I'm starting my third year in the Business Economics PhD program at Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) — Olin School of Business. I've been curious about health and demography since my research assistant job in undergrad where I collected lifespan data. WashU has recently started several initiatives and programs related to aging and health research. This presents me with interdisciplinary research opportunities I could capitalize on with proper guidance. My PhD coursework has allowed me to explore health economics papers and trained me in empirical methods often used in aging and health research. However, I'm still unsure if aging and health economics is the right field for me to explore. I'm curious what problems others on the frontier are working on, what new data has become available, and what open questions people are wrestling with. I believe these circumstances together make me an ideal candidate for the NBER mentoring program on aging and health economics research.

As an undergraduate, I worked under Joe Price, professor of economics at Brigham Young University, in his Record Linking Lab which specialized in linking individuals across historical records. As part of this job, I linked the recently publicized version of the Social Security Administration's NUMIDENT data with our lab's Database of Human Lifespan. The data I contributed are being used to this day in economic and demographic research. This experience helped prepare me for graduate school by giving me hands on experience with big data in Stata while cultivating an interest in demographic research.

My interest in demography and health influenced my decision to focus on applied microeconomics and industrial organization in my second-year PhD coursework. My IO coursework introduced me to the leading methods in structural modeling commonly used in contemporary health economics papers. My econometrics coursework taught me the intricacies of leading methods in causal inference such as randomized controlled trials, differences-in-differences, instrumental variables, and regression discontinuity. I've studied and presented canonical health economics papers in my IO classes. While this was very helpful, I'm still unsure what I could contribute as a researcher.

As one of the top medical schools in the country, WashU has always been a mecca of health research. New initiatives have made WashU an exciting place to study health economics. My graduate school just launched the "Business of Health" initiative tying medical and business research together closer than ever before. The university has also just started a public health school. I'd like to learn about interdisciplinary research so I can benefit from the exciting new initiatives at WashU's medical and public health schools.

Mentorship in practically accessing data was emphasized during the Q&A session for this program. This is very important to me. I understand aging and health data can be hard to access for a variety of reasons. I'd like guidance in being approved to use sensitive, proprietary data. WashU is getting a Federal Statistical Research Data Center soon, which could be a huge asset to me. WashU collects a variety of aging and health data that has been used by researchers across departments, but accessing it isn't straight forward to an early career researcher like me. I know I could access a wealth of valuable data if I can learn how to navigate the approval process.

Exposure to more research ideas would be beneficial to me as well. I would like to attend the meetings following the workshop on healthcare administration & fraud and long-term care & caregiving. I feel my research interests, level of doctoral training, and current available opportunities make me an ideal candidate for this mentorship program.

SPENCER TIMMERMAN

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EDUCATION

PhD **Washington University in St. Louis — Olin** May 2029 (Expected)

BS **Brigham Young University, Economics** June 2024
Minors in Mathematics and Statistics

AS **Salt Lake Community College, Communication Studies** May 2017

PHD COURSEWORK

Fall 2024: Macro 1 (B+), Quant Methods 1 (A-)**,** Applied Econometrics (A-), Micro 1 (B+)

Spring 2025: Macro 2 (B-), Quant Methods 2 (B+), Micro 2 (A), Industrial Organization 2 (A)

Fall 2025: Advanced Microeconometrics (B), IO 3 (A-), IO 3 (A-)

Spring 2026: IO 2 (A-), IO 4 (A), Causal Inference (A)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Record Linking Lab Jan 2023 to June 2024

- Helped develop tools that link families and individuals across records.
- Collaborated with fellow students to build big datasets of demographic data.
- Developed a surname dictionary to assist in linking U.S. historical records.

Poster: With Price, Joseph. (2023, December). *Creating a Surname Lexicon for Historical US Records*. Poster presented at the BYU School of FHSS Mary Lou Fulton Mentored Student Research Conference. Awarded first place in Economics.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Econ 398 May 2024 to June 2024

Teaching Assistant, Econ 378 May 2023 to Aug 2023

Teaching Assistant, Economics 110 Aug 2022 to Dec 2022

PROGRAMMING SKILLS

Proficient in Stata and LaTeX. Familiar with Python, R, MATLAB, and Julia.