Evidence of Teaching Excellence

Shiyu (Jake) Zhang
Ph.D. Candidate, Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences
California Institute of Technology
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Teaching Experience

I have served as teaching assistant for five undergraduate courses at Caltech, with 208 students enrolled in total. The courses span proof-based microeconomic theory, applied econometrics, empirical finance, and environmental economics, with assignments ranging from formal proofs to data analysis in R and Python.

Term	Course	Instructor	Enrolled
Spring 2026	BEM/Ec/ESE 119: Environmental Economics	Hannah Druckenmiller	35
Fall 2024	Ec 117: Matching Markets	Peter Caradonna	36
Spring 2024	BEM 114: Hedge Funds	Andrew Sinclair	36
Winter 2024	BEM 103: Introduction to Finance	Jean-Laurent Rosenthal	42
Fall 2023	Ec 122: Econometrics	Robert Sherman	59

My responsibilities included holding office hours, grading problem sets and exams, handling regrade requests, and answering student questions by email.

Summary of Teaching Evaluations

Across all five courses, students rated me 4.75 out of 5 on the four TA-specific items, against a Caltech-wide average of 4.65 for the same items and terms. My strongest item was feedback on assignments and exams: 4.94, against 4.62 Caltech-wide.

Caltech's Course Experience Questionnaire (CCEQ) has a separate section for each teaching assistant, and the reports I receive show only my own. The remaining questions evaluate the course and the instructor of record, so they are not reported here.

Evaluation item	My average	Caltech average
My TA provided helpful comments on assignments, papers, and/or exams.	4.94	4.62
My TA answered questions clearly.	4.67	4.64
My TA was well prepared in instructional settings.	4.65	4.66
My TA presented material clearly in instructional settings.	4.75	4.67
All four items	**4.75**	**4.65**

Scores are on a 1 to 5 scale, with 5 the most favorable, and are averaged with equal weight across the five courses.

Evaluations by Course

I received a perfect 5.00 on all four items in two courses, Ec 117 and Ec 122. In BEM/Ec/ESE 119, 31 of 35 enrolled students responded, and I scored above the Caltech-wide average on all four items.

Course	Term	Responses	Helpful comments	Answered clearly	Well prepared	Presented clearly
BEM/Ec/ESE 119	Spring 2026	31 of 35	4.71 (4.68)	4.83 (4.70)	4.75 (4.70)	4.75 (4.72)
Ec 117	Fall 2024	7 of 36	5.00 (4.62)	5.00 (4.66)	5.00 (4.66)	5.00 (4.68)
BEM 114	Spring 2024	12 of 36	5.00 (4.61)	4.50 (4.62)	4.50 (4.63)	5.00 (4.65)
BEM 103	Winter 2024	9 of 42	5.00 (4.57)	4.00 (4.57)	4.00 (4.60)	4.00 (4.61)
Ec 122	Fall 2023	14 of 59	5.00 (4.62)	5.00 (4.66)	5.00 (4.69)	5.00 (4.69)

Each cell shows my score, with the Caltech-wide average for the same item in the same term in parentheses. Responses are completed questionnaires out of total enrollment.

Student Comments

Students' comments focus on responsiveness and on prompt, fair grading. One student called me "an amazing TA," and another called me one of the best TAs they had had in a humanities and social sciences course. The first list below has every comment entered in the TA section of the questionnaire. The second has comments from the general course question that mention the TA.

Comments addressed to the TA

BEM/Ec/ESE 119: Environmental Economics (Spring 2026)

- "Timely grading and very helpful as a TA!"
- "Very reasonable with regrade requests and speedy grader!"

BEM 114: Hedge Funds (Spring 2024)

- "Please be prepared to answer question about the homework. . . ."
- "One of the best TAs I've had in an HSS course"

Ec 122: Econometrics (Fall 2023)

- "Jake was an amazing TA and was extremely helpful during office hours. He replied very promptly and took the time to answer any questions I had over email when I couldn't make it to office hours, which I greatly appreciated. I thought the grading for sets and the final was very fair. I'm very thankful for all his help this term."
- "Quick response to questions and clearly fully invested in his job :)"

Course comments that mention the TA

BEM 114: Hedge Funds (Spring 2024)

- "Sets are reasonable, all coding in Python and help from Prof/TA is readily available."

Ec 122: Econometrics (Fall 2023)

- "The grading is very efficient (<1 week turnaround time for HW in general), and the TAs this year gave great (very detailed) feedback."
- "... the homework was pretty reasonable and the textbook and TAs were very helpful."

Notes

- Source: Caltech Course Experience Questionnaire (CCEQ) reports, Fall 2023 to Spring 2026. Item wording is quoted from the questionnaire, and the full reports are available on request.
- Across the five courses, 73 of 208 enrolled students (35%) completed the questionnaire. Each report gives one response count for the whole questionnaire, not a separate count for my TA section.
- No comments were entered in the TA section for Ec 117 or BEM 103. Their TA scores are included in both tables above.

Ec 122: Econometrics

Fall 2023 | Teaching assistant: Shiyu Zhang

Course survey responses: 14 of 59 enrolled. TA-item counts are not reported.

■ **Black bar = N/A (not a numerical rating of 0 or 1).**

Teaching Assistant Section: Shiyu Zhang

Supplemental TA Questions

	Score	Dept.	Div.	Caltech
My TA provided helpful comments on assignments, papers, and/or exams.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.57	3.68	4.62
My TA answered questions clearly.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.57	4.26	4.66
My TA was well prepared in instructional settings.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.57	4.44	4.69
My TA presented material clearly in instructional settings.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.57	4.62	4.69

Comments

For Shiyu Zhang: What aspects of this TA's teaching did you find helpful? What aspects could be improved to help future students in their learning?

Jake was an amazing TA and was extremely helpful during office hours. He replied very promptly and took the time to answer any questions I had over email when I couldn't make it to office hours, which I greatly appreciated. I thought the grading for sets and the final was very fair. I'm very thankful for all his help this term.
Quick response to questions and clearly fully invested in his job:)

Source: original Caltech CCEQ report, page 3. This is a TA-section excerpt; the key above is added.

Scores, benchmark columns, distributions, and TA-specific comments are reproduced unchanged.

BEM 103: Introduction to Finance

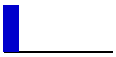
Winter 2024 | Teaching assistant: Shiyu Zhang

Course survey responses: 9 of 42 enrolled. TA-item counts are not reported.

■ **Black bar = N/A (not a numerical rating of 0 or 1).**

Teaching Assistant Section: Shiyu Zhang

Supplemental TA Questions

		Score	Dept.	Div.	Caltech
My TA provided helpful comments on assignments, papers, and/or exams.		**5.00** ± 0.00	4.00	4.32	4.57
My TA answered questions clearly.		**4.00** ± 0.00	3.33	4.37	4.57
My TA was well prepared in instructional settings.		**4.00** ± 0.00	3.33	4.44	4.60
My TA presented material clearly in instructional settings.		**4.00** ± 0.00	3.33	4.38	4.61

Comments

For Shiyu Zhang: What aspects of this TA's teaching did you find helpful? What aspects could be improved to help future students in their learning?

No comments were entered for this subject.

Source: original Caltech CCEQ report, page 3. This is a TA-section excerpt; the key above is added.

Scores, benchmark columns, distributions, and TA-specific comments are reproduced unchanged.

BEM 114: Hedge Funds

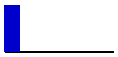
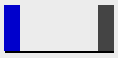
Spring 2024 | Teaching assistant: Shiyu Zhang

Course survey responses: 12 of 36 enrolled. TA-item counts are not reported.

■ **Black bar = N/A (not a numerical rating of 0 or 1).**

Teaching Assistant Section: Shiyu Zhang

Supplemental TA Questions

		Score	Dept.	Div.	Caltech
My TA provided helpful comments on assignments, papers, and/or exams.		**5.00** ± 0.00	4.65	4.59	4.61
My TA answered questions clearly.		**4.50** ± 0.50	4.67	4.67	4.62
My TA was well prepared in instructional settings.		**4.50** ± 0.50	4.68	4.68	4.63
My TA presented material clearly in instructional settings.		**5.00** ± 0.00	4.75	4.73	4.65

Comments

For Shiyu Zhang: What aspects of this TA's teaching did you find helpful? What aspects could be improved to help future students in their learning?

Please be prepared to answer question about the homework....
One of the best TAs I've had in an HSS course

Source: original Caltech CCEQ report, page 3. This is a TA-section excerpt; the key above is added.

Scores, benchmark columns, distributions, and TA-specific comments are reproduced unchanged.

Ec 117: Matching Markets

Fall 2024 | Teaching assistant: Shiyu Zhang

Course survey responses: 7 of 36 enrolled. TA-item counts are not reported.

■ **Black bar = N/A (not a numerical rating of 0 or 1).**

Teaching Assistant Section: Shiyu Zhang

Supplemental TA Questions

	Score	Dept.	Div.	Caltech
My TA provided helpful comments on assignments, papers, and/or exams.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.46	4.08	4.62
My TA answered questions clearly.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.77	4.31	4.66
My TA was well prepared in instructional settings.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.69	4.15	4.66
My TA presented material clearly in instructional settings.	**5.00** ± 0.00	4.77	4.31	4.68

Comments

For Shiyu Zhang: What aspects of this TA's teaching did you find helpful? What aspects could be improved to help future students in their learning?

No comments were entered for this subject.

Source: original Caltech CCEQ report, page 3. This is a TA-section excerpt; the key above is added.

Scores, benchmark columns, distributions, and TA-specific comments are reproduced unchanged.

BEM/Ec/ESE 119: Environmental Economics

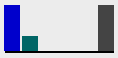
Spring 2026 | Teaching assistant: Shiyu Zhang

Course survey responses: 31 of 35 enrolled. TA-item counts are not reported.

Black bar = N/A (not a numerical rating of 0 or 1).

Teaching Assistant Section: Shiyu Zhang

Supplemental TA Questions

		Score	Dept.	Div.	Caltech
My TA provided helpful comments on assignments, papers, and/or exams.		**4.71** ± 0.45	4.73	4.68	4.68
My TA answered questions clearly.		**4.83** ± 0.37	4.80	4.67	4.70
My TA was well prepared in instructional settings.		**4.75** ± 0.43	4.75	4.83	4.70
My TA presented material clearly in instructional settings.		**4.75** ± 0.43	4.75	4.88	4.72

Comments

For Shiyu Zhang: What aspects of this TA's teaching did you find helpful? What aspects could be improved to help future students in their learning?

Timely grading and very helpful as a TA!
Very reasonable with regrade requests and speedy grader!

Source: original Caltech CCEQ report, page 3. This is a TA-section excerpt; the key above is added.

Scores, benchmark columns, distributions, and TA-specific comments are reproduced unchanged.