

Brian Beach

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Education

Ph.D. Economics, University of Pittsburgh; 2015
M.A. Economics, University of Pittsburgh; 2012
B.A. Business Finance, University of Washington (Tacoma); 2010
A.A. Green River Community College; 2008

Current Appointments

Vanderbilt University

- Associate Professor (with Tenure), Dept. of Economics 2023 -
- Director of Graduate Studies, Dept. of Economics 2023 -
- Faculty Affiliate, Center for Research on Inequality and Health 2023 -
- Assistant Professor, Dept. of Economics 2019 - 2023

National Bureau of Economic Research

- Research Associate 2023 -
- Faculty Research Fellow 2017 - 2023

Co-editor, Explorations in Economic History 2025 -

Past Appointments

Northwestern University

- Visiting Scholar, Center for Economic History 2022 - 2023

The College of William & Mary

- Assistant Professor, Dept. of Economics 2015 - 2019
- Faculty Affiliate, Public Policy 2015 - 2019

Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

NBER/NIA U54 Research on the Economics of Alzheimer's/Dementia (\$200,000), 2025
College of William & Mary Summer Research Grant, 2017
Arthur H. Cole Prize for best article in the Journal of Economic History, 2016
Suzann Wilson Matthews Summer Research Grant, 2016
Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship, 2014-2015
Social Sciences Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, 2013-2014
Arts and Sciences Graduate Summer Research Fellowship, 2013
Jerome C. Wells Award for Outstanding Teaching Assistance, 2012

Articles in Refereed Journals

Water and Waste: A History of Reluctant Policymaking in U.S. Cities

Journal of Urban History, 2025. 51(3) 619-33.

Racial and Ethnic Representation in Local Government

(with Daniel Jones, Tate Twinam, and Randall Walsh)

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 2024. 16(2) 1-36.

Historical Newspaper Data: A Researcher's Guide

(with Walker Hanlon)

Explorations in Economic History 2023. 90(101541).

Culture and the Historical Fertility Transition

(with Walker Hanlon)

The Review of Economic Studies, 2023. 90(4) 1669-1700.

Re-Evaluating the Long-Term Impact of In Utero Exposure to the 1918 Influenza Pandemic

(with Ryan Brown, Joseph Ferrie, Martin Saavedra and Duncan Thomas).

The Journal of Political Economy, 2022. 130(7) 1963-90.

Water Infrastructure and Health in U.S. Cities

Regional Science and Urban Economics, 2022. 94(103674).

Recessions, Mortality, and Migration Bias: Evidence from the Lancashire Cotton Famine

(with Vellore Arthi and Walker Hanlon)

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 2022. 14(2): 228-55.

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic and its Lessons for COVID-19

(with Karen Clay and Martin Saavedra)

Journal of Economic Literature, 2022. 60(1): 41-84.

Losing by Less? Import Competition, Unemployment Insurance Generosity, and Crime

(with John Lopresti)

Economic Inquiry, 2019. 57(2): 1163-81.

Coal Smoke and Mortality in an Early Industrial Economy

(with Walker Hanlon)

The Economic Journal, 2018. 128(615): 2652-75.

Gridlock: Ethnic Diversity in Government and the Provision of Public Goods

(with Daniel Jones)

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 2017. 9(1):112-36.

Business as Usual: Politicians with Business Experience, Government Finances, and Policy Outcomes

(with Daniel Jones)

Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 2016 131: 292-307.

Typhoid Fever, Water Quality, and Human Capital Formation

(with Joseph Ferrie, Martin Saavedra, and Werner Troesken)

The Journal of Economic History, 2016. 76(1) 41-75.

Awarded Arthur H. Cole prize for best article 2015-2016.

Mitigating the Effects of Low Birth Weight: Evidence from Quasi-randomly Assigned Adoptees

(with Martin Saavedra)

American Journal of Health Economics, 2015.1(3): 275-96.

Time or Spot? A Reevaluation of Amsterdam Market Data Prior to 1747

(with Stephen Norman and Douglas Wills)

Econometrica, 2013. 7 (1): 61-85.

Other Writing

Segregation and the Initial Provision of Water in the United States

(with John Parman and Martin Saavedra)

AEA Papers & Proceedings, 2022. 112: 193-8.

Censorship, Family Planning, and the Historical Fertility Transition

(with Walker Hanlon)

VoxEU, 2019.

Lessons from our Polluted Past

(with Walker Hanlon)

VoxDev, 2019.

Work in Progress

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the Fetal Origins Hypothesis

(with Douglas Almond and Martin Saavedra)

Pre-analysis plan registered with Open Science Framework: March 31, 2022.

Black Newspapers and Partisanship

(with Martin Saavedra and João Tampellini)

Disease and the Municipalization of Private Waterworks in England and Wales

(with Werner Troesken and Nicola Tynan)

Land Use Regulation and Individual Welfare

(with Tate Twinam)

Do Markets Reward Constitutional Reform? Lessons from America's State Debt Crisis

Invited Seminars

Black Newspapers and Partisanship

Ludwig Maximilian U. of Munich, Dec. 2025.
U. of Wisconsin, Oct. 2025.
U. of Montreal, Sep. 2025.
U. of Toronto Economic History Workshop, May 2025
Georgia State, Feb. 2025
Washington Area Economic History Conference, Nov. 2024
University of Pittsburgh, Aug. 2024

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the Fetal Origins Hypothesis

Emory, Apr. 2023

On the Spread of Germ Theory in American Newspapers

Marquette, Jan. 2023
UC Davis, Dec. 2022
Montana State, Dec. 2022
Yale, Nov. 2022
Northwestern, Nov. 2022

Culture and the Historical Fertility Transition

Middle Tennessee State, Sep. 2021
Colby, Nov. 2019
Vanderbilt, Jan. 2019
Chapman, Jan. 2019
U. of Pittsburgh, Dec. 2018

Segregation and the Initial Provision of Water in the United States

UT Knoxville, Apr. 2019
George Mason, Sep. 2018

Racial and Ethnic Representation in Local Government

George Washington, Jan. 2019
Florida State, Oct. 2018
Oberlin, Oct. 2018

Recessions, Mortality, and Migration Bias

Princeton, May 2018

Land Use Regulation and Individual Welfare

Utah State, Dec. 2017
Auburn Dec. 2017

Disease and the Municipalization of Private Waterworks in England and Wales

Northwestern, May 2015

Gridlock: Ethnic Diversity and Public Good Provision

College of William & Mary, Jan. 2015

UC Davis Ag. and Resource Economics, Jan. 2015

U. of New Mexico, Jan. 2015

Do Markets Reward Constitutional Reform? Lesson's from America's State Debt Crisis

Dickinson College, Jan. 2015

U. of Kentucky, Martin School of Public Policy, Jan. 2015

U. of South Carolina, Oct. 2014

Conference Presentations

- NBER DAE Summer Institute (Jul. 2025)
- World Economic History Congress (Jul. 2025)
- NBER Coordinating Center on the Economics of AD/ADRD Prevention, Treatment, and Care (Jun. 2025)
- Econometric Society European Meeting (Aug. 2024)
- Western Economic Association Annual Meeting (Jul. 2024)
- Economic History Society Annual Meeting (Apr. 2021)
- NYU Stern Health and History Workshop (2020, cancelled due to COVID)
- Economic Demography Workshop (2020, cancelled due to COVID)
- UC Irvine Demography & Development (2020, cancelled due to COVID)
- Urban Economic Association Annual Meeting (Oct. 2019)
- Economic History Association Annual Meeting (Sep. 2019)
- Cliometrics Society Annual Meeting (May 2019)
- Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting (Apr. 2019)
- University of Michigan's H2D2 Workshop (Mar. 2019)
- ASSA/AEA Annual Meeting (Jan. 2019)
- World Economic History Congress (Jul. 2018)
- NBER DAE Spring Meeting (Mar. 2018)
- Social Science History Annual Meeting (Nov. 2017)
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting (Nov. 2017)
- Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting (Nov. 2016)
- Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting (Nov. 2015)
- Economic History Association Annual Meeting (Sep. 2014)
- Cliometrics Society Annual Meeting (May 2014)

Teaching Experience

Vanderbilt University

- Public Economics (x7).
- Seminar on Microeconomic Policy (x3)
- Applied Microeconomic Research Designs and Methods (PhD) (x3)
- Economic History (PhD) (Fall 2019)

- Doctoral Thesis Committees: Nicholas Holtkamp (2021; Health and Human Services); Craig Sylvera (Co-Chair, 2022; Cleveland Federal Reserve), Kayleigh McCrary (2023; University of Richmond), Colin Sharpe (2023; Cornerstone), Tucker Smith (2024; Dallas Fed), Rowan Isaaks (2024; California Legislative Analyst's Office), João Tampellini (Chair, expected 2026).
- Undergraduate Thesis Committees: Shane Ausmus (Chair 2020-2021); James Tang (Chair 2020-2022), Clair Chen (2023-2024), Cameron Deal (Chair 2022-2024), Nicholas Forster-Benson (2024-2025), Clementine Louie (Chair 2025-2026).

Northwestern University

- U.S. Economic History Before 1865: Winter 2023

The College of William & Mary

- Public Economics (x8)
- Microeconomics for Public Policy (MPP) (X3)
- Economics of State and Local Policymaking (MPP) (x2)
- Economics of Regulation (Spring 2018)
- Introduction to Microeconomic Theory (Fall 2015)
- Undergraduate Thesis Committees: Jaeson Bae (Chair 2016-2018); Michael Testa (2016-2017)

University of Pittsburgh

- Introduction to Microeconomic Theory (x3)

Departmental Service

Vanderbilt University

- Director of Graduate Studies (2023-)
- Seminar coordinator, Economic History (2019-)
- PhD recruiting committee (2024, 2025)
- Recruiting committee, assistant professor (2023-2024)
- Recruiting committee, visiting assistant professor (2023-2024)
- Research presentation for honors thesis seminar (2020, 2024)
- Recruiting committee, full professor and departmental chair (2022-2023)
- Arrangements committee/host 2022 Cliometric Society meeting (2021-2022)
- Undergraduate studies committee (2019-2022)

The College of William & Mary

- Recruiting committee (2018-2019)
- Economics curriculum committee (2017-2018)
- Faculty advisor for policy research seminar (2015, 2016, 2017)
- Robert A. Barry (Outstanding senior in economics) selection committee (2017)
- Committee to evaluate the Whole of Government program (2017)
- Committee to evaluate capstone requirement for public policy (2016)

- Selby-Corey (Outstanding junior in economics) selection committee (2016)

Service to the College and University

Vanderbilt University

- OVPRI Internal Awards Committee (2024-)
- Major Advising (Average load of 20 students)
- Immersion Advising (1 student)
- External Dissertation Reader: (Kyle Blasinsky, 2025-2026)
- Faculty Mentor: Josh Martin (2023-2025, LGBTQ+ Policy Lab), Panka Bencsik (2023-, MHS).

The College of William & Mary

- Freshmen Advising (Average load of 6 students, 2015-2019)
- Major Advising (Average load of 6 students, 2015-2019)
- University teaching project on the state of undergraduate research in the social sciences (2018-2019)
- Charles Center Summer Research Scholarship Committee (2017, 2018)
- Summer Monroe Scholarship Advisor (2017)

Service to the Profession

- Mountain West Economic History Conference Planning Committee (2024 - 2026)
- World Economic History Congress “Meet the Editor” panel (Jul. 2025)
- Economic History Association Membership Committee (2024-2027)
- Economic History Association/Cliometric Society Liaison (2021-22)
- Guest lecture on 1918 Influenza Pandemic (Apr. 2020, Boston University)
- Paper selection committee: Cliometric Society annual meeting (2020, 2022)
- Paper selection committee: Troesken Memorial Conference (2020, 2022).
- Paper selection committee: EHA/Clio sponsored sessions for ASSA/AEA annual meeting (2019, 2020)
- External Dissertation Member: Sijie Li (U. of Pittsburgh, 2018), Rallye Shen (U. of Toronto, 2023), Régis Kouassi (U. of Montreal, 2024).

Referee Service

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics (x7) ■ American Economic Journal: Economic Policy (x3) ■ American Economic Review ■ American Economic Review: Insights ■ American Journal of Health Economics (x2) ■ Applied Economics ■ British Journal of Political Science ■ Demography (x3) ■ Econometrica ■ Economic History Review ■ Economic Inquiry (x6) ■ Economic Journal (x3) ■ Economica ■ Economics and Human Biology (x2) ■ Economics of Education Review (x2) ■ Empirical Economics ■ European Review of Economic History (x2) ■ Explorations in Economic History (x18) ■ Journal of Comparative Economics ■ Journal of Development Economics (x3) ■ Journal of Economic History (x19) ■ Journal of Health Economics (x6) ■ Journal of Institutional Economics (x2) ■ Journal of Political Economy (x6) ■ Journal of Public Economics ■ Journal of Urban Economics (x2) ■ National Tax Journal ■ Public Choice (x3) ■ Quarterly Journal of Economics (x13) ■ Regional Science and Urban Economics ■ Research in Economic

History ■ Review of Economics and Statistics (x8) ■ Science Data ■ Southern Economic Journal (x2) ■ The World Economy.

National Science Foundation Grant Reviewer

Conference Discussant

- NBER Race and Stratification in the Economy (Apr. 2024)
- ASSA/AEA Annual Meeting (Jan. 2024)
- Economic History Association (Sep. 2023)
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting (Apr. 2023) (x2)
- Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting (Nov. 2022)
- Economic History Association (Sep. 2022)
- ASSA/AEA Annual Meeting (Jan. 2020) (x2)
- Urban Economic Association Annual Meeting (Oct. 2019)
- Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting (Nov. 2018)
- World Economic History Congress (Jul. 2018)
- Social Science History Annual Meeting (Nov. 2017)
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting (Nov. 2017)
- Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting (Nov. 2016)
- ASSA/AEA Annual Meeting (Jan. 2016)
- Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting (Nov. 2015)

Service to the Community

- Guest for Freakonomics Podcast “Water, Water, Everywhere — But you have to stop and think” (Feb. 2024)
- Keynote speaker for National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine “Optimizing investments for Enhancing Urban Sustainability Infrastructure” (Jul. 2022)
- Guest for Densely Speaking Podcast (May. 2022)