

XIN JIN

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EDUCATION

University of Tennessee, Knoxville Ph.D. in Economics	expected 2026
Zhengzhou University M.A. in Applied Economics	2021
University of West Florida M.S. in Mathematics	2020
Zhengzhou University B.A. in Economics	2018

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Environmental Economics, Economics of Education, and Labor Economics.

WORKING PAPER

Ground Shakes, Academic Performance Falls? Evidence from Earthquakes in Mexico [JMP]

Abstract: Earthquakes impose a significant adverse impact on local development. Although the direct damages to infrastructure and human life are evident, the disruptions to educational outcomes are less apparent. Using administrative student-level panel data and precise measures of local ground tremors, I investigate the effect of earthquakes on elementary school students' low-stakes test performance. I exploit plausibly exogenous variation in the timing of earthquakes within a difference-in-differences event study framework, while addressing school switching by including student fixed effects and adopting an intent-to-treat approach. The findings show that students are more likely to switch to a new school after earthquake exposure. Affected students' test scores decline by 2.5 percent of a standard deviation in the year of first exposure to an earthquake. The effect appears transitory, as scores recover two years after the exposure. Analysis of earthquake characteristics reveals that test performance falls more sharply in the year of exposure when shaking intensity is higher and when the earthquake occurs shortly before the exam.

Air Pollution and Students' High-stakes Exam Performance: Evidence from Mexico with J. Scott Holladay and María Padilla-Romo [Submitted]

Abstract: This study examines how short-term and long-term exposure to air pollution affect students' performance on high-stakes tests. We focus on a centralized public high school admission exam in the metropolitan area of Mexico City, using geographic and temporal variation in $PM_{2.5}$ levels at the school level, combined with individual administrative data on test scores. A $10\mu g/m^3$ increase in exposure the week of the exam lowers test scores by 1.8% of a standard deviation when estimated separately. When estimated jointly with long-term exposure, the effect of short-term exposure falls to essentially zero and increases in long-term exposure reduce test scores by 5.7% of a standard deviation. The effect is largest for boys and lower-income students. Estimating the short-term impacts of air pollution on test scores and cognition may misattribute the impacts of long-term exposure to short-term variation.

Beyond Tuition: Assessing the Impact of Free Community College on Local Arrests

This study investigates the causal effect of a free community college program on local criminal activity by focusing on the staggered, statewide implementation of the Tennessee Promise program. Leveraging the variation in implementation timing and agency-level arrest data, we employ a difference-in-differences event-study approach to assess the spillover effects of financial support on arrest rates. The results indicate that Tennessee Promise reduces the arrest rate among young individuals in adopting counties compared to those that did not implement the program. Furthermore, the effects are particularly pronounced in counties with community colleges.

WORKING IN PROGRESS

From Familiar Faces to Academic Gains: Network Effect During School Transition with María Padilla-Romo

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Tennessee

Instructor

Econ 311: Intermediate Microeconomics

Spring 2024, Summer 2024, Summer 2025

Teaching Assistant

Ph.D. courses:

Econ 513: Macroeconomic Theory

Fall 2022, Fall 2023

Econ 514: Macroeconomic Theory

Spring 2023

Undergraduate courses:

Econ 381: Introduction to Econometrics

Spring 2025, Fall 2025

Econ 213: Principles of Macroeconomics

Fall 2021, Spring 2022

Econ 201: Introductory Economics: A Survey Course

Fall 2021, Spring 2022

University of West Florida

Teaching Assistant

Calculus I

Fall 2019, Spring 2020

Calculus II

Fall 2019, Spring 2020

PRESENTATIONS

2025 MidSouth Education Policy Workshop

Fall 2025

Southern Economics Association, 95th Annual Conference

Fall 2025

American Society of Health Economists, 14th Annual Conference

Summer 2025

Association for Education Finance and Policy, 50th Annual Conference

Spring 2025

Southern Economics Association, 94th Annual Conference

Fall 2024

Development Economics in the South Workshop

Spring 2024

Association for Education Finance and Policy, 49th Annual Conference

Spring 2024

University of Tennessee, Economics Brown Bag Seminar Series

Spring 2024

University of Tennessee, Applied Micro Group

Fall 2023

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Tennessee - Knoxville, TN

2021 - present

Graduate Research & Teaching Assistant

University of West Florida - Pensacola, FL

2019 - 2020

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Zhengzhou University - Zhengzhou, HN

2018 - 2021

Graduate Research Assistant

China Construction Bank - Zhengzhou, HN

2017

Corporate Banking Intern

HONORS AND AWARDS

Charles B. Garrison Award for Excellence in Teaching, University of Tennessee

2025

J. Fred and Wilma Holly Award for Excellence in Presented Research, University of Tennessee

2025

Graduate Summer Fellowship, University of Tennessee

2025

Graduate Assistantship, University of Tennessee

2021 - present

Graduate Assistantship, University of West Florida	2019 - 2020
Graduate Academic Scholarship, Zhengzhou University	2018 - 2021
Merit-based Scholarship, Zhengzhou University	2014 - 2018

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Southern Economics Association
Association for Education Finance and Policy
American Society of Health Economists

SKILLS

Programming Languages: STATA, Python, R, LaTeX, ArcGIS Pro
Languages: Chinese (native), English (fluent)