

OLENA BERCHUK

267-306-0972 — olenab@udel.edu — olenaberchuk.com

EDUCATION

University of Delaware Ph.D. in Economics Dissertation: <i>Essays on Education Adjacent Policies and Academic Outcomes</i> Committee: <i>Adrienne Lucas (chair), Sabrin Beg, Desmond Toohey, Elizabeth Farley-Ripple</i>	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

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Labor Economics, Economics of Education, Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

Military Conscription and Higher Educational Attainment in Ukraine (JMP, submitted)

Compulsory military service via draft is prevalent in several countries, with some leniency offered for university students. In 1989, a change in the Ukrainian conscription law 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 of deferral 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 in 2023 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 find large, negative impacts of feeling unsafe on student test scores when using student-level fixed effects. I also discuss instrumenting for safety via a school's distance from a school shooting.

Recess and Schooling Outcomes

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 schools in school districts that already had recess policies in place with those in school districts that were forced to provide it. I find a negative, albeit small, decrease in test scores and the percentage of students passing for schools suddenly required to offer daily recess and discuss the implications of this finding.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Delaware	Fall 2024 - Present
Money and Banking	
Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	
Instructor of Record, University of Delaware	
Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	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

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

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, Qualtrics XM, 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)	Desmond Toohey	Sabrin Beg
Professor and Economics Department Chair	Financial Economist	Associate Professor of Economics and Associate Chair
University of Delaware	US Securities and Exchange Commission	University of Delaware
Email: alucas@udel.edu	Email: dtoohey@udel.edu	Email: sbeg@udel.edu