

# Zahra (Mona) Ghassemi

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## PROFILE:

- Extensive and varied teaching experience, including 7 semesters as a teaching assistant.
- Experience working with students aged 6-87, including students with special needs.
- Experience working in leadership and instructional roles with youth in community and academic settings.
- Experience giving tutorials and designing lesson plans, assignments and quizzes, and evaluating student progress.
- Trained in active listening and harm reduction, as well as emergency response.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN AND WRITTEN:

- English (fluent)
- French (advanced)
- Farsi/Persian (fluent)

## EDUCATION:

### **Master of Arts: Social and Cultural Anthropology**

Concordia University (Montreal, QC)

2017

- 3.94/4.30 Cumulative GPA
- Thesis: *Reproducing The Virginity Imperative: Women's Collusion and Men's Complicity Among Young Iranians Living in Montreal*

### **Bachelor of Science: Computer Science and Biology**

McGill University (Montreal, QC)

2014

### **International Baccalaureate in Science**

CEGEP Vanier College (Ville-St-Laurent, QC)

2007-2009

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

### **Private Tutor**

Montreal, QC

2006-2019

- Tutored individuals for high school math and science, university-level computer science, and programming.

### **English Second Language Teacher**

VIPkid (remote, China)

2018 - 2019

- Taught over 100 one-on-one ESL classes to more than 40 Chinese children aged 5-12; 5/5 rating from parents.
- Personalized and extended lessons appropriately for student level with creative use of teaching aids.

### **Tutor and Test Prep Teacher**

Prep Academy Tutors of Montreal (Montreal, QC)

August 2018 - January 2019

- Tutor students in high school math, science (physics, chemistry), psychology, and SATs.

### **Computer Teacher**

Communicaid for Hearing-Impaired Persons (Montreal, QC)

September 2018 - December 2018

- Taught fundamental computer skills to hard-of-hearing seniors.
- Planned and delivered a 10-week curriculum, adapting lesson content to student needs.

### **Note-Taker and Tutor (Access Centre for Students With Disabilities)**

Concordia University (Montreal, QC)

2017-2018

- Tutored students of differing needs for various courses (Statistics, Interviewing).

- Wrote and illustrated clean class notes and sent to students in timely fashion.

### **Teaching Assistant (Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology)**

*Concordia University Department of Sociology and Anthropology (Montreal, QC)*

2016-2017

- Evaluated weekly assignments, term paper and final exam.
- Created new questions for quizzes and assignments.

### **Course Assistant (Logic and Computability)**

*McGill University (Montreal, QC)*

2013

- Developed questions for use in course assignments.

### **Note-Taker (Office for Students With Disabilities)**

*McGill University (Montreal, QC)*

2012

- Transcribed clean class notes in LaTeX and uploaded them for student in timely fashion.

### **Teaching Assistant (Introduction to Computing)**

*McGill University (Montreal, QC)*

2010-2012

- Evaluated programming assignments (Java).
- Responded to student questions during weekly office hours and on online discussion board.
- Taught and reviewed core course concepts with students during interactive tutorials.

### **Grader (Java)**

*Private Contract (Montreal, QC)*

Summer 2011

- Assessed programming assignments (Java).
- Communicated with instructor to ascertain what was expected of students.

### **Volunteer Tutor and Biology Camp Coordinator at McGill Computer Science Summer Camp**

*McGill University (Montreal, QC)*

Summers 2010-2014

- Coached camp participants during programming activities.
- Adapted and delivered a lesson on the Java programming language.
- Coordinated a small team to ensure the smooth running of the biology section of the camp.

### **Drawing Teacher**

*South Asian Women's Community Centre (Montreal, QC)*

2004-2005

*Noor Cultural Centre (Montreal, QC)*

*Relais Côte-des-Neiges (Montreal, QC)*

- Taught weekly or biweekly drawing lessons to children aged 6-12.
- Designed lessons appropriate for the children in attendance.
- Purchased supplies according to the needs of the class.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING:**

### **TEACHING WORKSHOPS:**

#### **Peer Instruction: Engaging Students in Small and Large Classrooms**

*GradProSkills, Concordia University*

2018

#### **Designing your Course: Aligning Learning Outcomes, Assessment, and Learning Activities**

*GradProSkills, Concordia University*

2018

#### **Best Practices for Grading and Giving Effective Feedback to Students**

*GradProSkills, Concordia University*

2018

#### **32-hour Graduate Seminar in University Teaching**

*GradProSkills, Concordia University*

2017

#### **T-Pulse Teaching Workshop**

*Tomlinson Project in University-Level Science Education, McGill University*

2010

## LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION, AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

### Peer Support and Advocacy Training

*Centre for Gender Advocacy (Montreal, QC)*

2017-2018

- Attended over 50 hours of weekly workshops and practice sessions on topics including active listening, harm reduction, mental health, and intersectional issues including race and gender.

### Leadership Certificate

*GradProSkills, Concordia University*

2017-2018

- Attended workshops on Foundations of Leadership, Navigating Emotional Intelligence, Leading Teams for Success, Professional Negotiation and Persuasion Skills, Solving Problems and Seeing the Big Picture, and Motivating and Inspiring as a Leader.

### French Language Workshops - Level 5

*GradProSkills, Concordia University*

2017

## COMPUTING:

### Certified Cloud Practitioner

*Amazon Web Services*

April 2023

### AWS Cloud Quest: Cloud Practitioner

*Amazon Web Services*

March 2023

### Mastering Container Security

*NorthSec (Montreal, Quebec)*

May 2020

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE:

### Code of Conduct Committee Lead

*NorthSec (Montreal, Quebec)*

June 2023 - Present

- Contributed continual updates and improvements to the Code of Conduct.
- Followed up on incident reports.

### Vice President of the Board of Directors, Vice Chair of Communication and PR Department

*Iranian-Canadian Congress (Canada)*

Apr 2023 - Present

- Contributed to high-level decision-making, including chairing committees and developing projects.
- Sent letters to policymakers and did interviews with the media on issues of relevance to the organization.
- Coordinated collaborations with like-minded organizations.

### Volunteer: Logistics; Training Moderator; Diversity Program Selection Committee

*NorthSec (Montreal, Quebec)*

May 2023, March - May 2021

- Assisted in gaffing and dressing of stage, serving food, and cleanup for an event with hundreds of attendees.
- Moderated a workshop hosted on Zoom (assisted trainer in addressing questions).
- Selected winning participants among applicants to the Diversity Outreach program.

### President of the Board of Directors

*QPIRG Concordia (Montreal, QC)*

October 2019-present

- Participated in board meetings and collective decision-making related to the organization.
- Contributed to the resolution of a staff conflict and acted as liaison to a staff member.
- Served on hiring committees and made decisions regarding funding allocations.

### Reading Club Organizer and Discussion Lead

*#BecauseWeveRead Montreal (Montreal, QC) and JooJoo Azad*

2018-present

- Hosted events and promoted through social media and intentional outreach to POC communities.

- Coordinated outreach and created partnerships with local bookstores and other organizations.
- Applied for and received funding from community organizations.
- Communicated with an international team.

### **Robotics Team Leader for CRC competition**

*Vanier College (Montreal, QC)*

2007-2009

- Constructed, with a team, a 12' by 12' kiosk to represent school during competition (both years).
- Arranged team meetings, invited guest speakers, and divided tasks between members.
- Purchased materials and created illustrations for journal, website and video teams.

### **Leadership Team Member**

*Fang-Shen-Do Kung Fu School (Montreal, QC)*

2007-2009

- Taught warmups and children's classes regularly, and a full adult class on emergency notice.
- Keyholder; in charge during absence of head instructors.
- Communicated with public and demonstrated techniques during special events.

## **AWARDS AND HONOURS:**

- Concordia Conference and Exposition Award 2017
- Carrie Boucock Memorial Award (Department of Sociology and Anthropology) 2017
- Governor General's Bronze Medal (for top graduating grade at high school) 2006

## **SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE:**

### **DevOps / Site Reliability Engineer**

*Internal Projects @ AlleyCorp Nord (Montreal, QC)*

Jan 2022 - Present

- Researched implementation of privacy-preserving LLM-based tooling.
- Assembled and tested robotics parts; worked with Viam Robotics' SDK.
- Experimented on ChatGPT's capability at engineering interview tests.
- Wrote blog posts and delivered talks on research results.

*Capable Health via AlleyCorp Nord (Montreal, QC)*

May 2022 - Jan 2023

- Automated AWS infrastructure and implemented security controls through Terraform, resulting in achievement of SOC2 type 2 certification.
- Secured infrastructure through implementation of linting and static analysis tools in CI and in shared developer environments.
- Led research, documentation, and implementation of an e2e test framework using Terraform and Datadog Synthetics.
- Designed, implemented, ran, and created reports for load tests with K6.
- Managed DNS and http redirects through Cloudflare.
- Automated database seeding for test environments (Ruby on Rails).

### **Lead Quality Assurance Engineer**

*Rally.io through AC781*

April 2020 - Present

- Implemented test framework for an API project (REST/GraphQL).
- Implemented e2e framework for a web/mobile application (Appium/Selenium).
- Managed release testing process and release schedule.

### **Quality Assurance Developer**

*Workjam, Inc. (Montreal, QC)*

January 2019 - April 2020

- Implemented e2e testing framework in Javascript using REST API calls, Appium, and Sauce Labs integration.
- Implemented front-end mobile tests and contributed to improvement of QA processes.

- On-boarded test developers and mentored an intern working on the localization project.

### **Quality Assurance and Support Specialist**

*Peerio (Montreal, QC)*

October 2018 - December 2018

- Tested software and website on multiple platforms and reported bugs to the development team.
- Created documentation and automated testing scenarios.
- Responded to customer support requests.

### **Programmer/Data Analyst**

*Lechowicz Lab, McGill University (Montreal, QC)*

2014

- Translated code for an ecological simulation from Delphi (Pascal) to Python.
- Streamlined code and added comments to improve reusability.

## WRITING, EDITING, AND TRANSLATION EXPERIENCE:

### **Editor: *Stories from Montreal Student Journal***

*SASU, Concordia University (Montreal, QC)*

2017-2018

- Edited writer's contribution and provided several rounds of feedback.
- Attended team meetings regarding the progress of the journal.

### **Translator (Farsi to English)**

*Smart Solution Systems, Inc. (Montreal, QC)*

2013

- Translated a 650-page catalogue of technical and educational supplies.

### **Private Editor (Montreal, QC)**

2006-present

- Edited letters of intent, essays, and articles.

### **Language Officer: Model United Nations**

*Vanier College (Montreal, QC)*

2008-2009

- Edited delegates' position papers in preparation for McMUN competition.
- Attended club meetings and debriefings.
- Represented VMUN during Vanier clubs' day and to the student council.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEER WORK:

### **Peer Support Volunteer**

*Centre for Gender Advocacy (Montreal, QC)*

2018-2020

- Listen actively to visitors seeking peer support.
- Assist drop-in visitors with services such as library, binders, safer sex and injection kits, and outside referrals.
- Keyholder.

### **CERT Volunteer**

*Concordia University (Montreal, QC)*

2018-present

- Responsible during on-campus emergencies to assist individuals in proper emergency response, evacuate floors, and report to other members of emergency response team.

### **Participant in Concordia University Public Conversation on Sexual Assault**

April 2018

- Brainstormed and communicated possible improvements to university sexual assault response

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

### **Revolution or Stasis? Marriage and sexual values among the Iranian diaspora in Montreal**

*CASCA/IUAES 2017: "Mo(u)vement", Ottawa University (Ottawa, ON)*

May 2017

## **Red and White: A Discussion of Hymeneal Blood Ritual as Gendered Violence**

AGSA Conference: "Colour, Tint, Tone", McGill University (Montreal, QC)

April 2017

## **Mary's Life on Mars: A Theoretical and Ethnographic Discussion of "The Virginity Imperative"**

SAGSA Conference: "To Boldly Go", Concordia University (Montreal, QC)

March 2017

### **PUBLIC LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS:**

#### **Bisexuality Workshop - co-presenter on biphobia and bi erasure**

Centre Communautaire LGBTQ de Montreal (Montreal, QC)

September 2017

#### **Reproducing The Virginity Imperative: Women's Collusion and Men's Complicity**

CafeLitt (Montreal, QC)

August 2017

#### **Reproducing The Virginity Imperative: Women's Collusion and Men's Complicity**

Three-Minute Thesis Competition, Concordia University (Montreal, QC)

March 2017

### **MEDIA APPEARANCES:**

#### **Interview ("Navigating Identity and Culture as an Iranian-Canadian")**

ICC Podcast with Daniel Bagheri Sarvestani

September 3, 2023

#### **Follow-up Interview (on the aftermath of the tragedy of UIA flight PS752)**

with Mike Finnerty, CBC Radio *Daybreak*

Jan 13, 2020

#### **Interview ("Iranian Montrealers on Tensions between Iran and the United States")**

with Mike Finnerty, CBC Radio *Daybreak*

Jan 6, 2020

#### **Interview (on Trump's exit from the Iran Nuclear Deal)**

with Mike Finnerty, CBC Radio *Daybreak*

May 10, 2018

#### **Interview (on sexual violence)**

with Mehdi Fallahi, Radio Namaashoum

February 12, 2018

#### **Interview (regarding my thesis research, feminism and virginity)**

with Mohammad Rad, Hodhod

August 23, 2016

### **TECHNICAL SKILLS**

#### **Programming Languages:**

- Javascript
- Java
- Python
- Bash (shell script)
- Ruby on Rails

#### **Automation:**

Infrastructure and CI:

- AWS
- Terraform

#### **• Github Actions**

- Bitbucket Pipelines

#### **Testing Tools:**

- K6
- Appium / Selenium
- WebdriverIO
- Cucumber / BDD
- RSpec
- Postman (scripting)

#### **Databases and Backend:**

- MySQL, PostgreSQL
- REST & GraphQL

#### **FE Development:**

- HTML5 / CSS
- React.js

#### **Tools of the Trade:**

- Git
- Linux / Terminal
- VSCode