

# Curriculum Vitae of Dongsheng Ding

---

CONTACT INFORMATION	Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering University of Pennsylvania 3401 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104	Phone: (213) 574-9471 E-mail: dongshed@seas.upenn.edu URL: <a href="https://dongshed.github.io">https://dongshed.github.io</a>
RESEARCH INTERESTS	My research interests lie in the interface of Optimization and Control, Machine Learning and Game Theory, and Probability and Statistics. Particularly, I am interested in developing reinforcement learning approaches for optimally controlling constrained and multi-agent dynamical systems, with applications in autonomous decision-making systems, toward a vision of safe, reliable, and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems. Also, I am interested in understanding other practical optimization and control problems, and developing adaptive, robust, and resilient algorithms to tackle them.	
APPOINTMENT	<b>Postdoctoral Researcher</b> University of Pennsylvania Host: Alejandro Ribeiro	Fall 2022 – Now
EDUCATION	<b>PhD in Electrical Engineering</b> , GPA: 4.0/4.0 University of Southern California Thesis: Provable reinforcement learning for constrained and multi-agent control systems Advisor: Mihailo R. Jovanović	Summer 2022
	<b>MS in Electrical Engineering</b> , GPA: 3.9/4.0 University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	Summer 2017
	<b>ME in Control Theory &amp; Engineering</b> , GPA: 3.7/4.0 <b>BE in Automation</b> , GPA: 3.8/4.0 Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China Master Thesis: Fractional-order nonlinear system control Undergraduate Thesis: Central force optimization	Spring 2015 Summer 2011
REFEREED PUBLICATIONS	<b>Journals</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>D. Ding, K. Zhang, J. Duan, T. Başar, and M. R. Jovanović. “Convergence and sample complexity of natural policy gradient primal-dual methods for constrained MDPs,” <i>J. Mach. Learn. Res.</i>; also arXiv: 2206.02346, 2022. (under review)</li><li>D. Ding, X. Wei, Z. Yang, Z. Wang, and M. R. Jovanović. “Fast multi-agent temporal-difference learning via homotopy stochastic primal-dual optimization,” <i>IEEE Trans. Control. Netw. Syst.</i>; also arXiv:1908.02805, 2020. (under revision)</li><li>Q. Wang, J. Zhang, D. Ding, and D. Qi, “Adaptive Mittag-Leffler stabilization of a class of fractional order uncertain nonlinear systems,” <i>Asian J. Control</i>, 18(6)</li></ol>	

2343–2351, 2016.

4. D. Ding, D. Qi, and Q. Wang, “Asymptotic pseudo-state stabilization of uncertain fractional-order nonlinear systems with additive disturbance,” *Nonlinear Dyn.*, 81(1) 667–677, 2015.
5. Q. Wang, D. Ding, and D. Qi, “Mittag-Leffler synchronization of uncertain fractional order chaotic systems,” *Chinese Physics B*, 24(6), 2015.
6. D. Ding, D. Qi, and Q. Wang, “Nonlinear Mittag-Leffler stabilization of commensurate fractional-order nonlinear systems,” *IET Control Theory Appl.*, 9(5) 681–690, 2014.
7. D. Ding, D. Qi, X. Luo, J. Chen, X. Wang, and P. Du, “Convergence analysis and performance of an extended central force optimization algorithm,” *Appl. Math. Comput.*, 219(4), 2246–2259, 2012.
8. D. Ding, X. Luo, J. Chen, X. Wang, P. Du, and Y. Guo, “A convergence proof and parameter analysis of central force optimization algorithm,” *J. Convergence Inf. Technol.*, 6(10), 16–23, 2011.

#### Machine Learning Conferences (Long Papers)

1. D. Ding, Z. Huan, and A. Ribeiro. “Resilient constrained reinforcement learning.” in *Proceedings of the 27th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics*, Valencia, Spain, 2024 (accepted); also arXiv:2312.17194.
2. D. Ding, C.-Y. Wei, K. Zhang, and A. Ribeiro. “Last-iterate convergent policy gradient primal-dual methods for constrained MDPs,” in *Proceedings of the Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2023. (acceptance rate 26.1%)
3. D. Ding, X. Wei, Z. Yang, Z. Wang, and M. R. Jovanović. “Sample efficient generalized Lagrangian policy optimization for safe multi-agent reinforcement learning,” in *Proceedings of the Learning for Dynamics and Control Conference*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2023.
4. D. Ding, C.-Y. Wei, K. Zhang, and M. R. Jovanović. “Independent policy gradient for large-scale Markov potential games: sharper rates, function approximation, and game-agnostic convergence,” in *Proceedings of the 39th International Conference on Machine Learning*, Baltimore, Maryland, 2022. (acceptance rate 21.5%, 118/1117 long presentations)
5. D. Ding, X. Wei, Z. Yang, Z. Wang, and M. R. Jovanović. “Provably efficient safe exploration via primal-dual policy optimization,” in *Proceedings of the 24th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics*, Virtual, 2021. (acceptance rate 30%, 48/455 orals)
6. D. Ding, K. Zhang, T. Başar, and M. R. Jovanović. “Natural policy gradient primal-dual method for constrained Markov decision processes,” in *Proceedings of the Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, Virtual, 2020. (acceptance rate 20%)

### Control Conferences (Short Papers)

1. D. Ding and M. R. Jovanović. “Policy gradient primal-dual mirror descent for constrained MDPs with large state spaces,” in *Proceedings of the 61st IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Cancún, Mexico, 2022.
2. D. Ding, K. Zhang, T. Basar and M. R. Jovanović, “Convergence and optimality of policy gradient primal-dual method for constrained Markov decision processes,” in *Proceedings of the 2022 American Control Conference*, Atlanta, Georgia, 2022.
3. D. Ding, X. Wei, H. Yu, and M. R. Jovanović. “Byzantine-resilient distributed learning under constraints,” in *Proceedings of the 2021 American Control Conference*, Virtual, 2021.
4. D. Ding, J. Yuan, and M. R. Jovanović. “Discounted online Newton method for time-varying time series prediction,” in *Proceedings of the 2021 American Control Conference*, Virtual, 2021.
5. D. Ding and M. R. Jovanović. “Global exponential stability of primal-dual gradient flow dynamics based on the proximal augmented Lagrangian,” in *Proceedings of the 59th IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Virtual, 2020.
6. D. Ding, X. Wei, Z. Yang, Z. Wang, and M. R. Jovanović. “Fast multi-agent temporal-difference learning via homotopy stochastic primal-dual method,” in *the Optimization Foundations for Reinforcement Learning Workshop at NeurIPS*, Vancouver, Canada, 2019.
7. D. Ding, X. Wei, and M. R. Jovanović. “Distributed robust statistical learning: Byzantine mirror descent,” in *Proceedings of the 58th IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Nice, France, 2019.
8. D. Ding and M. R. Jovanović. “Global exponential stability of primal-dual gradient flow dynamics based on the proximal augmented Lagrangian,” in *Proceedings of the 2019 American Control Conference*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2019.
9. D. Ding, B. Hu, N. K. Dhingra, and M. R. Jovanović. “An exponentially convergent primal-dual algorithm for nonsmooth composite minimization,” in *Proceedings of the 57th IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Miami Beach, Florida, 2018.
10. D. Ding and M. R. Jovanović. “A primal-dual Laplacian gradient flow dynamics for distributed resource allocation problems,” in *Proceedings of the 2018 American Control Conference*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2018.
11. D. Ding, D. Qi, and Q. Wang, “Adaptive Mittag-Leffler stabilization of commensurate fractional-order nonlinear systems,” in *Proceedings of the 53rd IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Los Angeles, California, 2014.
12. D. Ding, G. Zhang, D. Qi, and H. Zhang, “Strategy analysis of an evolutionary spectrum sensing game,” in *the Intelligent Computing and Applications (LSMS & ICSEE)*, Shanghai, China, 2014. (nominate paper award)

13. D. Ding, D. Qi, and Q. Wang, “Alternative LMI characterizations for fractional-order linear systems,” in *Proceedings of the 33rd Chinese Control Conference*, Nanjing, China, 2014.
14. D. Ding, D. Qi, and Q. Wang, “Fractional-order integral state space modeling and quasi state analysis via block operational matrix scheme,” in *Proceedings of the 26th Chinese Control and Decision Conference*, Changsha, China, 2014.

#### TALKS & POSTERS

1. Contributed talk of “Constrained policy optimization: A tale of regularization and optimism,” in *the INFORMS Optimization Society Conference*, Houston, Texas, 2024.
2. **Invited talk** of “Constrained policy optimization: A tale of regularization and optimism,” in *the ESE PhD Colloquium*, UPenn, 2023.
3. Contributed talk & poster of “Last-iterate convergent policy gradient primal-dual methods for constrained MDPs” in *the 37th Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems*, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2023.
4. **Invited talk** of “Provable constrained policy optimization in reinforcement learning,” in *the Safe Reinforcement Learning Online Seminar*, Virtual, 2023.
5. Contributed poster of “Sample efficient genealized Lagrangian policy optimization for safe MARL” in *the 5th Annual Learning for Dynamics and Control Conference*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2023.
6. Contributed talk of “Policy gradient primal-dual mirror descent for constrained MDPs with large state spaces,” in *the 61st IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Cancún, Mexico, 2022.
7. **Invited talk** of “Finite-time performance of policy optimization methods for constrained reinforcement learning,” in *the INFORMS 2022 Annual Meeting*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 2022.
8. Contributed talk of “Policy gradient primal-dual method for constrained MDPs,” in *the 2022 American Control Conference*, Atlanta, Georgia, 2022.
9. Contributed talk & poster of “Independent policy gradient for large-scale Markov potential games: sharper rates, function approximation, and game-agnostic convergence” in *the 39th International Conference on Machine Learning*, Baltimore, Maryland, 2022. (118/1117 long presentations)
10. **Invited poster** of “Independent policy gradient for large-scale Markov potential games” in *the REAL@USC-Meta center workshop*, ECE, USC, 2022.
11. **Invited poster** of “Provably efficient safe exploration via primal-dual policy optimization” in *the 11th Annual Research Festival*, ECE, USC, 2021.
12. **Invited talk** of “Provable constrained policy optimization for reinforcement learning” in *the 38th Southern California Control Workshop*, University of California, Irvine, California, Virtual, 2021.

13. Contributed talk & poster of “Provably efficient safe exploration via primal-dual policy optimization” in *the 24th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics*, Virtual, 2021. (48/455 orals)
14. Contributed talk & poster of “Natural Policy Gradient Primal-Dual Method for Constrained Markov Decision Processes” in *the 34th Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems*, Virtual, 2020.
15. Contributed talk of “Global exponential stability of primal-dual gradient flow dynamics based on the proximal augmented Lagrangian” in *the 59th IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Virtual, 2020.
16. Contributed poster of “Fast multi-agent temporal-difference learning via homotopy stochastic primal-dual method,” in *the Optimization Foundations for Reinforcement Learning Workshop at NeurIPS*, Vancouver, Canada, 2019; *the Southern California Machine Learning Symposium*, UCSD, 2020.
17. **Invited poster** of “Distributed robust statistical learning: Byzantine mirror descent” in *the 10th Annual Research Festival*, ECE, USC, 2019.
18. Contributed talk of “Exponential stability of primal-dual gradient flow dynamics based on proximal augmented Lagrangian,” in *the 2019 American Control Conference*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2019.
19. Contributed talk of “Nonsmooth composite minimization: an exponentially convergent primal-dual algorithm,” in *the 57th IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Miami Beach, Florida, 2018.
20. **Invited poster** of “An exponentially stable primal-dual algorithm for nonsmooth optimization” in *the 9th Annual Research Festival*, ECE, USC, 2018.
21. Contributed talk of “A primal-dual Laplacian gradient flow dynamics for distributed resource allocation problems,” in *the 2018 American Control Conference*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2018.
22. **Invited talk** of “A primal-dual algorithm for distributed resource allocation” in *the 34th Southern California Control Workshop*, University of California, Riverside, California, 2018.
23. Contributed talk of “Adaptive Mittag-Leffler stabilization of commensurate fractional-order nonlinear systems” in *the 53rd IEEE Conference on Decision and Control*, Los Angeles, California, 2014.
24. Contributed talk of “Alternative LMI characterizations for fractional-order linear systems” in *the 33rd Chinese Control Conference*, Nanjing, China, 2014.
25. Contributed talk of “Fractional-order integral state space modeling” in *the 26th Chinese Control and Decision Conference*, Changsha, China, 2014.

HONORS & AWARDS	Scholar Award, Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems	2023
	Expert Reviewers, International Conference on Machine Learning	2021
	Travel Award, Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems	2020
	Top Reviewers, International Conference on Machine Learning	2020
	Travel Award, IEEE Conference on Decision and Control	2020
	Travel Award, American Control Conference	2018, 2019, 2022
	MHI PhD Scholar Finalist, ECE, University of Southern California	2018, 2021
	ECE Department Fellowship, University of Minnesota	2015
	Honor for Outstanding Graduate Student, Zhejiang University	2015
	Nominate Paper Award, LSMS & ICSEE, 2014, Shanghai	2014
	Bosch Scholarship, Bosch in China	2013
	The First-Class of Graduate Scholarship, Zhejiang University	2012–2015
	National Scholarship, Ministry of Education of P.R. China	2011
	Wei Shaoxiang Engineering Talent, Wei Shaoxiang Foundation, HongKong	2010
	The Second-Class of Physics and Technology Innovation Contest, Zhejiang Physical Society, Zhejiang, China	2009
	The First-Class of Advanced Mathematics Contest, Zhejiang Mathematical Society, Zhejiang, China	2008

## ACADEMIC SERVICE

### **Journal Referee**

IEEE Transactions on Control of Network Systems  
 IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control  
 IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters  
 IEEE Control Systems Letters  
 Systems & Control Letters  
 Optimization Letters  
 Automatica  
 IEEE Access  
 Nonlinear Dynamics  
 IET Control Theory & Applications  
 International Journal of Robust and Nonlinear Control  
 Frontiers of Information Technology & Electronic Engineering  
 International Journal of Systems Science  
 The Journal of the Franklin Institute  
 Journal of Applied Mathematics and Computing  
 IEEE Transactions on Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence  
 APSIPA Transactions on Signal and Information Processing  
 Transactions on Machine Learning Research  
 Journal of Machine Learning Research  
 Machine Learning

### **Conference Referee**

IEEE Conference on Decision and Control 2018–2023

	Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems	2020–2023
	International Conference on Learning Representations	2021–2024
	International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics	2021
	International Conference on Machine Learning	2020–2024
	Learning for Dynamics and Control Conference	2024
	AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence	2023, 2024
	American Control Conference	2018–2024
	IFAC World Congress	2020
	Chinese Control Conference	2014
	Chinese Control and Decision Conference	2014
	<b>Conference Volunteer</b>	
	38th International Conference on Machine Learning, Virtual	2021, 2022
	24th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics, Virtual	2021
	35th Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems, Virtual	2021
	<b>Co-chair of Nonlinear System and Control Section</b>	
	26th Chinese Control and Decision Conference, Changsha, China	2014
	<b>Admissions Committee</b> , University of Pennsylvania	
	PhD Admission in the Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering	Fall 2023
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	<b>Guest Lecturer</b> , University of Pennsylvania	
	ESE 5140 Graph Neural Networks	Fall 2023
	<b>Teaching Assistant</b> , University of Southern California	
	EE 587 Nonlinear Systems	Spring 2018
	<b>Guest Lecturer</b> , University of Minnesota Twin Cities	
	EE 3015 Statistical Methods in Electrical and Computer Engineering	Spring 2017
	<b>Teaching Assistant</b> , University of Minnesota Twin Cities	
	EE 4231 Automatic Control Systems	Fall 2016
	EE 3015 Statistical Methods in Electrical and Computer Engineering	Spring 2017
	EE 8231 Optimization Theory	Spring 2017
MENTORING EXPERIENCE	<b>Mentor for PhD Students</b> , University of Pennsylvania	
	Berkay Uslu (2nd year)	Fall 2023 – Now
	Topic: Constrained diffusion models	
	Shervin Khalafi (2nd year)	Fall 2023 – Now
	Topic: Constrained diffusion models	
	<b>Mentor for Master Students</b> , University of Pennsylvania	
	Zhengyan Huan (2nd year)	Summer 2023 – Now
	Topic: Resilient constrained reinforcement learning	

Yi Zhao (1st year)

Summer 2023 – Now

Topic: Risk-constrained reinforcement learning

**Mentor for Undergraduate Students**, University of Southern California

Directed Research 490

Spring 2022

**Mentor for Master Students**, University of Southern California

Viterbi Graduate Mentorship Program

Fall 2018 – Summer 2021

## SKILLS

Python,  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , C/C++, Matlab, SQL

## MEMBERSHIPS

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)

IEEE Control Systems Society Membership

The Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

## GRADUATE

### COURSE

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Control Systems:** EE 5231 Linear System and Optimal Control, EE 8215 Nonlinear Systems, AEM 8421 Robust Multi-Variable Control Systems, AEM 8423 Convex Optimization Methods in Control; **Optimization and Computation:** EE 5239 Introduction to Nonlinear Optimization, EE 8231 Optimization Theory, ISE 633 Large-Scale Optimization for Machine Learning, CSCI 5304 Computational Aspects of Matrix Theory, CSCI 8314 Sparse Matrix Computations; **Probability and Machine Learning:** MATH 507A/B Theory of Probability, EE 556 Stochastic Systems & Reinforcement Learning, CSCI 5525 Machine Learning, EE 546 Mathematics of High-Dimensional Data, DSO 699 Statistical Learning Theory, CSCI 699 Theoretical Machine Learning, EE 5581 Information Theory and Coding.