VALERIA ZURLA

Contact Information

Brown University
Department of Economics
64 Waterman St
Providence, RI, 02912

Email: valeria_zurla@brown.edu
Phone: +1 (401) 837-3799

Education

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, Brown University	2016-present
Fields of interest: Public Economics, Health Economics, Political Economy	
Advisor: Prof. Emily Oster	
M.A. in Economics, Brown University	2017
M.Sc. in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University (Summa cum Laude)	2013-2015
Visiting Student, Dartmouth College	Fall 2012
B.A. in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University (Summa cum Laude)	2010-2013

Teaching Experience

Empirical Research Methods (Bocconi University, Prof. Paolo Pinotti)	Spring 2016

Research Experience

Research Assistant and Lab Manager for Prof. Emily Oster	2018-present
Behavioral Feedback: Does Selective Adherence to Dietary Recommendations Influence Scientific Results?	
Research Assistant for Prof. Fabiano Schivardi and Prof. Tom Schmitz	2016
The IT Revolution and Southern Europe's Two Lost Decades	
Research Assistant for Prof. Fabiano Schivardi and Prof. Guido Tabellini	2016
Credit Misallocation During the Financial Crisis	
Research Assistant for Prof. Fabiano Schivardi	2015
The Education Premium for Entrepreneurs	

Other Work Experiences

Action Institute, Research Associate	2013-2014

Honors, Fellowships and Scholarships

Brown University, Distinction in Field Examination	2018
Brown University, Department of Economics, PhD Scholarship	2018
Brown University, Population Studies and Training Center, Predoctoral trainee	2018
Unicredit & Universities Foundation, Crivelli Europe Scholarship	2016, 2017
Allianz Summer Academy	2015
IGIER Visiting Student Initiative	2014-2015

Fondazione Bianca Maria Barbieri Rossi, University Scholarship 2010
Lombardia Region, Award of Merit 2010
BCC Binasco, Yearly Scholarship 2008-2015

Research in Progress

Labor Supply Responses, Incidence and Welfare Consequences of Earned Income Tax Credits: Evidence from Italy
Decentralization of Health Care, Regional Inequality and Long-Term Outcomes: Evidence from Italy
The Effects of State Earned Income Tax Credits on Infant Health
Cultural Values and Entrepreneurship: An Empirical Investigation
Terrorism and Political Polarization: Italy in the "Years of Lead" (with Luisa Cefalà)

Other

Brown University, Applied Micro Lunch, Organizer 2018-present

Skills

Computer skills: STATA, Matlab, LaTex, SAS
Languages: Italian (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate)

Completed and Current PhD Courses

Microeconomics I Fall 2016
Prof. Rajiv Vohra, Brown University
Macroeconomics I Fall 2016
Prof. Oded Galor and Prof. David Weil, Brown University
Econometrics I Fall 2016
Prof. Eric Renault, Brown University
Microeconomics II Spring 2017
Prof. Kareen Rozen, Brown University
Macroeconomics II Spring 2017
Prof. Joaquin Blaum and Prof. Gauti Eggertsson, Brown University
Econometrics II Spring 2017
Prof. Andriy Norets, Brown University
Applied Economic Analysis Spring 2017
Prof. Anja Sautmann
Public Economics I Fall 2017
Prof. John N. Friedman, Brown University
Economics of Labor and Population Fall 2017
Prof. Emily Oster, Brown University
Bayesian and Structural Econometrics Fall 2017
Prof. Andriy Norets, Brown University

Urban Economics	Spring 2018
Prof. Matthew Turner, Brown University	
Political Economy	Spring 2018
Prof. Brian Knight, Brown University	
Public Economics II	Spring 2018
Prof. Nathaniel Hendren, Harvard University	
Topics in Labor Economics	Fall 2018
Prof. Kenneth Chay, Brown University	

9/20/18

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to recommend you admit Valeria Zurla to the HealthCare Bootcamp. We have a number of student applying and I would rank Valeria at the top of our list.

Valeria is current embarking on her third year in our program. I know her fairly well, having had the pleasure of teaching her in my applied methods class last year. Following that class, I asked Valeria to work for me full time over this past summer and then part time (in lieu of a TA-ship) over this current year. I selected Valeria for this position as she was the best performer in my graduate class.

Valeria has the makings of an excellent economist. Her comments in my class – which had a significant health component given my interests – were typically thoughtful and mature. Somewhat to my chagrin, many of our students do not have much research instinct or inclination in the second year. However, for my class Valeria produced a credible paper using survey data to analyze the response to a ETIC-style bonus in Italy.

Valeria has a number of promising research ideas and seems to be consistently developing more. She is working on a number of different areas, but I think her most promising (early-stage) idea focuses on a health reform in Italy. In this reform, regions were given control over their health care systems and some choose to privatize and some did not. There were resulting changes in health care quality and access, and responsive migration. Valeria is hoping to acquire administrative data which would allow her to analyze the impacts of this reform, and speak to the differences across public versus private structures.

Valeria is also an excellent RA, who has been working with me on a project on behavioral response to health news. I have found myself relying on her for more and more complex tasks as she shows her abilities.

Given her early stage in our program I think Valeria would benefit tremendously from the broad exposure that this boot camp will offer, and I hope you will accept her. Please be in touch if I can be helpful with additional information about this candidate.

Sincerely Yours,

Emily Oster

Professor of Economics

Brown University

VALERIA ZURLA
Brown University, Department of Economics, 64 Waterman St, Providence RI, 02912
Email: valeria_zurla@brown.edu, Phone: +1 (401) 837-3799

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to apply for the 2018 Health Economics Research Boot Camp. I am a third year PhD student at Brown University and my main research interests include Public Economics, Health Economics and Political Economy.

I would like to participate to this research boot camp mainly because I have only recently discovered an interest in health economics and I am currently starting to do research in health-related topics. As I explain in my essay, I started to approach health economics mainly because of my work with Professor Emily Oster and because of the topics discussed in some of my second-year classes. Given my "late" interest in the topic, my PhD coursework does not include any specific Health Economics course. As a consequence, I think this workshop would help me have a better comprehension of the challenges of doing research in health economics, understand where the frontier of the research on the topic is at and meet scholars and researchers at the top of the field. I am sure my current and future research, as detailed in the essay, would greatly benefit from this opportunity.

As requested, I have included a copy of my CV with a list of all current and completed PhD courses and a two pages essay explaining more in detail why I would like to participate to the Health Economics Research Boot Camp.

My recommendation letter writer is Professor Emily Oster.

Sincerely,
Valeria Zurla

ESSAY

Rationale for Participating to the Health Economics Research Boot Camp

Before starting my PhD program, I was not planning on doing research in Health Economics. Looking back at the years of my Undergraduate and Master programs, I think that this is mainly due to the fact that, even though I have always been interested in health-related topics, I was never really exposed to rigorous research in this area. As I imagine often happens, my first two years as a PhD Student changed my perspective on doing research in Economics and shifted my interests towards not only Public Economics but also Health Economics.

The main motive that has always pushed me towards economic research is the conviction that it would allow me to study relevant problems and propose feasible solutions. The relevant problems I have always wanted to focus on, as I think is true for many economists, were the ones affecting my home country, Italy and I came to realize that the best way to approach and investigate these issues is through the tools of Public Economics. My interest in Health Economics came slightly after, when, during my second-year classes, I understood how pervasive are health economics issues. I came in contact with outstanding scholars that showed me how much can be achieved by doing research in this field. Finally, coming to know the work at the frontier of this field, I became aware of how challenging and exciting is to do research in this field and how much is still left to be done.

I owe most of my interest in this field to my advisor, Emily Oster. Her class showed me the complexity and nuances behind most of health-related research questions and taught me the tools to try to answer such questions in a rigorous and thorough way. At the same time, the papers presented in her class gave me an overview of the many applications of health economics and the main questions that are still open in the field. During this summer, I also started to work with her as a Research Assistant and I think that this experience is what ultimately convinced me that I wanted to do research in Health Economics. Working on her projects showed how much impact health-related research can have not only in Economics but also in other fields.

I am currently working on two projects related to public and health economics. My first project aims at investigating the effects of the recent introduction of an earned income tax credit in Italy. This tax credit has several characteristics that make it particularly useful

to examine relatively understudied aspects of this kind of programs (e.g. heterogeneity in responses, salience, impact of peer effects on responses). Exploiting administrative employer-employee matched data, I ask whether the introduction of this program affects labor supply, welfare and incidence. As a future step in this project, I would like to match the data with administrative data on the health histories of workers to ask whether this program had any health spillovers. The second project I am currently working on focuses on the effects of the decentralization of health care from the national to the regional level that took place in Italy in the early 2000s. Because of this process, each region had the power to structure its health care system in a different way (e.g. more vs less privatization, different types of exemptions, different organization of hospitals). I aim at studying the impact of this reform on regional inequalities, patient migration and long-term health outcomes. As a further step, I would also like to study the political economy side of this question, testing the Tiebout hypothesis and trying to understand whether the health care system chosen in each region reflects the preferences of the citizens.

In my future research, I plan to explore different areas of Health Economics. I would like to continue studying the health-related effects of different kinds of public programs, with a focus on retirement and unemployment. At the same time, I would like to do research on how behavioral biases affect health choices focusing on the decision to vaccinate. Among the several possible channels that influence the decision, I plan to focus on the effects of media biases, fake-news, social networks and altruistic vs egoistic motives.

The rationale for why I think I would benefit from this boot camp is threefold. First of all, given my "late" interest in the topic, my PhD coursework does not include any specific Health Economics course. As a consequence, I think this workshop would help me have an even better comprehension of the challenges of doing research in health economics and understand where the frontier of the research on the topic is at. Second, the focus of the workshop on selected research topics that intersect with public and behavioral economics is a perfect match with my current and future research projects. In particular, given my specific interest in the intersection and effects of public economics programs on health outcomes, I think I could learn tools and skills that are crucial to pursue my research objectives. Finally, the opportunity to meet scholars and researchers at the top of this field, discuss possible research paths and get feedback would be extremely valuable as a young researcher.