

Weikang Zhang

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Research Fields

Primary: Financial Economics
Secondary: Labor Economics; Applied Microeconomics

Job Market Paper

HODL Strategy or Fantasy? 480 Million Crypto Market Simulations and the Macro-Sentiment Effect
with Alison Watts · Under review, *Global Finance Journal*

With hindsight taken out, HODL does not pay the way it is sold: median excess returns are negative at every horizon. The outsized gains used to justify HODL are most compressed after sustained optimism, when the strategy looks most appealing.

Contribution: Developed the research design, implemented the models, and conducted the empirical analysis.

Work in Progress

Occupational Mobility and Earnings Dynamics

This project models how earnings and employment paths diverge among workers starting in the same occupation and wage position.

Conference Presentations

2026 Midwest Economics Association (MEA)

Education

Ph.D. in Economics Southern Illinois University Carbondale	<i>Expected 2027</i>
M.S. in Economics Southern Illinois University Carbondale	2024
B.S. in Marketing · B.A. in Philosophy Southern Illinois University Carbondale	2022

Awards

Dr. C. Y. Kao President Baking Company (Business) Scholarship	2025–2026, 2026–2027
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Teaching Experience

Graduate Teaching Assistant, College of Business, SIUC

Jan–Dec 2023

FIN 350 Small Business Financing · MGMT 304 Introduction to Management ·
MGMT 345 Computer Information Systems · MGMT 380 Managing Information Systems

- Supported 150+ students across four undergraduate business courses taught in accelerated eight-week online sections, grading weekly assignments and answering students' questions.
- Worked through the reasoning step by step with students over Zoom when a question was difficult to explain by email.

Courses Prepared to Teach

Principles and Intermediate Microeconomics and Macroeconomics · Money and Banking ·
Financial Economics · Investments · Econometrics

Professional Experience

Graduate Assistant, Evaluation and Developmental Center, SIUC

2024–Present

- Shared primary responsibility with the director for preparing the center's 2026 CARF accreditation review: interpreted accreditation standards, revised internal policies and documentation, and explained the changes to staff.
- Analyze cash flow, operating budgets, and projected revenue, presenting the findings to the director to inform staffing and operational decisions.

Skills

Methods: Bayesian model development and inference; large-scale simulation design.

Computing: GPU-accelerated scientific computing (Python/CUDA).

References

Alison Watts, Professor of Economics, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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Zsolt Becsi, Associate Professor of Economics, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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Scott Gilbert, Interim Associate Dean, College of Business and Analytics; Associate Professor of Economics, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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