

OLENA BERCHUK

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Economics of Education, Labor Economics, Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

Military Conscription and Higher Educational Attainment in Ukraine (job market paper)

Compulsory military service via draft is prevalent in several countries, with some leniency offered for university students. In 1989, Gorbachev delayed the draft for university students until after they graduate. This provided young men in Ukraine with the opportunity to avoid the draft during times of political instability. I apply a regression discontinuity design to cohorts making university application decisions around two periods of instability, 1990 and 2004. I find that the effect on higher educational attainment is large in magnitude, positive, and highly statistically significant. I connect these findings to the increase in university entrants in Ukraine today in response to the war with Russia.

Student Safety and Schooling Outcomes

School safety has received a lot of attention from parents and schools, particularly with the rise of gun violence. Understanding the mechanisms and the size of the effect of student safety on academic outcomes can be helpful in setting up effective policies for schools, both in the form of preventive and supportive measures. I use a new data set that stems from students' perceptions of safety and attempt to get causal estimates by instrumenting for safety via a school's distance from a school shooting. Although I find some statistically significant effects for math and science test scores, my instrument is weak and none of these results should be taken as causal.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Impacts of Recess on Student Achievement

Many school districts in the United States do not require a minimum recess time for elementary school students. With such few guidelines, some schools provide only two 30 minute sessions per week or often conflate gym time with recess time to maximize the number of instructional hours. Starting from the 2017-2018 school year, Florida passed a state-wide requirement that all schools provide at least 20 minutes of free play for students in grades K-5. Leveraging this new law, I apply a difference in difference design that compares school districts that already had recess policies in place with those that were forced to provide it. I find that providing more recess time for students did not have a negative impact on test scores or attendance, suggesting that students can and should be allowed breaks to be themselves throughout the day without concern of it negatively impacting the school's academic standing.

EDUCATION

University of Delaware Ph.D. Candidate, Economics	Expected 2024
Temple University M.A., Economics	2019
Temple University B.A., Economics Minor, Spanish	2018
University of Oviedo, Spain Temple University Summer Study Abroad Program	2017

SCHOLARSHIPS AND HONORS

Economics Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award, University of Delaware	2023, 2022
Third Year Summer Research Stipend, University of Delaware	2022
Phi Beta Kappa Member	2018
Norman & Ruth Sun Writing Prize, Temple University	2018
Honors President's Scholarship, Temple University	2015 - 2018

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record, University of Delaware

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	Winter 2024, Winter 2023
Introduction to Macroeconomics	Winter 2022

Head Teaching Assistant, University of Delaware

- Substitute lecturer for 270+ student class, managed and organized other TAs

Introduction to Macroeconomics	Fall 2023, Spring 2023
Introduction to Microeconomics	Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Fall 2021

Teaching Assistant, University of Delaware

Introduction to Macroeconomics	Spring 2020
Introduction to Microeconomics	Fall 2019

Writing Tutor, Temple University

2016 - 2018

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant Summer 2023

Prof. Emily Battaglia, University of Delaware

Research Assistant 2020 - 2021

Prof. Jeremy Tobacman, University of Delaware

Research Assistant Summer 2019

Prof. Jim Berry, University of Delaware

Graduate Data Analysis Intern 2018 - 2019

Career Center, Temple University

Bureau of Labor Statistics Intern 2018

Temple University

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Software	Stata, SurveyCTO, Latex, R, some Python
Spoken Languages	Fluent in Ukrainian, Russian, and English, conversational in Spanish

OTHER

Compete and train in dog agility	2021 - Present
Attend weekly HEMA longsword fighting classes	2019 - Present
Conduct church choir and arranged weekly rehearsals	2014 - Present

REFERENCES

Adrienne Lucas (main advisor)
Professor and Economics Department Chair
University of Delaware
Email: alucas@udel.edu

Desmond Toohey
Financial Economist
US Securities and Exchange Commission
Email: dtoohey@udel.edu

Sabrin Beg
Associate Professor of Economics and Associate Chair
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Julianna Butler (teaching reference)
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