

Overview

This document has the reading list for the NBER behavioral public economics boot camp.
Articles with one star are “required readings.”

Overview articles

Behavioral economics

Bernheim, B. Douglas, Stefano DellaVigna, and David Laibson. 2018. “Handbook of Behavioral Economics.” *Elsevier*.

DellaVigna, Stefano. 2009. “Psychology and Economics: Evidence from the Field.” *Journal of Economic Literature*.

Behavioral public economics

* Bernheim, B.D. and D. Taubinsky. 2018. “Behavioral Public Economics.” *Handbook of Behavioral Economics*.

Behavioral Welfare Analysis

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Bernheim, B. Douglas. 2016. “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: A Unified Approach to Behavioral Welfare Economics.” *Journal of Benefit Cost Analysis*.

Optimal Sin Taxes

* Allcott, H., and D. Taubinsky. 2015. “Evaluating Behaviorally-Motivated Policy: Experimental Evidence From the Lightbulb Market.” *American Economic Review*.

* Allcott, H., B.B. Lockwood and D. Taubinsky. 2019. “Regressive Sin Taxes, with Applications to the Optimal Soda Tax.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Allcott, H., S. Mullainathan, and D. Taubinsky (2014). “Energy Policy with Externalities and Internalities,” *Journal of Public Economics*

Benjamin B. Lockwood, Hunt Allcott, Dmitry Taubinsky, and Afras Sial (2022) “The Optimal Design of State-Run Lotteries.”

Hunt Allcott, Benjamin B. Lockwood and Dmitry Taubinsky (2019), “Should we Tax Sugar Sweetened Beverages? An Overview of Theory and Evidence” (with Hunt Allcott and Benjamin B. Lockwood). *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol 33, No 3: 202-227.

Farhi, E., and X. Gabaix. 2020. "Optimal Taxation with Behavioral Agents." *American Economic Review*.

O'Donoghue, T. and M. Rabin. 2006. "Optimal Sin Taxes," *Journal of Public Economics*.

Gruber, J. and B. Koszegi. 2004. "Tax Incidence when Individuals are Time-Inconsistent: The Case of Cigarette Excise Taxes." *Journal of Public Economics*.

Gruber, Jonathan, and Botond Koszegi. 2001. "Is Addiction 'Rational'? Theory and Evidence." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Non-Standard Policy Instruments

* Bernheim, B. Douglas, Andrey Fradkin, and Igor Popov. 2015. "The Welfare Economics of Default Options in 401(k) Plans." *American Economic Review*.

Ambuehl, Sandro, Doug Bernheim, and Annamaria Lusardi. 2021. "Evaluating Deliberative Competence: A Simple Method with an Application to Financial Choice." Working Paper.

Barahona, Nano, Cristobal Otero, Sebastian Otero, and Joshua Kim. 2021. "Equilibrium Effects of Food Labeling Policies." *Econometrica*.

Butera, Luigi, Robert Metcalfe, William Morrison, and Dmitry Taubinsky. 2022. "Measuring the Welfare Effects of Shame and Pride." *American Economic Review*.

Allcott, Hunt, and Judd Kessler. 2019. "The Welfare Effects of Nudges: A Case Study of Energy Use Social Comparisons." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*.

Thaler, R. and C. Sunstein. 2003. "Libertarian Paternalism." *American Economic Review*.

Camerer, Colin, Samuel Issacharoff, George Loewenstein, Ted O'Donoghue, and Matthew Rabin. 2003. "Regulation for Conservatives: Behavioral Economics and the Case for 'Asymmetric Paternalism.'" *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*.

DellaVigna, Stefano, and Elizabeth Linos. 2022. "RCTs to Scale: Comprehensive Evidence from Two Nudges Units." *Econometrica*.

Madrian, Brigitte C., and Dennis F. Shea. 2001. "The Power of Suggestion: Inertia in 401(k) Participation and Savings Behavior." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Thaler, Richard H. and Shlomo Benartzi. 2004. "Save More Tomorrow™: Using Behavioral Economics to Increase Employee Saving." *Journal of Political Economy*.

Chetty, Raj, John N. Friedman, Soren Leth-Petersen, Torben Heien Nielsen, and Tore Olsen. 2014. "Active vs. Passive Decisions and Crowd-Out in Retirement Savings Accounts." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Choukhmane, Taha. 2021. "Default Options and Retirement Savings Dynamics." Working paper.

Carroll, Gabriel D., James J. Choi, David Laibson, Brigitte C. Madrian, and Andrew Metrick. 2009. "Optimal Defaults and Active Decisions." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Goldin, Jacob and Daniel Reck. 2020. "Revealed Preference Analysis with Framing Effects." *Journal of Political Economy*.

A Sociological Perspective on Behavioral Economics

Small, Mario, and Deevah Pager (2020). "Sociological Perspectives on Racial Discrimination," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.

Tax Misperceptions

*Chetty, R., A. Looney, and K. Kroft (2009). "Salience and Taxation: Theory and Evidence," *American Economic Review*.

*Taubinsky, D. and A. Rees-Jones (2018) "Attention Variation and Welfare: Theory and Evidence from a Tax Salience Experiment," *Review of Economic Studies*

Rees-Jones, A. and D. Taubinsky (2020) "Measuring 'Scheduling'" *Review of Economic Studies*.

Morrison and Taubinsky (forthcoming). "Rules of Thumb and Attention Elasticities: Evidence from Under- and Overreaction to Taxes." *Review of Economics and Statistics*.

Rees-Jones, A. and D. Taubinsky. "Taxing Humans: Pitfalls of the Mechanism Design Approach and Potential Resolutions." *Tax Policy and the Economy*

Hunt Allcott, Benjamin B. Lockwood, and Dmitry Taubinsky. "Ramsey Strikes Back: Optimal Commodity Taxes and Redistribution in the Presence of Salience Effects." *American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings*, 108 (2018): 88-92

Goldin, Jacob and Tatiana Homonoff (2013). "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: Cigarette Tax Salience and Regressivity." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.

Naomi Feldman and Bradley Ruffle (2015). "The Impact of Including, Adding and Subtracting a Tax on Demand," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, Vol. 7, No 1, 95-118.

Sebastien Bradley and Naomi Feldman (2020). Hidden Baggage: Behavioral Responses to Changes in Ticket Tax Disclosure," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, Vol 12, No. 4, pp.58-87

Peter Katuščák, Laura Kawano, and Naomi Feldman (2016). “Taxpayer Confusion: Evidence from the Child Tax Credit,” *American Economic Review*, Vol. 106, No. 3, 807-35.

Koichiro Ito. Do Consumers Respond to Marginal and Average Price? Evidence from Nonlinear Electricity Pricing.” *American Economic Review*

Hoopes, Jeffrey, and Daniel Reck and Joel Slemrod (2015). “Taxpayer search for information: Implications for rational inattention,” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.

Perceptions of Public Policy

* Stantcheva, Stefanie. 2021. “Understanding Tax Policy: How Do People Reason?” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Other papers are linked [here](#).

Insurance

Conceptual Framework

Chetty, R., & Finkelstein, A. (2013). Social insurance: Connecting theory to data. Handbook of public economics (pp. 111–193). Elsevier

*Hendren, N., Landais, C., & Spinnewijn, J. (2021). Choice in insurance markets: A pigouvian approach to social insurance design. *Annual Review of Economics*, 13, 457–486

Spinnewijn, J. (2015). Unemployed but optimistic: Optimal insurance design with biased beliefs. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 13(1), 130–167

Spinnewijn, J. (2017). Heterogeneity, demand for insurance, and adverse selection. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 9(1), 308–43

Social Insurance, Behavioral Frictions and Moral Hazard

Baicker, K., Mullainathan, S., & Schwartzstein, J. (2015). Behavioral hazard in health insurance. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 130(4), 1623–1667

Brot-Goldberg, Z. C., Chandra, A., Handel, B. R., & Kolstad, J. T. (2017). What does a deductible do? the impact of cost-sharing on health care prices, quantities, and spending dynamics. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(3), 1261–1318

Chetty, R. (2008). Moral hazard versus liquidity and optimal unemployment insurance. *Journal of political Economy*, 116(2), 173–234

DellaVigna, S., Lindner, A., Reizer, B., & Schmieder, J. F. (2017). Reference-dependent job search: Evidence from hungary. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(4), 1969–2018

Ganong, P., & Noel, P. (2019). Consumer spending during unemployment: Positive and normative implications. *American economic review*, 109(7), 2383–2424

Gerard, F., & Naritomi, J. (2021). Job displacement insurance and (the lack of) consumption-smoothing. *American Economic Review*, 111(3), 899–942

Gross, T., Layton, T., & Prinz, D. (2020). The liquidity sensitivity of healthcare consumption: Evidence from social security payments (tech. rep.). National Bureau of Economic Research

Marinescu, I., & Skandalis, D. (2021). Unemployment insurance and job search behavior. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 136(2), 887–931

Mueller, A. I., Spinnewijn, J., & Topa, G. (2021). Job seekers' perceptions and employment prospects: Heterogeneity, duration dependence, and bias. *American Economic Review*, 111(1), 324–63

Social Insurance, Behavioral Frictions and Adverse Selection

Abaluck, J., & Gruber, J. (2011). Choice inconsistencies among the elderly: Evidence from plan choice in the medicare part d program. *American Economic Review*, 101(4), 1180–1210

Abaluck, J., & Gruber, J. (2016). Evolving choice inconsistencies in choice of prescription drug insurance. *American Economic Review*, 106(8), 2145–84

Abaluck, J., & Gruber, J. (2020). When less is more: Improving choices in health insurance markets

Abaluck, J., & Adams-Prassl, A. (2021). What do consumers consider before they choose? Identification from asymmetric demand responses. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 136(3), 1611–1663

Barseghyan, L., Molinari, F., O'Donoghue, T., & Teitelbaum, J. C. (2013). The nature of risk preferences: Evidence from insurance choices. *American economic review*, 103(6), 2499–2529

Bhargava, S., Loewenstein, G., & Sydnor, J. (2017). Choose to lose: Health plan choices from a menu with dominated option. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(3), 1319–1372

Brot-Goldberg, Z. C., Layton, T., Vabson, B., & Wang, A. Y. (2021). The behavioral foundations of default effects: Theory and evidence from medicare part d (tech. rep.). National Bureau of Economic Research

Fang, H., Keane, M. P., & Silverman, D. (2008). Sources of advantageous selection: Evidence from the medigap insurance market. *Journal of political Economy*, 116(2), 303–350

Handel, B. R. (2013). Adverse selection and inertia in health insurance markets: When nudging hurts. *American Economic Review*, 103(7), 2643–82

Handel, B. R., & Kolstad, J. T. (2015). Health insurance for "humans": Information frictions, plan choice, and consumer welfare. *American Economic Review*, 105(8), 2449–2500

Handel, B. R., Kolstad, J. T., & Spinnewijn, J. (2019). Information frictions and adverse selection: Policy interventions in health insurance markets. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 101(2), 326–340

Hendren, N. (2013). Private information and insurance rejections. *Econometrica*, 81(5), 1713–1762

Hendren, N. (2017). Knowledge of future job loss and implications for unemployment insurance. *American Economic Review*, 107(7), 1778–1823

Ketcham, J. D., Lucarelli, C., Miravete, E. J., & Roebuck, M. C. (2012). Sinking, swimming, or learning to swim in medicare part d. *American Economic Review*, 102(6), 2639–73

Ketcham, J. D., Lucarelli, C., & Powers, C. A. (2015). Paying attention or paying too much in medicare part d. *American economic review*, 105(1), 204–33

Ketcham, J. D., Kuminoff, N. V., & Powers, C. A. (2019). Estimating the heterogeneous welfare effects of choice architecture. *International Economic Review*, 60(3), 1171–1208

Landais, C., Nekoei, A., Nilsson, P., Seim, D., & Spinnewijn, J. (2021). Risk-based selection in unemployment insurance: Evidence and implications. *American Economic Review*, 111(4), 1315–55

Landais, C., & Spinnewijn, J. (2021). The value of unemployment insurance. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 88(6), 3041–3085

Polyakova, M. (2016). Regulation of insurance with adverse selection and switching costs: Evidence from medicare part d. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 8(3), 165–95

Sydnor, J. (2010). (over) insuring modest risks. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2(4), 177–99

Incidence of Behavioral Frictions

Allcott, H., Lockwood, B. B., & Taubinsky, D. (2019). Regressive sin taxes, with an application to the optimal soda tax. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(3), 1557–1626

*Handel, B. R., Kolstad, J. T., Minten, T., & Spinnewijn, J. (2021). The social determinants of choice quality: Evidence from health insurance in the netherlands (tech. rep.). National Bureau of Economic Research

Inequality

* Bergman, Peter, Raj Chetty, Stefanie DeLuca, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence Katz, and Christopher Palmer. 2020. “Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Barriers to Neighborhood Choice.” Working paper.

https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/cmto_paper.pdf

Household Finance

* Beshears, John, James J. Choi, David Laibson, and Brigitte C. Madrian. 2018. "Behavioral Household Finance." In: Bernheim D, Laibson D, DellaVigna S Handbook of Behavioral Economics - Foundations and Applications 1. Elsevier.

Laibson D, Maxted P, Moll B. (2021). Present Bias Amplifies the Household Balance-Sheet Channels of Macroeconomic Policy." Working paper.

Agarwal, Sumit, Souphala Chomsisengphet, Neale Mahoney, and Johannes Stroebe. 2015. "Regulating Consumer Financial Products: Evidence from Credit Cards." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Allcott, Hunt, Joshua Kim, Dmitry Taubinsky, and Jonathan Zinman. 2022. "Are High-Interest Loans Predatory? Theory and Evidence from Payday Lending." *Review of Economic Studies*.

Gathergood, John, Benedict Guttman-Kenney, and Stefan Hunt. 2018. "How Do Payday Loans Affect Borrowers." *The Review of Financial Studies*.

Gathergood, John, Neale Mahoney, Neil Stewart, and Jörg Weber. 2019. "How do Individuals repay their debt? The Balance-Matching Heuristic." *American Economic Review*.

Keys, Benjamin, and Jilian Wang. 2019. "Minimum payments and debt paydown in consumer credit cards." *Journal of Financial Economics*.

Beshears, John, James J. Choi, Christopher Clayton, Christopher Harris, David Laibson and Brigitte C. Madrian. 2020. "Optimal Illiquidity." Working Paper.

Behavioral economics of poverty and development

* Kremer, Michael, Gautam Rao, and Frank Schilbach. 2017. "Behavioral Development Economics." Chapter 5, in the Handbook of Behavioral Economics, Volume 1.
<https://economics.mit.edu/files/16499>

Ashraf, N., Colin Camerer, and G. Loewenstein. 2005. "Adam Smith, Behavioral Economist". *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.
https://www.dropbox.com/s/0l15231g1bur613/AdamSmith_JEP_2005.pdf?dl=0

Ashraf, N., D. Karlan., and W. Yin. 2006. "Tying Odysseus to the mast: Evidence from a commitment savings product in the Philippines." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 121(2), pp.635-672.

Bai, L., B. Handel., E. Miguel., and G. Rao. 2021. "Self-control and demand for preventive health: Evidence from hypertension in India." *Review of Economics and Statistics*.

Brune, L., X. Gine., J. Goldberg., and D. Yang. 2016. "Facilitating savings for agriculture: Field experimental evidence from Malawi." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*

Casaburi, L., and J. Willis. 2018. "Time versus state in insurance: Experimental evidence from contract farming in Kenya." *American Economic Review*.

Kaur, S., M. Kremer., and S. Mullainathan. 2015. "Self-control at work." *Journal of Political Economy*.

Sadoff, S., A. Samek., and C. Sprenger, C., 2020. "Dynamic inconsistency in food choice: Experimental evidence from two food deserts." *The Review of Economic Studies*.

Schilbach, F. 2019. "Alcohol and self-control: A field experiment in India." *American economic review*.

Ashraf, N., O. Bandiera., and B.K. 2014. "No margin, no mission? A field experiment on incentives for public service delivery." *Journal of public economics*.

Ashraf, N., O. Bandiera., E. Davenport., and S.S. Lee. 2020. "Losing prosociality in the quest for talent? Sorting, selection, and productivity in the delivery of public services." *American Economic Review*.

Gneezy, U. and A. Rustichini. 2000. "Pay enough or don't pay at all." *The Quarterly journal of economics*.

Lacetera, N., M. Macis., and R. Slonim. 2012. "Will there be blood? Incentives and displacement effects in pro-social behavior." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.

Lacetera, N., M. Macis., and R. Slonim. 2014. "Rewarding volunteers: A field experiment." *Management Science*.

Hanna, R., S. Mullainathan., and J. Schwartzstein. 2014. "Learning through noticing: Theory and evidence from a field experiment." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Mani, A., S. Mullainathan., E. Shafir., and J. Zhao. 2013. "Poverty impedes cognitive function." *Science*.

Fehr, D., G. Fink and B.K. Jack (2022) "Poor and rational: Decision-making under scarcity" *Journal of Political Economy*, Forthcoming.

Psychology

Deci, E.L. 1971. "Effects of externally mediated rewards on intrinsic motivation." *Journal of personality and Social Psychology*.

Schacter, D.L., D.R. Addis., and R.L. Buckner. 2007. "Remembering the past to imagine the future: the prospective brain." *Nature reviews neuroscience*.

Moore, S.A., and L.A. Zoellner. 2007. "Overgeneral autobiographical memory and traumatic events: an evaluative review." *Psychological bulletin*.

Holmes, E.A., and A. Mathews. 2010. "Mental imagery in emotion and emotional disorders." *Clinical psychology review*.

Behavioral industrial organization

* Grubb, Michael D. 2015 "Overconfident Consumers in the Marketplace." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 29(4): 9-36.

Grubb, M. D. (2015). "Failing to Choose the Best Price: Theory, Evidence, and Policy." *Review of Industrial Organization* 47(3): 303-340.

Heidhues, P. and B. Köszegi (2018). Behavioral Industrial Organization. Handbook of Behavioral Economics: Applications and Foundations 1. B. D. Bernheim, S. DellaVigna and D. Laibson, North-Holland. 1: 517-612.

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