James Okun

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Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology **Cambridge, MA • 2022-Present**
Candidate for Ph.D. in Economics

Brown University, *Magna cum laude* **Providence, RI • 2016-2020**
Bachelor of Science with Honors in Applied Mathematics-Economics
Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science
Ph.D. Coursework: Micro Theory I, Micro Theory II, Bayesian and Structural Econometrics, Applied Econometrics

Publications

Pandemic Schooling Mode and Student Test Scores: Evidence from U.S. School Districts
The American Economic Review: Insights, forthcoming (with Emily Oster, Rebecca Jack, and Clare Halloran)
Press Coverage: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*
NBER working paper 29497
The NBER Digest No. 1. January 2022

Working Papers and Data

Bargaining in the Presence of Unsophisticated Agents: The Case of Medicare Part B
Developing a bargaining model between PBMs and manufacturers for physician-administered drugs in which a share of insurers are unsophisticated to understand the effects of unsophisticated agents on equilibrium outcomes.

Newspaper Membership in the U.S. Congressional Press Galleries 1875-1939
Digitized data from historical copies of the *Congressional Directory*.

Research Experience

Massachusetts Institute of Technology **Cambridge, MA • 2020–2022**
Pre-doctoral Research Fellow to Professor Amy Finkelstein in the Economics Department

- Provided research assistance on a project studying the productivity and quality of skilled nursing facilities and **estimated structural models** of nursing home value added
- Worked on a project studying the quality of Medicare Part D plans offered to low-income beneficiaries

Brown University **Providence, RI • 2017-2020**
The Effect of Transparency on Political Behavior: Evidence from the U.S. Congressional Press Galleries June 2019 - June 2020

- Economics Honors Thesis Advised by Professor Jesse Shapiro
- Digitized historical copies of the *Congressional Directory* using state of the art **deep learning based OCR** to analyze novel data on press gallery membership in the U.S. Congress from 1875-1939
- Using text from historical newspapers, I find entry into the press gallery **meaningfully changes coverage of Congress**, but said coverage does not impact the way in which politicians speak (as judged from language in the *Congressional Record*)

Research Assistant to Professor Emily Oster in the Economics Department June 2018-January 2020

- Scripted in R and Stata to clean data and visualize the results of regression analysis
- Made use of natural language processing techniques to automate the summarization of ACOG practice bulletins

Research Assistant to Professor Arthur Salomon in the Biochemistry Department June 2017-August 2019

- Created a **novel machine learning technique** to predict accuracy of LC-MS relative quantitative data
- **Supervised the projects** of 3 other undergraduate researchers

Teaching Experience

Brown University **Providence, RI • 2018-2020**
Teaching Assistant

- Undergraduate Real Analysis (MATH 1010 Spring 2019 and Spring 2020)
- Undergraduate Mathematical Econometrics (ECON 1630 Spring 2020)
- Undergraduate and **Graduate** Deep Learning (CSCI 1470/2470 Fall 2019)
- **Graduate** Statistics for Program Evaluation (MPA 2040 Summer 2019)
- Undergraduate Multivariable Calculus (MATH 0180 Fall 2018)

Professional Service

- Referee for the *American Economic Review: Insights*

Leadership

Tink Knit 501(c)3 **Providence, RI • 2017– 2019**
President

- Led a **501(c)(3)** nonprofit with a staff of **40 plus** individuals teaching low-income women in Providence to make knitwear that earned them income
- Created an e-commerce platform to increase sales and spread awareness about our organization

Meiklejohn Peer Adviser **Providence, RI • September 2017–June 2019**
Peer Adviser

- Advised first-year Brown students as they started college

Honors and Awards

- Outstanding Thesis Award in Economics
- Inducted into the Rhode Island Chapter of Omicron Delta Epsilon
- Pathfinder Scholarship in Mathematics

Languages and Technical Skills

Technical: Stata, R, Python, Matlab
Languages: English (native) and French (basic conversational proficiency)