

Abenezer Taye

Post-Doctoral Research Scholar
Institute for Software Integrated Systems
Vanderbilt University

Office Address: 1400 18th Ave S,
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37212
USA

Cell Phone  (336) 335-8289
Email  abenezertaye@gwu.edu
LinkedIn  <https://www.linkedin.com/in/abenezer-taye/>
GitHub  <https://github.com/Abenezergirma>

EDUCATION

George Washington University, Washington, DC
Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering, January 2021 - August 2025

Advisor: Prof. Peng Wei

Dissertation title: *Enhancing Safety and Energy-Efficiency in Advanced Air Mobility Through Trajectory Planning and Mission Feasibility Assessment Strategies*

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Greensboro, North Carolina
Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering (Transferred Before Completion), August 2019 - December 2020

Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
B.S. in Electro-Mechanical Engineering, June 2017

RESEARCH INTERESTS

By contributing to the intersection of **flight control**, **robotics**, **multi-agent systems**, and **machine learning**, I develop autonomous systems and decision support tools for aviation, air transportation, and aerial vehicles. My research expertise blends in both learning-based and model-based approaches for **trajectory planning**, **control**, **aircraft mechanics**, and **battery prognostics**, and ensuring that new aircraft types such as small unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and electrical take-off and landing (eVTOL) vehicles operate **safely** and **energy-efficiently** in complex environments, e.g. high-density airspaces under winds.

Testing Platforms for Novel AAM Concepts

- eVTOL simulators
- sUAS hardware flight testing
- Battery digital twins
- UAM/UAS transportation networks

MAJOR PROJECTS

Technical Lead, Securing High-Density Urban Airspaces Oct. 2025 - Onward

- Leading a team of six research engineers on a **\$6M NASA-funded University Leadership Initiative (ULI)** project focused on securing AAM operations.
- Developing methods and algorithms to identify vulnerabilities in AAM systems and model the impact of cyberattacks.
- Designing defense strategies against cyberattacks and improving system-level resilience and security.

Technical Lead, Safe, Scalable, and Energy-Efficient Trajectory Planner for AAM Operations Jan. 2021 - Aug. 2025

- Developed a real-time, multi-agent trajectory planner for AAM operations to ensure both safety and scalability in dense urban airspace environments.
- Integrated a data-driven reachability analysis module and a scalable Markov decision process (MDP) framework to guide decentralized decision-making.
- Enhanced safety through action-shielding and reward-shaping strategies, while optimizing for energy efficiency using aircraft powertrain modeling, trajectory smoothness, and wind-aware planning.

Technical Thrust Lead, In-Time Learning-Based Safety Management for Scalable AAM Operations Mar. 2021 - May 2024

- Led the first thrust of a **\$2.5M NASA-funded System-Wide Safety** project to develop a scalable, data-driven safety management system for heterogeneous Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) operations.

- Designed a mission feasibility assessment framework that integrates battery prognostics with uncertainty quantification to evaluate the impact of adverse weather (e.g., wind) on flight safety.
- Demonstrated the framework's effectiveness in real-world-inspired scenarios, including drone package delivery and urban air taxi services.

Technical Lead, Learning-based Li-ion Battery Modeling for Online Decision Making

Sept. 2022 - Aug. 2025

- Developed a real-time predictive model for Li-ion batteries powering drones using **Neural ODEs** and **Physics-Informed Neural Networks** to address the computational limitations of traditional electrochemical models.
- Achieved a **33 × speedup** in battery state prediction and mission feasibility assessment compared to model-based approaches, without compromising prediction accuracy.
- Enabled mission feasibility assessment and mid-flight replanning through efficient online battery state prediction, supporting safe and adaptive aircraft operations.

Technical Lead, Energy Demand Analysis for eVTOL Aircraft in Urban Air Mobility

Sept. 2023 - Dec. 2024

- Developed a predictive framework to forecast charging demand for electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft in urban air mobility (UAM) operations.
- Integrated energy consumption models with aircraft specifications, wind forecasts, and scheduled flight missions to estimate aggregated power demand at vertiports.
- Enabled proactive energy planning and infrastructure optimization for UAM networks through data-driven demand forecasting.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Research Intern, Sensor Fusion and Tracking Toolbox, MathWorks

May 2023 - Aug. 2023

- Built a MATLAB application to analyze and diagnose multi-agent tracking systems, identify root causes of performance issues, and suggest algorithmic improvements.
- Enabled support for advanced tracking algorithms (JPDA, PHD, MHT) to facilitate in-depth performance evaluation and comparative analysis.
- **Accelerated the tracker development cycle by 60%** and demonstrated effectiveness using real-world radar data in aircraft landing approach scenarios.

Research Intern, MathWorks Advanced Research and Technology Office, MathWorks

May 2022 - Aug. 2022

- Developed a decentralized, data-driven trajectory planning framework for urban air mobility using real-time reachability analysis and Markov decision processes (MDP) to ensure aircraft separation and safety.
- Designed an online learning algorithm to approximate aircraft reachable sets via a discrepancy function trained on simulated trajectories, enabling adaptive and efficient collision avoidance.
- **Demonstrated a 78% reduction in near-midair collisions** in large-scale simulations (up to 32 aircraft over a 15 km area).

LANGUAGES/TOOLS/TECHNOLOGIES

Programming Skills: Python (+5 years)
MATLAB/Simulink (+5 years)
C/C++ (+5 years)

Packages: TensorFlow, PyTorch, OpenCV, Keras, OpenAI Gym

Operating Systems: Linux, Windows, ROS

Standards: Familiar with DO-178C certification process

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Publications

Published, in press, submitted

1. **A. Taye**, P. Wei, “Energy-Efficient Trajectory Planning and Mission Feasibility Assessment Framework for Drone Package Delivery Operations”, Accepted by *AIAA Journal of Aerospace Information Systems*.
2. **A. Taye**, R. Valenti, A. Rajhans, A. Mavrommatti, P.J. Mosterman and P. Wei, “Safe and Scalable Real-Time Trajectory

3. P. Razzaghi, A. Tabrizian, W. Guo, S. Chen, **A. Taye**, E. Thompson, A. Bregeon, A. Baheri and P. Wei, “A Survey on Reinforcement Learning in Aviation Applications”, *Engineering Applications of Artificial Intelligence*, vol. 136, part A, Oct. 2024.

Conference Publications

Published, in press, accepted

1. N. Dahle, R. Canady, A. Diaz-Gonzalez, A. Coursey, B. Bjorkman, C. Lemieux-Mack, S. Gonzalez, N. Koroma, **A. Taye**, G. Biswas, B. C. Ward, X. Koutsoukos “Detection of Compromised UAVs using Graph Machine Learning,” AIAA SciTech Forum, Orlando, FL, 2026.
2. A. Diaz-Gonzalez, A. Coursey, B. Bjorkman, D. Shatokhin, C. Lemieux-Mack, S. Gonzalez, N. Dahle, N. Koroma, **A. Taye**, R. Canady, X. Koutsoukos, G. Biswas, B. C. Ward “Networked Simulation for Cybersecurity Evaluation of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems in Dense Urban Environments,” AIAA SciTech Forum, Orlando, FL, 2026.
3. B. Bjorkman, S. Zheng, A. Coursey, C. Lemieux-Mack, S. Gonzalez, A. Diaz-Gonzalez, N. Dahle, N. Koroma, R. Canady, X. Koutsoukos, G. Biswas, **A. Taye**, B. C. Ward “Remote ID Spoofing Attacks and Defenses,” AIAA SciTech Forum, Orlando, FL, 2026.
4. I. Sharifi, M. Ghazanfari, **A. Taye**, P. Wei, M. H. Ahmed, H. T. Kim, M. Ghasemi, V. Gupta, N. Dahle, R. Canady, A. D. Gonzalez, A. Coursey, B. Bjorkman, et. al. “A Survey of Security Challenges and Solutions for UAS Traffic Management (UTM) and small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS),” AIAA SciTech Forum, Orlando, FL, 2026.
5. M. Ghazanfari, I. Sharifi, **A. Taye**, P. Wei, B. C. Ward, X. Koutsoukos, G. Biswas, N. Dahle, R. Canady, A. D. Gonzalez, A. Coursey, B. Bjorkman, et. al. “A Survey of Security Challenges and Solutions for Advanced Air Mobility and eVTOL Aircraft,” AIAA SciTech Forum, Orlando, FL, 2026.
6. **A. Taye**, A. Coursey, M. Quinones-Grueiro, C. Hu, G. Biswas, P. Wei, “Safe to Fly? Real-Time Flight Mission Feasibility Assessment for Drone Package Delivery Operations”, The 36th International Conference on Principles of Diagnosis and Resilient Systems (DX’25), Nashville, TN, Sept. 2025.
7. C. Vu, M. Ghazanfari, K Dong **A. Taye**, A. Tabrizian, and P. Wei “Transformer or CNN? Benchmarking Real-Time Detection Transformer and YOLOv8 for Small UAS Autonomous Landing”, AIAA AVIATION, Las Vegas, NV, July 2025.
8. J. Xu, C. Vu, **A. Taye**, A. Tabrizian, P. Wei, “Small UAS Landing Site Detection with ArUco Markers and Deep Learning based Computer Vision”, AIAA AVIATION, Las Vegas, NV, July 2025.
9. D. Ding, C. Vu, **A. Taye**, A. Tabrizian, P. Wei, Z. Zhao, “Synthetic Data Generation for Computer Vision based Autonomous Landing for Small UAS Package Delivery”, AIAA AVIATION, Las Vegas, NV, July 2025.
10. **A. Taye**, S. Chen, P. Wei, “Energy-Aware Strategic Traffic Management for Urban Air Mobility”, AIAA SCITECH, Orlando, FL, Jan 2025.
11. A. Tabrizian, P. Gupta, **A. Taye**, J. Jones, E. Thompson, S. Chen, T. Bonin, D. Eberle and P. Wei, “Using Large Language Models to Automate Flight Planning under Wind Hazards”, AIAA/IEEE Digital Avionics Systems Conference (DASC), San Diego, CA, Sept. 2024.
12. **A. Taye**, P. Wei, P. Pradeep, J. Jones, T. Bonin, and D. Eberle, “Energy Demand Analysis for eVTOL Charging Stations in Urban Air Mobility”, AIAA AVIATION, Las Vegas, NV, July 2024.
13. **A. Taye**, P. Wei, “Flight Mission Feasibility Assessment of Urban Air Mobility Operations under Battery Energy Constraint”, AIAA SCITECH, Orlando, FL, Jan. 2024.
14. **A. Taye**, E. Thompson, P. Wei, T. Bonin, and J. Jones, “Probabilistic Evaluation for Flight Mission Feasibility of a Small Octocopter in the Presence of Wind”, AIAA AVIATION, San Diego, CA, Jun. 2023.
15. **A. Taye**, J. Bertram, C. Fan, and P. Wei, “Reachability based online safety verification for high-density urban air mobility trajectory planning”, AIAA AVIATION, Chicago, IL, Jun. 2022.

16. E. Thompson, **A. Taye**, W. Guo, P. Wei, M. Quinones, I. Ahmed, G. Biswas, J. Quattrociocchi, S. Carr, U. Topcu, and J. Jones, "A survey of eVTOL aircraft and AAM operation hazards." AIAA AVIATION, Chicago, IL, Jun. 2022.

Technical Reports

1. **A. Taye** and P. Wei, "AI Safety and Certification in Aviation Systems - Identifying the Gaps and Opportunities", Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), 2022.

INVITED TALKS

1. **A. Taye** "Safe to Fly? Real-Time Flight Mission Feasibility Assessment for Drone Package Delivery Operation", The 36th International Conference on Principles of Diagnosis and Resilient Systems (DX'25), Nashville, TN, Sept. 2025.
2. **A. Taye** "Energy-Aware Strategic Traffic Management for Urban Air Mobility", AIAA SCITECH, Orlando, FL, Jan 2025.
3. **A. Taye** "Energy-Efficient Trajectory Planning and Mission Feasibility Assessment Framework for Drone Package Delivery Operations", INFORMS Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, Oct. 2024.
4. **A. Taye** "Energy Demand Analysis for eVTOL Charging Stations in Urban Air Mobility", AIAA AVIATION, Las Vegas, NV, July 2024.
5. **A. Taye** "Flight Mission Feasibility Assessment of Urban Air Mobility Operations under Battery Energy Constraint", AIAA SCITECH, Orlando, FL, Jan. 2024.
6. **A. Taye**, J. Bertram, C. Fan, and P. Wei, "Reachability based online safety verification for high-density urban air mobility trajectory planning", AIAA AVIATION, Chicago, IL, Jun. 2022.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Honorable Mention Award, AIAA Young Professionals, Students, and Educators (YPSE) Conference	2022
Ambassador of Science and Technology of the graduation year 2017, Ministry of Science and Technology of Ethiopia	2017

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), Student Member
 Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), Student Member
 Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), Student Member

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Conference Session and Workshop Organizer

Workshop Co-Host Apr. 2025
 "NASA System-Wide Safety Program Workshop "
George Washington University, Washington DC, DC

Session Co-Chair Aug. 2024
 "System-Wide Safety"
AIAA Aviation 2024, Las Vegas, NV

Session Co-Chair Aug. 2024
 "Regional Air Mobility and General Aviation"
AIAA Aviation 2024, Las Vegas, NV

Reviewer Activities

- *Journal referee*
 - Aerospace Science and Technology 2022 - 2026
 - The Aeronautical Journal 2023 - 2026
 - AIAA Journal of Aerospace Information Systems 2022 - 2026
 - IEEE Transactions on Intelligent Transportation Systems 2022 - 2026
- *Conference referee*

- AIAA Aviation
- AIAA SciTech

2022 - 2026
2022 - 2026

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant for **MAE4182 - Electro-Mechanical Control Systems**

Fall 2024

- **Description** State-space representations of dynamic systems; dynamics of linear systems; controllability and observability; linear observers; compensator design by separation principle; linear-quadratic optimal control; Riccati equations; random processes; Kalman filter; applications of optimal stochastic control theory to robotics.

MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Students

Jairo Sanchez, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, George Washington University

Spring 2023

Tharun Saravanan, Computer Science, George Washington University

Summer 2023

Liza Mozolyuk, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, George Washington University

Summer 2023

Jeremiah Webb, Computer Science, Vanderbilt

Fall 2025 - Present

REFERENCES

Dr. Peng Wei

Associate Professor

Tel: (202)-994-0895

Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Email: pwei@gwu.edu

George Washington University

Washington, DC 20052

Dr. Bryan C. Ward

Assistant Professor

Tel: (615)-343-6204

Department of Computer Science

Email: bryan.c.ward@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Nashville, TN 94720-1720

Dr. Gautam Biswas

Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Engineering

Tel: (615)-343-6204

Department of Computer Science

Email: gautam.biswas@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Nashville, TN 94720-1720