

Chenzhe Zhang

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Education

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. in Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics

Aug. 2026 – Present

Columbus, OH, USA

Duke University

M.A. in Economics; Dean's Research Award for Master's Students

Aug. 2024 – May 2026

Durham, NC, USA

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

BSc in Economics and Finance; First-Class Honors

Sep. 2020 – Jun. 2024

Suzhou, China

Research Interests

Applied Microeconomics; Environmental and Energy Economics; Policy Evaluation; Causal Inference; Machine Learning.

Research Experience

Environmental and Energy Economics

Effect of Wind Farm Construction on Local Climate Change

Research Assistant

May 2025 – Dec. 2025

Supervisor: Dr. Zhenxuan Wang

- Employ an event-study and staggered Difference-in-Differences design to examine the impact of wind-farm construction on local atmospheric conditions.
- Preliminary evidence suggests that wind-farm construction may reduce the frequency of thermal inversions, with implications for the validity of using thermal inversions as an instrumental variable.

Dynamic Optimization of Distributed Photovoltaic Systems

Course Project

Sep. 2025 – Dec. 2025

Supervisor: Prof. Martin Smith

- Developed a continuous-time optimal control model in which a social planner jointly chooses distributed photovoltaic subsidies and direct abatement to manage pollution.
- Preliminary calibration shows an optimal front-loaded and declining subsidy path, highlighting the importance of grid efficiency and rural households' trust in policy for avoiding inefficient subsidy use.

Clear Sky, Clear Minds: Empirical Evidence from NSFC Applications

Undergraduate Final-Year Project

Sep. 2023 – Jul. 2024

Supervisors: Dr. Shuyang Si; Dr. Nakaya Kakuda

- Used air pollution from upwind cities as an instrumental variable and compiled daily weather, air quality, and annual NSFC research proposal records from 2013 to 2019.
- Results suggest that two-to-three-month exposure to air pollution before the application period decreases the number of grant proposals submitted.

Applied Microeconomics, Policy, and Behavioral Research

Government Endorsement and Voter Skepticism: An Experiment on Selective Disclosure in Political Communication

Capstone Project

Feb. 2025 – Jun. 2025

Supervisor: Dr. Pellumb Reshidi

- Developed theoretical predictions on voter behavior when facing governments with varying policy preferences.

- Designed a controlled experiment to test how perceived government bias affects voter decision-making under selective policy disclosure.

Long-Term Effects of Education on Earnings and Psychological Well-Being

Jan. 2025 – Jun. 2025

Capstone Project

Supervisor: Prof. Atila Abdulkadiroglu

- Used Chinese Family Panel Studies data from 2010 to 2022 and regression discontinuity designs to examine the effects of the College Expansion Policy and the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy.
- Preliminary results suggest a diminishing association between education and income over time, but an inverted-U-shaped relationship between education and mental health.

Policy Effects on Real Estate Supply Behavior in Suzhou

Jun. 2023 – Sep. 2023

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Supervisor: Dr. Shuyang Si

- Collected detailed data on underground garage column spacing in residential complexes across Suzhou.
- Employed a regression discontinuity design to evaluate the impact of the 2013 air-defense parking rent regulation.
- Findings suggest that the policy unintentionally reduced the construction quality of standard residential garages.

The Effect of Nutrition Label Education on Consumers' Healthy Diet Choices

Jun. 2022 – Sep. 2022

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Supervisor: Dr. Shuyang Si

- Designed and conducted a field experiment by administering surveys before and after a nutrition-label education intervention at a commercial center.
- Field-trial results show that nutrition-label education significantly increases consumers' willingness to pay for products with lower fat and sodium content, but not for reductions in other nutrients.

Presentations

- “Clear Sky, Clear Minds: Empirical Evidence from NSFC Applications,” Department of Economics, Rice University, Oct. 2025.
- “Clear Sky, Clear Minds: Empirical Evidence from NSFC Applications,” Department of Economics, Duke University, Oct. 2024.
- “Policy Effects on Real Estate Supply Behavior in Suzhou,” Seminar, International Business School Suzhou, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Sep. 2023.
- “The Effect of Nutrition Label Education on Consumers' Healthy Diet Choices,” Seminar, International Business School Suzhou, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Oct. 2022.

Honors and Awards

ENGIE-Axium ScholarShip	Apr.2026
Dean's Research Award for Master's Students	Oct. 2025
University Academic Achievement Award, Top 10% within Cohort	Aug. 2023

Skills

Programming and Software: Stata, Python, R, MATLAB, Microsoft Office
Languages: Mandarin Chinese, English

Last updated: Aug. 2026