

# Robert D. Metcalfe

Department of Economics  
University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, CA

Email: [robert.metcalfe@usc.edu](mailto:robert.metcalfe@usc.edu)  
Homepage: <http://www.rmetcalfe.net/>  
Google: [Scholar \(6247 citations\)](#)

## Research Areas

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

## Employment

- Associate Professor of Economics (with tenure), University of Southern California, 2020–
- 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–
- Research Associate, National Bureau of Economic Research, EEE, 2021–
- Faculty Research Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research, EEE, 2019–2021
- Affiliate, J-PAL, 2020–
- Faculty Affiliate, E2e Project, UC Berkeley, 2019–
- Co-founder, Signal, 2018– & The Behavioralist, 2016–

## Education

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

## Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. Zhang, C.Y., Hemmeter, J., Kessler, J.B., Metcalfe, R., Weathers, R. (forthcoming) [Nudging Timely Wage Reporting: Field Experimental Evidence from the U.S. SSI Program](#), **Management Science**.
2. Butera, L., Metcalfe, R., Morrison, W., Taubinsky, D. (2022) [Measuring the Welfare Effects of Shame and Pride](#). **American Economic Review**, 112 (1): 122-168.
3. 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**.
4. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. (2021). [Efficiency and Equity Impacts of Energy Subsidies](#). **American Economic Review**, 111 (5): 1658-1688.
5. 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.

6. 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.
7. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Rundhammer, F. (2020). [Promoting customer engagement: A new trend in utility regulation](#). **Regulation & Governance** 14(1): 121-149.
8. 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
9. 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.
10. Dolan, D., Kavetsos, G., Kregel, 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.
11. Hallsworth, M., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Vlaev, I. (2017). [The Behaviorist as Tax Collector: Using Natural Field Experiments to Enhance Tax Compliance](#). **Journal of Public Economics**, 148: 14-31.
12. Feddersen, J., Metcalfe, R., Wooden, M. (2016). [Subjective Wellbeing: Why Weather Matters](#). **Journal of the Royal Statistical Society**, 179(1): 203-228.
13. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. (2016). [The impact of behavioral science experiments on energy policy](#). **Economics of Energy & Environmental Policy**, 5(2): 27-44.
14. 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.
15. Drouvelis, M., Metcalfe, R., Powdthavee, N. (2015). [Can priming cooperation increase public good contributions?](#) **Theory and Decision**, 79(3): 479-492.
16. List, J.A., Metcalfe, R. (2014). [Field experiments in the developed world: an introduction](#). **Oxford Review of Economic Policy**, 30(4): 585-596.
17. Dolan, P., Metcalfe, R. (2012). [The relationship between innovation and subjective wellbeing](#). **Research Policy**, 41(8): 1489-1498.
18. Dolan, P., Metcalfe, R. (2012). [Measuring subjective wellbeing: Recommendations on measures for use by national governments](#). **Journal of Social Policy**, 41(2): 409-427.
19. 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.
20. Dolan, P., Metcalfe, R. (2012). [Valuing Health: A Brief Report on Subjective Well-Being versus Preferences](#). **Medical Decision Making**, 32(4): 578-582.
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. Dolan, P., Lee, H., King, D., Metcalfe, R. (2009). [Valuing Health Directly](#). **British Medical Journal**, 339.

## Working Papers

1. 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**.
2. Brandon, A., Clapp, C., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M. [The Human Perils of Scaling Smart Technologies: Evidence from Field Experiments](#). Working Paper.
3. 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](#).
4. Brandon, A., Ferraro P., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M., Rundhammer, F. [Do The Effects of Social Nudges Persist? Theory and Evidence from 38 Natural Field Experiments](#). NBER Working Paper No. 22627.
5. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Tam, E. [Welfare and Congestion](#).
6. Larson, F., List, J., Metcalfe, R. [Can Myopic Loss Aversion Explain the Equity Premium Puzzle? Evidence from a Natural Field Experiment with Professional Traders](#). NBER Working Paper No. 22605. Reject and Resubmit, **Econometrica**. Currently re-running the field experiment.
7. Cohen, P., Hahn, R., Hall, J., Levitt, S., Metcalfe, R. [Using Big Data to Estimate Consumer Surplus: The Case of Uber](#). NBER Working Paper No. 22627.
8. Hallsworth, M., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Vlaev, I. [The Making of Homo Honoratus: From Omission to Commission](#). NBER Working Paper No. 21210.
9. List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M., Rundhammer, F. [Harnessing Policy Complementarities to Conserve Energy: Evidence from a Natural Field Experiment](#). NBER Working Paper No. 23355.
10. 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](#). Working Paper.
11. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Monti-Nussbaum, M. [The Impact of Fake Reviews on Demand and Welfare..](#) Working Paper.
12. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Metcalfe R., Rasooly, I. [Race and Redistribution in the United States: An Experimental Study](#).

## Work in progress

1. Hahn, R., Hendren, N., Metcalfe, R., Sprung-Keyser, B. *A Welfare Analysis of Climate Change Policies*.
2. Hahn, R., Hendren, N., Metcalfe, R., Sprung-Keyser, B. *A Welfare Analysis of Regulation*.
3. Metcalfe, R. *Making Energy Consumers More Price Elastic Under Time of Use Tariffs*.
4. Metcalfe, R. *The Impact of Management on Maritime Productivity and Carbon Emissions*.
5. Metcalfe, R., Sollaci, A., Syverson, C. *Management and Productivity*.
6. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R., Tam, E. *The Welfare Effect of Personal Energy Debt Forgiveness*.
7. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. *The Consumer Demand and Welfare Effects of Automatic Energy Payments*.
8. Fairweather, D., Kahn, M., Metcalfe, R., Sandoval-Olascoaga, S. *Impact of Flooding Information on Property Search and Purchases: Evidence from a Nationwide Natural Field Experiment*.

9. Metcalfe, R., Roth, S. *The Demand for Indoor Clean Air*.
10. Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. *The Demand for Electric Vehicles*.
11. Akesson, J., Hahn, R., Mahler, A., Metcalfe, R. *Estimating Inertia and Switching Costs Under Full Attention and Information*.
12. Akesson, J., Conti, R., Hahn, R., Metcalfe R., Rasooly, I. *The Non-linear Effect of Descriptive Social Norms*.
13. Brooks, B., Metcalfe, R., Stalinski, M. *Impact of Auction Design on Welfare*.
14. Bhardwaj, S., Cruce, T., Hahn, R., Metcalfe, R. *Getting More Low-Income Students to go to College? Evidence from Three Nationwide Field Experiments*.
15. Davis, J., Hahn, R.W., List, J., Metcalfe, R., Price, M. *The Efficiency of Referral Incentives: Evidence from Two Large Natural Field Experiments*.
16. Butera, L., List, J., Metcalfe, R. *Who's in the Family? Causes and Consequences of Multiple Hypothesis Testing*.

## Research Grants as PI

Improving Efficient Electric Vehicle Charging. J-PAL, \$75,000. Principal Investigator, 2021-2023.

Understanding The Human Impact on Air Pollution in the Maritime Industry. J-PAL, \$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, Seminars, Talks

**2023 (scheduled)** - Keynote at the 13th International Conference of the French Association of Experimental Economics, Marseille; Keynote at the 11th Mannheim Conference on Energy and the Environment at ZEW, Mannheim; University of Calgary; University of Iowa; University of Chicago; Princeton University; Stanford University; Cal Poly.

**2022** - Keynote at the Economic Science Association Conference, Buenos Aires; 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

- Zhihan Liu, Pre-doc USC, 2022-2023
- Lillian Bartholomew, Pre-doc USC, 2022-2024
- Ruozi Song, PhD Committee, USC 2023
- Victor Myloans, Pre-doc 2021-2022, IMF

## Service

- Co-organize the annual Advances with Field Experiments conference, with John List (2016-).
- Initiated and run the Applied Microeconomics seminar, University of Southern California (2020-)
- PhD Recruitment Committee, University of Southern California (2020-)
- Chair of two Junior Recruitment Committees, University of Southern California (2020-21)
- 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

- Field Experiments, University of Southern California:
  - 2022 - teaching evaluation score of 4.80 (30 students); 70 contact hours.
  - 2021 - teaching evaluation score of 4.87 (30 students); 70 contact hours.
  - 2020 - teaching evaluation score of 4.85 (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.

Last updated: February 8, 2023

<http://www.rmetcalfe.net>