Colleen O'Briant

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FIELDS OF INTEREST	Applied Econometrics, Reinforcement Learning, Simulation Modeling, Industrial Organization

EDUCATION

University of Oregon — Eugene, Oregon
Ph.D. in Economics — (Expected June 2024)
Committee: Keaton Miller (Chair), Mark Colas, David Evans, Brittany Erickson

Virginia Commonwealth University — Richmond, Virginia
BFA in Painting, Printmaking, Drawing, and Extended Media — 2009 – 2013
Mentors: Javier Tapia and Hilary Wilder

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Graduate Teaching Award (University of Oregon Economics Dpt) — 2023
First-Year Graduate Fellowship (University of Oregon Economics Dpt) — 2018

WORKING PAPERS

The Econometrics of Inverse Reinforcement Learning

The recent discourse on Responsible AI surfaces an urgent need for transparency and trust in AI systems. One way to foster that transparency is to bridge the gap between Machine Learning and Econometrics. In this paper, I bridge the gap between two methods to estimate models of Dynamic Discrete Choice (DDC): Nested Fixed Point (Rust, 1987) from the Econometrics literature and Max-Margin Inverse Reinforcement Learning (Ng and Russell, 2000) from the AI literature.

Limited Attention and New Product Adoption for Marijuana Dispensaries

I use a rich dataset and an instrumental variables approach to identify how small business owners may misattribute noise for profit signals. I analyze thousands of product ordering decisions by Washington State marijuana dispensaries over the first three years of legalization of recreational marijuana. In a traditional economic framework, entrepreneurs make accurate predictions about the relative profitability of certain products over others. But a behavioral update would allow for some degree of inattentiveness by the firm. I use the exogeneity of weather shocks to measure how dispensary owners respond to noise in the signal of a product's profitability.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Dynamics of Taxi Driver Passenger-Seeking Behavior

TEACHING EXPERIENCE	**Independent Instructor (University of Oregon)**	
	EC 201 Principles of Microeconomics	Winter 2021, 2022
	EC 320 Introduction to Econometrics (I)	Fall 2023
	EC 421 Introduction to Econometrics (II) Summer 2021, 2022, Fall 2021, 2022	
	Discussion Leader or Teaching Assistant (University of Oregon)	
	EC 101 Contemporary Economic Issues	Fall 2020
	EC 201 Principles of Microeconomics	Winter 2020
	EC 202 Principles of Macroeconomics	Fall 2019
	EC 320 Introduction to Econometrics (I)	Spring 2023
	EC 421 Introduction to Econometrics (II)	Spring 2021
	EC 440/540 Public Economics	Fall 2020
	EC 451/551 Issues in Labor Economics	Spring 2020
	EC 607 Core Econometrics (III)	Spring 2020
TALKS AND TUTORIALS	**Teaching Programming with Tidyverse Koans**	August 2023
	Cascadia R Conf (Seattle, WA)	
	Doing Research using Org mode for Emacs	October 2021
	University of Oregon Economics Department Micro Group	
SKILLS	**Programming**	
	Proficient in R, Rust, and SQL.	
	Taught R eight times in Econometrics courses and labs.	
SERVICE	Co-President: UO Women in Economics Group	2021 – 2022
	Organizer: UO Microeconomics Brown Bag Group	2020 – 2021

REFERENCES

Prof. Keaton Miller (chair)
Associate Professor
University of Oregon
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Prof. David Evans
Assistant Professor
University of Oregon
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Prof. Mark Colas
Assistant Professor
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Sharon Kaplan
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University of Oregon
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