

ACADEMIC POSITION

Northwestern University

Evanston, IL

Assistant Professor (Tenure Track), Department of Communication Studies, School of Communication Sept 2023 –

Co-Director, [Computational Multi-Modal Communication Lab](#)

Core faculty, [Media, Technology, and Society \(MTS\)](#)

Core faculty, [Technology and Social Behavior \(TSB\)](#)

Faculty Affiliate, [Center for Communication & Public Policy \(CCPP\)](#)

Faculty Affiliate, [Center for Human-Computer Interaction + Design \(HCI+D\)](#)

Faculty Affiliate, [Artificial Intelligence at Northwestern \(AI@NU\)](#)

EDUCATION

Stanford University

Stanford, CA

Ph.D. in Communication

2017–2023

Ph.D. Minor in Political Science

Committee: Jennifer Pan (Chair), Jeff Hancock, Angèle Christin, Yiqing Xu

Stanford University

Stanford, CA

M.A. in East Asian Studies

2015–2017

Tsinghua University

Beijing, China

B.A. in Journalism (graduated with honors)

2011–2015

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- [13] Qian, S., **Lu, Y.**, Peng, Y., Shen, C. & Xu, H. (2024). [Convergence or divergence? A cross-platform analysis of climate change visual categories, features, and user engagement on Twitter and Instagram](#). *Public Relations Review*. 50(2), 102454.
- [12] **Lu, Y.**, & Peng, Y. (2024). [The Mobilizing Power of Visual Media Across Stages of Social-Mediated Protests](#). *Political Communication*. 1-28.
- [11] Chen, K., **Lu, Y.***, & Wang, Y. (2023). [Unraveling China's digital traces: evaluating communication scholarship through a sociotechnical lens](#). *Chinese Journal of Communication*. Online First in October 2023. [*co-first author]
- [10] Christin, A., & **Lu, Y.** (2023). [The Influencer Pay Gap: Platform Labor Meets Racial Capitalism](#). *New Media & Society*. Online First in April 2023.
- [9] Peng, Y., **Lu, Y.***, & Shen, C. (2023). [An Agenda for Studying Credibility Perceptions of Visual Misinformation](#). *Political Communication*, 40(2), 225-237. [*co-first author]
- [8] **Lu, Y.**, & Shen, C. (2023). [Unpacking Multimodal Fact-checking: Features and Engagement of Fact-checking Videos on Chinese TikTok \(Douyin\)](#). *Social Media + Society*, 9(1).
- [7] Chen, A., **Lu, Y.***, Chen, K., & Ng, A. (2023). [Pandemic Nationalism: Use of Government Social Media for Political Information and Belief in COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories in China](#). *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. Online First in February 2023. [*co-first author]

- [6] **Lu, Y.**, Schaefer, J., Park, K., Joo, J., & Pan, J. (2022). [How Information Flows from the World to China](#). *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. Online First in August 2022.
- [5] **Lu, Y.**, & Pan, J. (2022). [The Pervasive Presence of Chinese Government Content on Douyin Trending Videos](#). *Computational Communication Research*, 4(1), 68-97.
- [4] Muise, D., **Lu, Y.**, Pan, J., & Reeves, B. (2022). [Selectively localized: Temporal and visual structure of smartphone screen activity across media environments](#). *Mobile Media & Communication*, 10(3), 487–509.
- [3] **Lu, Y.**, Pan, J., & Xu, Y. (2021). [Public Sentiment on Chinese Social Media during the Emergence of COVID-19](#). *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, 1, 1-47.
- [2] **Lu, Y.**, & Pan, J. (2021). [Capturing Clicks: How the Chinese Government Uses Clickbait to Compete for Visibility](#). *Political Communication*, 38(1-2), 23-54.
- [1] Reeves, B., Ram, N., Robinson, T. N., Cummings, J. J., Giles, C. L., Pan, J., [...] **Lu, Y.**, et al. (2021). [Screenomics: A Framework to Capture and Analyze Personal Life Experiences and the Ways that Technology Shapes Them](#). *Human-Computer Interaction*, 36(2), 150-201.

BOOK CHAPTER

- [2] Peng, Y., & **Lu, Y.** (2023). [Computational Visual Analysis in Political Communication](#). D. Lilleker & A. Veneti (eds.), *Research Handbook on Visual Politics*. Edward Elgar.
- [1] Chen K & **Lu, Y.**. Video as data in computational analysis. In Shen L., Shultz P. J., Cobley P. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Quantitative Research Methods in Communication Science*. Forthcoming.

UNDER REVIEW

- [7] **Lu, Y.**, Pan, J., Xu, X., & Xu, Y. Decentralized Propaganda in the Era of Digital Media: The Massive Presence of the Chinese State on Douyin (R&R, *American Journal of Political Science*).
- [6] **Lu, Y.** Performative Propaganda Engagement: How Online Celebrity Fandom Engages with State Propaganda in China (R&R, *Political Communication*).
- [5] Hanley, H., **Lu, Y.***, & Pan, J. Across the Firewall: Foreign Media’s Role in Shaping Chinese Social Media Narratives on the Russo-Ukrainian War. (R&R, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*) [*co-first author]
- [4] **Lu, Y.**, Peng, Y. & Shen, C. Fauci Under Fire: Understanding Public Figure Memes as Vehicles for Pandemic Misinformation (Under Review).
- [3] Peng, Q., **Lu, Y. (corresponding author)**, & Peng, Y., Qian, S., Liu X., & Shen, C. Crafting the Reality: Investigating Visual Realism and Misinformation Potential of Photorealistic AI-Generated Images. (Under Review).
- [2] Dahlke, R., Tu, F., Wang, Y.C., **Lu, Y.**, Engeda, B.W. & Hancock, J. Contextualizing Misinformation: A User-Centric Approach to Linguistic and Topical Patterns in News Consumption. (Under Review).
- [1] Divon, T. & **Lu, Y.** (In)Visible Politics: Influencers on TikTok and Douyin as State Brokers, (Extended abstract accepted, full manuscript under review in *Convergence*)

SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS

- [4] **Lu, Y.** How Fans Engage with State Propaganda through Celebrity Mobilization (Manuscript in preparation).
- [3] **Lu, Y.** & Peng, Y. GPT Demonstrates Promising yet Improvable Results in Analyzing Visual Concepts in Social Science Research (Manuscript in preparation).

- [2] Chen, K., **Lu, Y.***, & Zou, S. TikToking Vaccine Nationalism: A Multimodal Understanding of COVID-19 Vaccine Videos on Douyin (Manuscript in preparation). [*co-first author]
- [1] Peng, Y., Qian, S., **Lu, Y.**, & Shen, C. What Features Predict Visual Credibility? Leveraging Multimodal Large Language Models to Enhance Credibility Predictions and Uncover Interpretable Features (Manuscript in preparation).

GRANTS

External

- OpenAI Researcher Access Program, \$5,000 worth API credits, *PI* 2024–2025
(with Cuihua (Cindy) Shen and Yilang Peng)
- National Science Foundation (CNS-2150716), \$500,000, *Research Fellow* 2022–2025
Project title: *Collaborative Research: SaTC: CORE: Small: Understanding How Visual Features of Misinformation Influence Credibility Perceptions* (PI: Cuihua (Cindy) Shen and Yilang Peng)
- Princeton Data-Driven Social Science (DDSS) Initiative, \$10,000, *co-PI* 2022–2023
Project title: *Propagating the Repressive Apparatus on Social Media: The Case of TikTok*
- Summer Institutes in Computational Social Science (SICSS) Research Grant, \$2,500, *PI* 2021
Project title: *Invisible Spammers: Detecting Bots on Chinese Social Media*
- Magic Grant from Brown Institute for Media Innovation, \$100,000, *co-PI* 2019–2020
Project title: *Screenomics Interactive Dashboard*
- Google Cloud COVID-19 Credit Grant, \$250, *PI* 2020
Project title: *Echo or Divergence: COVID-19 Discourse on Twitter and Weibo*

Internal

- HAI-Google Cloud Credits Grant Program, \$2,171, *PI* 2023
Project title: *Fandom, Propaganda and State Mobilization on Chinese Social Media*
- Stanford Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (IRiSS) Research Data Grant, \$1,500, *PI* 2022
Project title: *Fauci Memes Matter: Public Figure Memes and COVID-19 Misinformation*
- Stanford Program on Democracy and the Internet (PDI) Research Funding, \$10,000, *PI* 2020–2021
Project title: *Multimodal beyond Text: Investigating Visual Misinformation on Social Media*
- Stanford Global Studies (SGS) Global Perspectives Grant, \$3,500, *PI* 2016
Project title: *Environmental Policy Implementation in China*
- Stanford Center For East Asian Studies Summer Grant, \$3,900 2016
- Tsinghua Undergraduate Overseas Research & Training Grant, \$1,500 2014

Travel Grants

- Michael Haley Travel Grant 2023
- The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) Small Research and Conference grant 2022
- National Communication Association (NCA) Student Caucus Travel Grant 2022
- American Political Science Association (APSA) Travel Grant 2022
- Center For East Asian Studies Conference Travel Grant 2022, 2016

AWARDS & HONORS

- Top Student Paper Award, Political Communication Division, International Communication Association 2023
- Stanford Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI) Graduate Fellowship 2022–2023
- Stanford Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (IRiSS) Dissertation Fellowship 2022–2023
- Stanford Computational Social Science Fellowship 2020–2021
- Stanford Graduate Fellowship in Science & Engineering 2017–2021
- Stanford Asia Pacific Scholar Fellowship 2016
- Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) Global Policy Fellowship 2016
- Stanford Silas Palmer Research Fellowship 2015
- Beijing Distinguished Graduate Student Award 2015
- People.cn Best Paper Award (First Prize) 2015
- TECO Green Tech Contest (Bronze Medalist) 2014
- Evergrande Comprehensive Scholarship 2014
- Hang Seng Bank Mainland Scholarship 2013
- Rural Investigation and Studies Award by China Institute for Rural Studies 2013

INVITED TALKS & SEMINARS

- Chinese University of Hong Kong, Computational Social Science Laboratory Dec 2024 (scheduled)
- University of California San Francisco, PRISM Health Symposium Dec 2024 (scheduled)
- Political Science Speaker Series for Chinese Scholars Nov 2024 (scheduled)
- Northwestern University, Northwestern Institute on Complex Systems Nov 2024 (scheduled)
- Northwestern University, Culture and Society Workshop Oct 2024
- University of Wisconsin–Madison, Local News and the Future of Democracy Conference Oct 2024
- National University of Singapore, Summer Institute in Computational Social Science Singapore Jun 2024
- New York University, Frontiers in Empirical Research on East Asia May 2024
- Northwestern University, Chinese Political Economy Conference May 2024
- Ohio State University, School of Communication Apr 2024
- Northwestern University, Human-Computer Interaction + Design Center Apr 2024
- Duke Kunshan University, Center for the Study of Contemporary China Mar 2024
- University of Iowa, School of Journalism & Mass Communication Feb 2024
- University of Chicago, Computational Social Science Workshop Feb 2024
- University of Wisconsin–Madison, Computational Methods Research Group Nov 2023
- Northwestern University, Data Science Nights Oct 2023
- University of Wisconsin–Madison, Mass Communication Research Center Symposium Oct 2023
- Renmin University of China, Symposium on Multimodal Research Oct 2023
- Stanford University, Stanford Center on China’s Economy and Institutions May 2023
- UCLA, Department of Communication Jan 2023

• Northwestern University, Department of Communication Studies	Jan 2023
• The Chinese University of Hong Kong, School of Journalism and Communication	Dec 2022
• City University of Hong Kong, Department of Media and Communication	Dec 2022
• Northwestern University, Computer Vision in the Social Sciences Workshop	Dec 2022
• Dartmouth College, Program in Quantitative Social Science	Dec 2022
• UCSD, China Research Workshop	Dec 2022
• University of Maryland, College of Information Studies	Nov 2022
• University of San Francisco, Department of Economics	Nov 2022
• National University of Singapore, Department of Communications and New Media	Oct 2022
• Chinese Politics Research in Progress Workshop (online)	Apr 2022
• Stanford University, Center for Work, Technology, & Organization	Dec 2021
• Shandong University, School of Journalism and Communication (online)	Nov 2021
• Central South University, ICA 2021 Regional Hub Symposium	May 2021
• Stanford University, Data Science Lab (online)	Feb 2020, Feb 2021
• China Computational Social Science Forum (online)	Jan 2021
• Tsinghua University, The Forum for Frontier Theories and Methods in Political Science	Dec 2020
• United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society, Conversation Series	July 2019

REFERRED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

• International Communication Association (ICA), Annual Conference	2018, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024
• American Political Science Association (APSA), Annual Conference	2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
• International Conference on Computational Social Science (IC2S2)	2020, 2021, 2022, 2024
• National Communication Association (NCA), Annual Conference	2016, 2022
• Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Annual Conference	2021
• The Society for Political Methodology (PolMeth), Annual Conference	2023
• Politics and Computational Social Science (PaCSS) conference	2023
• The New Directions in Analyzing Text as Data (TADA) meeting	2023
• Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), Annual Conference	2022
• International Studies Association (ISA), Annual Conference	2023
• Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE), Annual Conference	2022
• Chinese Internet Research Conference (CIRC), Annual Conference	2018, 2021
• The International Journal of Press/Politics (IJPP), Annual Conference	2021
• Multidisciplinary International Symposium on Disinformation in Open Online Media (MISDOOM)	2021
• Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast (ASPAC), Annual Conference	2016

TEACHING

Instruction

COMM_ST 395: Digital Propaganda and Repression, Northwestern University Fall, Spring 2024
Undergraduate lecture

MTS 525: Computational Communication Research, Northwestern University Spring 2024
Ph.D. seminar

Teaching Assistant

COMM 1: Introduction to Communication, Stanford University

Fall 2019–2020

Instructor: Prof. Jeff Hancock

COMM 106/206: Communication Research Methods, Stanford University

Winter 2019–2020

Instructor: Dr. Anna Gibson

Guest Lectures

- Northwestern University, *Introduction to Grad Research in Media, Technology & Society* Oct 2024, Oct 2023
- Northwestern University, *Summer Institute in Computational Social Science Chicago* August 2024
- Northwestern University, *Misinformation and Disinformation in the Age of AI* May 2024
- University of Wisconsin–Madison, *Social Media Analytics* Apr 2024, Mar 2023, Mar 2022, Nov 2020
- Chinese University of Hong Kong, *Digital Research* April 2024
- Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management, *Computational Social Science Research* Feb 2024
- North Dakota State University, *Advanced Issues in Communication* Oct 2023
- University of California, Davis, *Persuasive Technologies* Nov 2022
- NYU-Shanghai, *2022 Summer School in Applied Social Science Research Methods* Jul 2022
- University of San Francisco, *Natural Language Processing* Nov 2020
- Tsinghua University, *Comparative Journalism Studies* Nov 2020

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Founder, *COMputation Island*

An online platform for computational communication research (CCR) on WeChat (12,000+ followers) 2021–present

- Organized this platform to share cutting-edge research in computational social sciences, facilitate academic discussions, and promote resource exchanges to students and scholars in Asia and other regions.
- Wrote and edited articles to introduce computational social science studies, methods, and resources to students and scholars in communication, political science, and other disciplines.
- Led and managed the platform maintenance, editor recruitment, editorial work, and platform outreach.

Association-related Service:

International Communication Association (ICA):

- Organizer, “The Future of Computational Message Science: Theoretical Advances, Computational Frontiers, and Grand Societal Challenges” Pre-conference (2024)
- Panel Chair, “Image-as-Data Methods in the Age of Generative Artificial Intelligence” (2024)
- Panel Discussant, “Leveraging Generative AI in Communication Research: Opportunities, Challenges, and Best Practices” (2024)
- Award Committee, Best Paper Award for the ICA Computational Methods Division (2024)
- Mentor, Communication and Technology Division Research Escalator (2024)
- Panel Chair, “Video-as-data in Computational Communication: Toward a Mixed-Method Pathway” (2023)
- Panel Chair, “Video-as-data in Computational Communication” (2022)
- Panel Chair, “Propaganda in the Computational Age: Disinformation and Beyond” (2020)

American Political Science Association (APSA):

- Panel Chair, “Preprocessing, Annotation, and Interpretation in Computational Social Science” (2023)

Politics and Computational Social Science (PaCSS) conference: Panel Chair, “Chinese Politics” (2023)

Text-as-Data (TADA) conference: Doctoral Consortium Mentor (2023)

Reviewers for Peer-reviewed Journals (in alphabetical order):

American Journal of Political Science
American Political Science Review
Asian Studies Review
China Quarterly
Chinese Journal of Communication
Comparative Political Studies
Computational Communication Research
Humanities and Social Sciences Communications
Information, Communication & Society
International Journal of Public Opinion Research
Journal of Communication
Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication
New Media & Society
PLoS ONE
Political Communication
Political Research Quarterly
Social Media and Society
Sociological Methods and Research
The Journal of Politics

University and Departmental Service:

Northwestern University:

- Graduate Admissions Committee, Technology & Social Behavior PhD Program (2023-2024)
- Speaker Series Coordinator, Media, Technology & Society (2023-2024)

Stanford University:

- Department Liaison, Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (2019–2023)
- International Student Chair, Department of Communication (2020–2022)
- Alumni Mentor, Center for East Asian Studies (2022, 2021, 2019)
- Group Coordinator, Professor Jennifer Pan’s Research Group (2018–2020)
- Student Assistant, State of the Field in Chinese Politics Conference (2018)
- Conference Assistant, Digital Humanities Asia 2018 Summit (2017)

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCES

Social Media Lab, Stanford University Student Affiliate	Stanford, CA 2022–2023
Human Screenome Project, Stanford University Student Affiliate	Stanford, CA 2017–2023
Stanford Data Science Collaboratory, Stanford University Student Member	Stanford, CA 2019–2021
School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University Visiting Scholar	Beijing, China 2020–2021

Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute (JICA-RI)
Global Policy Intern

Tokyo, Japan
Jun–Sep, 2016

USC Annenberg Center for the Digital Future
Research Intern

Los Angeles, CA
Jun–Aug, 2014

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Bloomberg Businessweek China
Journalist Intern

Beijing, China
Sep–Dec, 2014

Bayer China
CSR Intern

Beijing, China
Dec 2014–May 2015

Ruder Finn Asia
Public Relations Intern

Beijing, China
Sep–Dec, 2013

China News Agency
Journalist Intern, Political News Department

Beijing, China
Jun–Aug, 2013

SKILLS

- **Statistical Programming/Markup Languages:** R, Python, Stata, SPSS, \LaTeX , SQL
- **Languages:** Mandarin (Native), English (Proficient), Korean (Intermediate), Japanese (Elementary)
- **Applications:** Tableau, Adobe Creative Suite, Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro
- **Music:** Guzheng (Level 8 Certificate), Band Performing