: 21	Web: Y	Instructor Mean	4.2	3.9	4.3	3.9	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.1	
				Instructor SD	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.1