

# Xijia “Polina” Zhang

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## Education

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**Georgia Institute of Technology**

Aug. 2024 – May. 2029

*Ph.D. in Robotics*

**University of Michigan**

Sep. 2022 – May. 2024

*B.S.E in Computer Science*

**Shanghai Jiao Tong University**

Sep. 2020 – Aug. 2024

*B.E in Electrical and Computer Engineering*

## Research Focus

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**Previous:** Developing robotic systems that enhance human-robot collaboration, specifically focusing on natural language explanations.

**Current:** Algorithmically improve foundation models (LLMs, VLMs, and VLAs) for robotics settings.

## Relevant Publications

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[“Model-Agnostic Policy Explanations with Large Language Models”](#) 

**Zhang Xi-Jia**, Yue Guo, Shufei Chen, Simon Stepputtis, Matthew Gombolay, Katia Sycara, Joseph Campbell  
COLM 2025 (**top 5% of submissions**)

- Propose a method for generating natural language explanations of agent behavior based only on observed states and actions, without access to the agent’s underlying model.

[“Learning Effective Action Advising in the Face of Changing Rewards”](#) 

Yue Guo, **Zhang Xi-Jia**, Simon Stepputtis, Joseph Campbell, Katia Sycara  
CoLLAs 2024 (**Oral**)

- Enable the teacher policy to continually learn and adapt its reward function through ongoing observation of the student when providing action advices.

[“Teaching the Teacher: Enhancing Human-to-Robot Skill Demonstration with Live Foundation Model and Augmented Reality Feedback”](#)

Nina Moorman, Matthew Luebbers, **Zhang Xi-Jia**, Zulfiqar Zaidi, Marcus Lau, Yixing Yao, Megan Langwasser, Letian Chen, Sanne van Waveren, Matthew Gombolay  
(*in submission*)

- Support non-expert users in providing kinesthetic demonstrations through language explanations and policy visualizations.
- Contributions: Language explanations.

[“Communication and Verification in LLM Agents towards Collaboration under Information Asymmetry](#)

Run Peng, Ziqiao Ma, Amy Pang, Sikai Li, **Zhang Xi-Jia**, Yingzhuo Yu, Cristian-Paul Bara, Joyce Chai  
(*in submission*)

- Investigate the performance of LLM agents in human-robot collaboration tasks under information asymmetry.
- Contributions: TIAGo robot development.

See full list of publications [\[link\]](#)

# Skills

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Toolchain	ROS, ROS2, Linux, Docker, Huggingface, RLlib
Frameworks & Libraries	Gym, NLTK, Transformers, Pytorch, Scikit-Learn
Robotics Development	TIAGo, Jaco Arm, Khepera, Fetch; RViz, Gazebo

# Honors & Awards

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Sep. 2024	Robotics Fellowship	<i>Georgia Institute of Technology</i>
Mar. 2024	James B. Angell Scholar	<i>University of Michigan</i>
Apr. 2024	Elected Member	<i>Tau Beta Pi, Michigan Gamma</i>
Dec. 2023	Dean's List	<i>University of Michigan</i>
Apr. 2023	Dean's List	<i>University of Michigan</i>
Dec. 2022	Dean's List	<i>University of Michigan</i>
May. 2023	Chun-Tsung Scholar	<i>Shanghai Jiao Tong University</i>
Oct. 2021	Rongchang Innovation Scholarship Nomination	<i>Shanghai Jiao Tong University</i>
Nov. 2021	Silver Medal	<i>The University Physics Contest</i>