

Robert D. Metcalfe

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Homepage: <http://www.rmetcalfe.net/>
Google Scholar: [9507 citations](#)
H-index: [37](#)
RePEc ranking: [Top 1% worldwide](#)

Fields of specialization

Applied Microeconomics, Behavioral & Experimental Economics, Environmental & Energy Economics, Public Economics.

Employment (Past and Present)

- Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. 2024–
- SIPA Professorship of Energy Policy, Columbia University. 2024–
- Professor of Economics, University of Southern California, 2023–2024
- Associate Professor of Economics, University of Southern California, 2020–2023
- Assistant Professor, Questrom School of Business, Boston University, 2017–2020
- Postdoctoral Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Chicago, 2012–2017
- Fitzjames Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Oxford, 2009–2012
- Economist, Department of Work & Pensions, U.K. Government, 2004–2005

Affiliations

- Chief Economist, Centre for Net Zero, Octopus Energy Group, 2022–
- Co-Editor, Journal of Public Economics, 2022–
- Associate Editor, Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics, 2022–
- Associate Editor, Management Science, 2024–
- Research Associate, National Bureau of Economic Research, EEE & PE, 2021–
- Faculty Research Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research, EEE, 2019–2021
- Affiliate, J-PAL, 2020–
- Co-founder of two companies: Signol & The Behaviouralist

Education

- Ph.D. Imperial College London, 2010
- M.Sc. London School of Economics, 2005
- B.A. University of Wales, Swansea, 2003

Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. Brandon, A., Ferraro P., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M., Rundhammer, F. (2025) [Do The Effects of Social Nudges Persist? Theory and Evidence from 38 Natural Field Experiments](#). Accepted, **Review of Economic Studies**.
2. Zhang, C.Y., Hemmeter, J., Kessler, J.B., Metcalfe, R., Weathers, R. (2023) [Nudging Timely Wage Reporting: Field Experimental Evidence from the U.S. SSI Program](#), **Management Science**, 69 (3): 1341-1353

3. Hallsworth, M., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Rotaru, K., Vlaev, I. (2023) [The Making of Homo Honoratus: From Omission to Commission](#), *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 34 (4): 588-600.
4. Butera, L., Metcalfe, R., Morrison, W., Taubinsky, D. (2022) [Measuring the Welfare Effects of Shame and Pride](#). *American Economic Review*, 112 (1): 122-168.
5. Akesson, J., Ashworth-Hayes, S., Hahn, R., Metcalfe R., Rasooly, I. (2022) [Fatalism, Beliefs, and Behaviors During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, 64: 147-190.
6. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. (2021) [Efficiency and Equity Impacts of Energy Subsidies](#). *American Economic Review*, 111 (5): 1658-1688.
7. Burgess, S., Metcalfe, R., Sadoff, S. (2021) [Who Responds to Financial Incentives in Schools? Evidence From a Large Scale Field Experiment Using High-Stakes Assessments](#). *Economics of Education Review*, 85: 102195.
8. Gosnell, G., List, J., Metcalfe, R. (2020) [The Impact of Managerial Practices on Employee Productivity: A Field Experiment with Airline Captains](#). *Journal of Political Economy*, 128 (4): 1195-1233.
9. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Rundhammer, F. (2020) [Promoting customer engagement: A new trend in utility regulation](#). *Regulation & Governance* 14(1): 121-149.
10. Brandon, A., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M., Rundhammer, F. (2019) [Testing for Crowd Out in Social Nudges: Evidence from a Natural Field Experiment in the Market for Electricity](#). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States*, 116 (12): 5293-5298
11. Metcalfe, R., Burgess, S., Proud, S. (2019) [Students' Effort and Educational Achievement: Using the Timing of the World Cup to Vary the Value of Leisure](#). *Journal of Public Economics*, 172: 111-126.
12. Dolan, D., Kavetsos, G., Krekel, C., Mavridis, D., Metcalfe, R., Senik, C., Szymanski, S., Ziebarth, N. (2019) [Quantifying the intangible impact of the Olympics using subjective well-being data](#). *Journal of Public Economics*, 177.
13. Hallsworth, M., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Vlaev, I. (2017) [The Behavioralist as Tax Collector: Using Natural Field Experiments to Enhance Tax Compliance](#). *Journal of Public Economics*, 148: 14-31.
14. Feddersen, J., Metcalfe, R., Wooden, M. (2016) [Subjective Wellbeing: Why Weather Matters](#). *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 179(1): 203-228.
15. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. (2016) [The impact of behavioral science experiments on energy policy](#). *Economics of Energy & Environmental Policy*, 5(2): 27-44.
16. Story, G., Vlaev, I., Metcalfe, R., Crockett, M., Kurth-Nelson, Z., Darzi, A., Dolan, R. (2015) [Social Redistribution of Pain and Money](#). *Nature Scientific Reports*, 5, 15389.
17. Drouvelis, M., Metcalfe, R., Powdthavee, N. (2015) [Can priming cooperation increase public good contributions? Theory and Decision](#), 79(3): 479-492.
18. List, J.A., Metcalfe, R. (2014) [Field experiments in the developed world: an introduction](#). *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 30(4): 585-596.
19. Dolan, P., Metcalfe, R. (2012) [The relationship between innovation and subjective wellbeing](#). *Research Policy*, 41(8): 1489-1498.
20. Dolan, P., Metcalfe, R. (2012) [Measuring subjective wellbeing: Recommendations on measures for use by national governments](#). *Journal of Social Policy*, 41(2): 409-427.
21. Dolan, P., Hallsworth, M., Halpern, D., King, D., Metcalfe, R., Vlaev, I. (2012) [Influencing behaviour: The mindspace way](#). *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 33: 264-277.

22. Dolan, P., Metcalfe, R. (2012) [Valuing Health: A Brief Report on Subjective Well-Being versus Preferences](#). *Medical Decision Making*, 32(4): 578-582.
23. Metcalfe, R., Dolan, P. (2012) [Behavioural economics and its implications for transport](#). *Journal of Transport Geography*, 24, 503-511.
24. Metcalfe, R., Dolan, P., Powdthavee, N. (2011) [Destruction and Distress: Using a Quasi-Experiment to Show the Effects of the September 11 Attacks on Subjective Well-Being in the UK](#). *Economic Journal*, 121, F81-F103.¹
25. Dolan, P., Metcalfe, R. (2010) [Oops... I did it again: Repeated focusing effects in reports of happiness](#). *Journal of Economic Psychology* 31(4): 732-737.
26. Dolan, P., Lee, H., King, D., Metcalfe, R. (2009) [Valuing Health Directly](#). *British Medical Journal*, 339.

Working Papers

1. Fairweather, D., Kahn, M., Metcalfe, R., Sandoval-Olascoaga, S. [Expecting Climate Change: A Nationwide Field Experiment on the Housing Market](#). Revise and Resubmit, *American Economic Review*.
2. Hahn, R., Hendren, N., Metcalfe, R., Sprung-Keyser, B. [A Welfare Analysis of Policies Impacting Climate Change](#). Revise and Resubmit, *American Economic Review*.
3. Metcalfe, R., Sollaci, A., Syverson, C. [Management and Productivity in Retail](#). Revise and Resubmit, *Journal of Political Economy*.
4. Goldszmidt, A., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Muir, I., Smith, K., Wang, J. [The Value of Time in the United States: Estimates from a Nationwide Natural Field Experiment](#). Revise and Resubmit, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*
5. Brandon, A., Clapp, C., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M. [The Human Perils of Scaling Smart Technologies: Evidence from Field Experiments](#). Revise and Resubmit, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*
6. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Metcalfe R., Rasooly, I. [Race and Redistribution in the United States: An Experimental Study](#). Revise and resubmit, *Journal of Public Economics*.
7. List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M. [Energy Smart Meters: Do Prices Matter to their Adoption and Do They Reduce Consumption?](#) Revise and Resubmit, *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*.
8. Larson, F., List, J., Metcalfe, R. [Can Myopic Loss Aversion Explain the Equity Premium Puzzle? Evidence from a Natural Field Experiment with Professional Traders](#). Reject and Resubmit, *Econometrica*.
9. Metcalfe, R., Roth, S. [Making the Invisible Visible: The Impact Revealing Indoor Air Pollution on Behavior and Welfare](#). Under review.
10. Bernard, L., Hackett, A., Metcalfe, R., Panzone, L., Schein, A. [The Impact of Dynamic Prices on Electric Vehicle Public Charging Demand: Evidence from a Nationwide Natural Field Experiment](#).
11. Bernard, L., Hackett, A., Metcalfe, R., Schein, A. [Decarbonizing Heat: The Impact of Heat Pumps and a Time-of-Use Heat Pump Tariff on Energy Demand](#).
12. Jacob, M., Jenkinson, R., Lopez Garcia, D., Metcalfe, R., Schein, A., Simpson, C., Yu, L. [The Impact of Demand Response on Energy Consumption and Economic Welfare](#).
13. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Tam, E. [Welfare Estimates of Shifting Peak Travel](#). Under review.
14. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Kochhar, R., Metcalfe, R. [Do Water Audits Work?](#) Under review.

¹Alphabetical apart from Metcalfe, who solely came up with the idea and design of the project.

15. Cohen, P., Hahn, R., Hall, J., Levitt, S., Metcalfe, R. [Using Big Data to Estimate Consumer Surplus: The Case of Uber.](#)
16. List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M., Rundhammer, F. [Harnessing Policy Complementarities to Conserve Energy: Evidence from a Natural Field Experiment.](#) Under review.
17. Floyd, E., Hallsworth, M., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Rotaru, K., Vlaev, I. [What Motivates People to Pay Their Taxes? Evidence from Four Experiments on Tax Compliance.](#) Under review.
18. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Monti-Nussbaum, M. [The Impact of Fake Reviews on Demand and Welfare.](#) Under review.

Work in progress

1. Metcalfe, R. *The Value and Welfare Effects of Automatic Electric Vehicle Charging.*
2. Metcalfe, R. *The Impact of Management on Maritime Productivity and Carbon Emissions.*
3. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Tam, E. *The Welfare Effect of Personal Energy Debt Forgiveness.*
4. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. *The Consumer Demand and Welfare Effects of Automatic Energy Payments.*
5. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. *Estimating Inertia and Switching Costs Under Full Attention and Information.*
6. Akesson, J., Conti, R., Hahn, R., Metcalfe R., Rasooly, I. *Can Bad Norms be Good?*

Research Grants as PI

Building Environmental Economics at USC, \$450,000. Co-Principal Investigator, 2023-2025.

Improving Efficient Electric Vehicle Charging. Jameel Poverty Action Lab, \$75,000. Principal Investigator, 2021-2023.

Understanding The Human Impact on Air Pollution in the Maritime Industry. Jameel Poverty Action Lab, \$125,000. Principal Investigator, 2020-2022.

Using a Travel App to Understand Travel and Commuting Behavior. Innovate UK, \$125,000. Principal Investigator, 2016-2017.

Using Behavioral Science to Increase Airline Fuel Efficiency. Innovate UK, \$125,000. Principal Investigator, 2015-2016.

Using Behavioral Science to Change Travel Behavior. Innovate UK: \$220,000. Principal Investigator, 2015-2018.

Motivating Parents Using a Parent Academy. Education Endowment Fund - \$1.8 million. Principal Investigator, with John List, Steven Levitt, Sally Sadoff, 2014-2015.

Financial Incentives in English School. Education Endowment Fund - \$2.2 million. Co-PI, with Simon Burgess, Sally Sadoff, 2012-2014.

The Use of Online Social Norms in Influencing Energy Consumption: Tides Foundation - \$90,000. Principal Investigator, 2011-2012.

Keynotes

- 2025 - IFO-FAU-KOMKIS Workshop on Funding the Green Transition, Nürnberg.
- 2025 - IZA Environmental Economics conference, Bonn.
- 2025 - Energy Economics conference, University of Navarra.
- 2024 - European Economic Association, Environmental Economics section, Rotterdam.
- 2024 - 9th Atlantic Workshop on Energy and Environmental Economics, A Toxa.
- 2023 - 13th International Conference of the French Association of Experimental Economics, Montpellier.
- 2023 - 11th Mannheim Conference on Energy and the Environment at ZEW, Mannheim.
- 2022 - Economic Science Association Conference, Buenos Aires.

Seminars

- 2025 - Georgia Tech, Harvard, MIT.
- 2024 - AEAs; Bank of England; HEC Lausanne; IFS/UCL; ITAM; London School of Economics; Paris School of Economics; Toulouse School of Economics; Vanderbilt; UIC; University of California San Diego; University of Chicago; University of Oxford.
- 2023 - University of Calgary; University of Pittsburgh; University of Chicago; Princeton University; Stanford University; Cal Poly; NBER Summer Institute EEE; Norwegian School of Economics; London School of Economics; Columbia University.
- 2022 - Harvard University; University of California Berkeley; University of Zurich; University of Geneva; Duke University; Bocconi University; University of California San Diego; NBER Summer Institute, Personnel Economics, Digitization and IT.
- 2021 - Center for Economic and Social Research, USC; Texas A&M; University of Zurich; NBER Spring EEE Session; Max Planck Institute Bonn University; Hertie School Berlin; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- 2020 - AEAs; USC; Columbia University; University of Michigan; University of Rotterdam.
- 2019 - AEAs; Stanford; Yale; Cornell; Johns Hopkins; Boston College; Harvard Business School; Columbia Business.
- 2018 - Carnegie Mellon University; Empirical Management conference, Harvard Business School; University of Pittsburgh; University of California San Diego; Purdue; Boston University; London School of Economics; University of Oxford; Journal of Environmental Economics and Management Inaugural conference in Oslo; NBER Summer Institute EEE.

Students, Pre-docs

- Anna Papp, PhD Advisor, Columbia SIPA, 2025. Placement: MIT Econ Post-Doc, UCSB Bren AP.
- Francesco Gabriele, PhD Advisor, USC, 2025. Placement: HKUST AP.
- Lukas Puschnig, Pre-doc USC, 2023-2024. Placement: LMU Munich PhD.
- Lillian Bartholomew, Pre-doc USC, 2022-2024. Placement: RAND PhD.
- Xidi Zhang, Pre-doc USC, 2022-2024. Placement: University of Notre Dame PhD.
- Zhihan Liu, Pre-doc USC, 2022-2023. Placement: USC Ph.D.
- Ruozhi Song, PhD Advisor, USC, 2023. Placement: World Bank Research Group, Research Economist.
- Victor Myloans, Pre-doc USC 2021-2022, Placement: IMF

Service

- PhD Placement Chair, Columbia SIPA (2024-)
- Co-organize the annual Advances with Field Experiments conference, with John List (2016-).
- Initiated and manage the Applied Microeconomics seminar, University of Southern California (2020-)
- PhD Placement Chair, University of Southern California (2022-2023)
- PhD Recruitment Committee, University of Southern California (2020-2022)
- Chair of Junior Recruitment Committee, University of Southern California (2020-21; 2023-24)
- Strategic Leadership Council, Questrom, Boston University (2019-2021)
- MBA Social Impact PDC at Questrom, Boston University (2018-2021).
- Initiated and ran a work-in-progress seminar group for MPPL faculty at Questrom (2017-2021).
- Co-organize the virtual Advances with Field Experiments seminar series, with John List (2020-2021).

Refereeing

American Economic Review; American Economic Review: Insights; American Economic Journal: Applied; American Economic Journal: Economic Policy; American Journal of Political Science; Economic Journal; Economica; Global Environmental Change; Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists; Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization; Journal of Environmental Economics and Management; Journal of European Economic Association; Journal of Health Economics; Journal of Human Resources; Journal of Public Economics; Journal of Urban Economics; Management Science; Oxford Review of Economic Policy; Quarterly Journal of Economics; Psychological Science; Research Policy; Review of Economic Studies; Review of Economics and Statistics; Science.

Teaching

- Economics of Energy, SIPA, Columbia University
- Empirical Methods for PhD Economics, 2023² University of Southern California
- Research on Frontier Economics, University of Southern California:
 - 2022 - teaching evaluation score of 3.72 out of 4 (8 students); 70 contact hours.
- Field Experiments,³ University of Southern California:
 - 2022 - two sections with teaching evaluation score of 3.78 and 3.9 out of 4 (42 students); 140 contact hours.
 - 2021 - teaching evaluation score of 3.87 out of 4 (30 students); 70 contact hours.
 - 2020 - teaching evaluation score of 3.85 out of 4 (25 students); 70 contact hours.
- Modeling Business Decisions and Market Outcomes, Boston University:
 - 2020 - three sections with teaching evaluation scores of 4.81, 4.74, and 4.70 out of 5 (120 students); 120 contact hours.
 - 2018 - three sections with teaching evaluation scores of 5.0, 4.82, and 4.78 out of 5 (110 students); 120 contact hours.
 - 2017 - two sections with teaching evaluation scores of 5.0 and 4.85 out of 5 (50 students); 80 contact hours
- Behavioral Economics, M.Sc. Executive students, London School of Economics (2016); 10 contact hours
- Public Economics, Undergraduate, Department of Economics, University of Oxford (2011-2012); 24 contact hours.
- Microeconomics, Undergraduate, Merton College, University of Oxford (2009-2012); 200 contact hours.

²I created and managed this one-year (two semesters) course for the second year graduate students in economics (and from other schools).

³I created and managed this course for the masters students in economics.

Media

- [Mortgage Regulators Are Shrugging Off Climate Risk. It Could Cost Taxpayers Billions](#), New York Times.
- [How Great Britain's 'demand flexibility service' is cutting costs and CO2 emissions](#), Carbon Brief.
- [Demand reduction measured in last winter's DFS is 'too optimistic'](#), Utility Week.
- [You're Probably Falling for Fake Product Reviews](#), Wall Street Journal.
- [Fake online reviews lead shoppers to overpay, new study says](#), Axios.
- [Robert Metcalfe on Management Practices and Productivity](#), Visible Hand Podcast.
- [People from elite backgrounds increasingly dominate academia, data shows](#), Washington Post.
- [What Is Your Time Worth?](#), NPR.
- [For Lyft users, time is money—now, we know how much](#), UChicago News.
- [Football tournaments penalise GCSE students. Can't we avoid this fixture clash?](#), The Guardian.
- [Virgin Atlantic Tested 3 Ways to Change Employee Behavior](#), Harvard Business Review.
- [Virgin Atlantic just used behavioral science to 'nudge' its pilots into using less fuel. It worked](#), Washington Post.
- [Uber's Pricing Formula Has Allowed Economists to Map Out a Real Demand Curve](#), Wall Street Journal.
- [Freakonomics' Steven Levitt On How Inefficient Uber Really Is](#), Forbes.
- [Why Uber Is an Economist's Dream](#), Freakonomics Podcast.
- [Computing the Social Value of Uber. \(It's High.\)](#) Bloomberg.
- [Boys' GCSE grades dented by football tournaments](#), The Guardian.
- [English GCSE results to plunge this summer as teens tune in to World Cup](#), The Sun.
- [GCSE results 'dip during World Cup summers'](#), The BBC.

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