

## **THEA HOW CHOON**

270 Bay State Rd, Office B08  
Boston University, Department of Economics  
Boston MA 02215 USA  
Cell: (857) 272-4332  
Email: [theahow@bu.edu](mailto:theahow@bu.edu)  
Website: [theahowchoon.com](http://theahowchoon.com)

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### **EDUCATION**

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2020 (expected)  
Dissertation Title: *Essays on Information Revelation and Political Institutions*  
Dissertation Committee: Dilip Mookherjee, Barton Lipman and Juan Ortner  
  
B.A. Economics, *First Class*, University of Cambridge, 2014

### **FIELDS OF INTEREST**

Microeconomic theory, Political economy

### **WORKING PAPERS**

"Biased Campaign Advice: Cheap Talk and Bayesian Persuasion," September 2019.  
"Gender Composition and Strategic Behavior: Evidence from U.S. City Councils," (with Jesse Bruhn and Anna Weber), November 2019.

### **WORK IN PROGRESS**

"Informational Lobbying of Incumbent with Re-election Incentives"

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Stony Brook International Conference on Game Theory, Stony Brook NY, 2019  
Boston University Economics Department Poster Session. Boston, MA, Fall 2019

### **FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

Gitner Prize for Outstanding Economics Teaching Fellow, Boston University, 2019  
Research Grant, Institute for Economic Development, Summer 2019  
Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston University, 2018  
Summer Research Grant, Department of Economics, Boston University, Summer 2018  
Research Grant, Institute for Economic Development, Spring 2017

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Instructor, Introductory Microeconomic Analysis, Metropolitan College, Boston University, Spring 2020  
Instructor, Introductory Microeconomic Analysis, College of Arts and Sciences, Boston University, Summer 2019  
Head Teaching Fellow, Principles of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2018 - Spring 2019  
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Microeconomic Analysis, Boston University, Fall 2015 - Spring 2019

### **LANGUAGES:**

English (native), Mauritian Creole (native), French (fluent), Chinese (basic)

**COMPUTER SKILLS:** MATLAB, STATA, R, LaTeX

**CITIZENSHIP:** Mauritius/F1

**REFERENCES**

**Professor Dilip Mookherjee**

Department of Economics

Boston University

Phone: (617) 353-4392

Email: [dilipm@bu.edu](mailto:dilipm@bu.edu)

**Professor Barton Lipman**

Department of Economics

Boston University

Phone: (617) 353-2995

Email: [blipman@bu.edu](mailto:blipman@bu.edu)

**Professor Juan Ortner**

Department of Economics

Boston University

Phone: (617) 353-6323

Email: [jortner@bu.edu](mailto:jortner@bu.edu)

### **Biased Campaign Advice: Cheap Talk and Bayesian Persuasion** (Job Market Paper)

A special interest seeks to influence the policy outcome of an Downsian election, by sending messages to candidates before they announce their policy platforms. This sender possesses information about voter preferences. I show that this type of information may be credibly revealed by cheap talk, even if the sender is extremely biased. Furthermore, the sender is often able to distort policy, by privately recommending their most favoured policy platform that can still win the election. If the sender can instead commit to public messages conditional on what they observe, this becomes a Bayesian persuasion game. I compare the two models and obtain contrasting results: a special interest with credibility concerns only talks to one candidate, essentially acting as a political adviser, whereas one with full commitment advises both candidates at once. Furthermore, the former may improve median voter welfare, but the latter always worsens it.

### **Gender Composition and Strategic Behavior: Evidence from U.S. City Councils** (*with Jesse Bruhn and Anna Weber*)

We investigate the effects of gender representation on policy at the city council level in the U.S., as well as the channels through which such effects may occur. Using newly collected data on city council elections and minutes of council meetings, we exploit close elections between male and female candidates to study how an exogenous increase in the proportion of female city councilors affects not only policy, but the group dynamics in the council.