

# FRANÇESKA XHAKAJ

<https://www.franceskaxhakaj.com/>

francesx@cs.cmu.edu ◇ (702)-934-3574 ◇ 5000 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

## EDUCATION

- 2015 - present    **Ph.D. Human-Computer Interaction**  
**School of Computer Science**  
**Carnegie Mellon University**, Pittsburgh, PA  
Advisor: Dr. Amy Ogan  
Research Focus: Develop technologies to help and support instructors improve their practices.
- 2015 - 2017    **M.S. Human-Computer Interaction**  
**School of Computer Science**  
**Carnegie Mellon University**, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2015 - present    **PIER Associate**  
Program for Interdisciplinary Education Research funded by IES (Institute of Education Sciences)
- 2011 - 2015  
GPA: 3.92/4.00    **B.S. Computer Science**  
**Lafayette College**, Easton, PA  
Minor in Mathematics  
Summa Cum Laude, Honors in Computer Science  
Thesis: Intelligent tutors and granularity: A new approach to Red Black Trees.  
Advisor: Dr. Chun Wai Liew

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

### ▲ Carnegie Mellon University

- 2019 - present    *Project:* Practical Classroom Sensing at Scale for Instructor Professional Development  
with Dr. Amy Ogan, Dr. Chris Harrison, Dr. Yuvraj Agarwal
- 2018    *Project:* Improving Introductory Computer Programming Instruction by Supporting Conceptual Learning with an Intelligent Tutoring System  
with Dr. Vincent Aleven
- 2015 - 2018    *Project:* Helping Teachers Help Students: Teacher's Use of ITS Analytics to Improve Learning  
with Dr. Vincent Aleven and Dr. Bruce M. McLaren
- Summer 2015    *Project:* Integrating Errors into the Lynnette Cognitive Tutor  
with Dr. Vincent Aleven
- Summer - Fall 2014    *Project:* Integrating Intelligent Tutoring Systems in MOOCs  
Undergraduate Student Researcher with Dr. Vincent Aleven

### ▲ Other Research Experience

- Spring 2014    *Project:* Tutors to support geology field projects  
EXCEL Student Researcher with Dr. Chun Wai Liew at **Lafayette College**
- January 2013    *Project:* Computational Modeling of Fish Evolution  
EXCEL Student Researcher with Dr. Chun Wai Liew at **Lafayette College**
- Summer 2012    *Project:* Using HMM and the Viterbi Algorithm on the Iterated Diner's Dilemma game  
EXCEL Student Researcher with Dr. Chun Wai Liew at **Lafayette College**
- Summer 2013    *Project:* Studying the dynamic behavior of JavaScript objects  
Undergraduate Student Researcher with Dr. Barbara G. Ryder at **Virginia Tech**  
PROLANGS@VT research group

## CONFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

1. Ahuja, K., Kim, D., **Xhakaj, F.**, Varga, V., Xie A., Zhang, S., Townsend, J. E., Harrison, Ch., Ogan, A., & Agarwal, Y. (2019). EduSense: Practical Classroom Sensing at Scale. *Proc. ACM Interact. Mob. Wearable Ubiquitous Technol.*
2. **Xhakaj, F.**, & Aleven, V. (2018). Towards Improving Introductory Computer Programming with an ITS for Conceptual Learning. In *International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education*, pp. 535-538.
3. Bodily, R., Kay, J., Aleven, V., Davis, D., Jivet, I., **Xhakaj, F** & Verbert, K. (2018) Open learner models and learning analytics dashboards: A systematic review. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge*, pp. 41-50.
4. **Xhakaj, F.**, Aleven, V., McLaren, B.M. (2017). Effects of a Teacher Dashboard for an Intelligent Tutoring System on Teacher Knowledge, Lesson Planning, Lessons and Student Learning. In *Proceedings of the European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning*, pp. 315-329.
5. **Xhakaj, F.**, Aleven, V., McLaren, B.M. (2017). Effects of a dashboard for an intelligent tutoring system on teacher knowledge, lesson plans and class sessions. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education*, pp. 582-585.
6. **Xhakaj, F.**, Aleven, V., McLaren, B.M. (2016). How teachers use data to help students learn: Contextual Inquiry for the design of a dashboard. In *Proceedings of the European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning*, pp. 340-354.
7. Aleven, V., **Xhakaj, F.**, Holstein, K., & McLaren, B. M. (2016). Developing a teacher dashboard for use with intelligent tutoring systems. In *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Teaching Analytics, ECTEL 2016*.
8. Holstein, K., **Xhakaj, F.**, Aleven, V., & McLaren, B. M. (2016). Luna: A dashboard for teachers using intelligent tutoring systems. In *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Teaching Analytics, ECTEL 2016*.
9. Aleven, V., Sewall, J., Popescu, O., **Xhakaj, F.**, Chand, D., Baker, R. S., & Gasevic, D. (2015). The beginning of a beautiful friendship? Intelligent tutoring systems and MOOCs. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education*, pp. 525-528.
10. Liew, C. W., & **Xhakaj, F.** (2015). Teaching a complex process: Insertion in Red Black Trees. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education*, pp. 698-701.
11. **Xhakaj, F.**, & Liew, C. W. (2015). A new approach to teaching Red Black Trees. In *Proceedings of the Conference on Innovation and Technology in Computer Science Education, ITiCSE '15*, pp. 278-283.

## JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

1. Wei, Sh., **Xhakaj, F.**, & Ryder, B.G. (2015) Empirical Study of the Dynamic Behavior of JavaScript Objects. *Journal of Software: Practice and Experience*, 46, 7, 867-889.

## UNPUBLISHED SENIOR THESIS

1. **Xhakaj, F.** (2015). Intelligent tutors and granularity: A new approach to Red Black Trees. Unpublished senior thesis, Department of Computer Science, Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania. USA.

## TEACHING AND MENTORING EXPERIENCE

### ▲ Carnegie Mellon University

- Instructor [Principles of Computing \(15-110\)](#), Summer 2 2020  
Instructor of the intro course 15-110, a course in fundamental computing principles (~80 students). Due to the 2020 pandemic, this course was conducted fully online, over Zoom.
- Instructor **CS Pedagogy (15-890)**, Spring 2020  
Instructor of 15-890, a course targeted toward students who are interested in improving their ability to teach computer science and who are interested in the science of teaching and learning.
- Instructor [Principles of Computing \(15-110\)](#), Summer 2 2019  
Instructor of the intro course 15-110, a course in fundamental computing principles (~50 students).
- Head TA [User-Centered Research and Evaluation \(UCRE\)](#), Fall 2018  
Took part in course and curriculum redesign including: deciding topics/concepts for the course, creating learning goals for projects and individual assignments, structuring projects and assignments over the semester. Created assignments, projects and questions for the final. Designed grading rubrics for assignments/the exam. Taught recitation of 20 students,

supervised and graded individual and group student work, held office hours.

- TA [\*\*Programming Usable Interfaces \(PUI\)\*\*](#), *Spring 2018*  
Taught recitation of 20 students, designed some labs and homework assignments, created some quiz and exam questions, graded student work, held office hours.
- Guest Lecture **Grad research seminar on Second Language Acquisition**, *Fall 2019*  
Lecture on my work on the ClassInSight project and using data to help and support teachers' teaching and practices.
- Guest Lecture **Programming Usable Interfaces (PUI)**, *Fall 2019*  
Lecture on prototyping with InVision.
- Guest Lecture **Programming Usable Interfaces (PUI)**, *Spring 2018*  
Lecture on user-centered design methods and examples of their use in my own research.
- Mentor **Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU)**, *Summer 2020*  
Mentored two undergraduate students in their REU projects.
- Mentor **Undergraduate Independent Study and Research Assistants**, *Spring 2020*  
Mentored two undergraduate students in their Independent Study projects and six undergraduate students as Research Assistants on the ClassInSight project.
- Mentor **Undergraduate Independent Study and Research Assistants**, *Fall 2019*  
Mentored sixteen undergraduate students as Research Assistants on the ClassInSight project.
- Mentor **Undergraduate Independent Study**, *Fall 2018, Spring 2019*  
Mentored two undergraduate students each semester in their Independent Study projects.
- Mentor [\*\*LearnLab Summer School at CMU\*\*](#), **ITS Track**, *Summer 2015 - 2018*  
Mentored groups of students in developing Intelligent Tutoring Systems for various domains.
- Mentor **Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU)**, *Summer 2016, Summer 2019*  
Mentored five students each summer as they conducted research and software development.

#### ▲ Lafayette College

- TA **Algorithms and Data Structures (CS150)**, *2013 - 2014*  
Led and oversaw lab sessions, built some assignments and lab worksheets.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2019 [\*\*The Alan J. Perlis Graduate Student Teaching Award\*\*](#), School of Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon University
- 2019 The Graduate Student Assembly Departmental Appreciation Award, Carnegie Mellon University
- 2015 Summa Cum Laude, Honors in Computer Science, Lafayette College
- 2014 Upsilon Pi Epsilon Scholarship Award, Lafayette College
- 2014 James P. Schwar Prize, Lafayette College
- 2011 - 2015 Walter Oechsle Scholarship, Lafayette College
- 2012, 2013 Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing Scholarship, Grace Hopper Conference

## LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

### ▲ Carnegie Mellon University

- 2019 - present **Director of the Community for Teaching and CS Education at CMU**  
Working with teaching professors and students to build and develop a community at CMU for faculty and students who are interested in teaching and CS Education
- 2019 - 2020 Student representative in the **Curriculum Committee**, Human-Computer Interaction Institute
- 2019 - 2020 Student representative in the **Faculty Hiring Committee**, Human-Computer Interaction Institute
- 2017 - 2019 **Women in SCS**, leader and in organizing committee
- 2017 - 2018 SCS4All Initiative, organizing committee
- 2019 Grad School Panel Moderator in the Opportunities for Undergraduate Research in Computer Science (OurCS) conference
- 2017, 2019 Opportunities for Undergraduate Research in Computer Science (OurCS) Organizer and Moderator
- 2018-2019 HCII Ph.D. Tea Time Social
- 2016-2017 HCII Ph.D. Monthly Lunch Gatherings
- 2015, 2019 HCII Prospective Ph.D. Student Open House Organizer

### ▲ Lafayette College

- 2012 - 2015 Women in Computing, Founder and President
- 2014 - 2015 Upsilon Pi Epsilon Club, President

## SKILLS

### ▲ Programming

Java, Python, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, C++, C, R, Jess, Intel IA32

### ▲ Tools

CTAT, Django, Ajax, jQuery, Heroku, NodeJs, SQLite, LaTeX, Mathematica, WordPress, Sketch, InVision, Adobe: Photoshop, Flash Player, InDesign

### ▲ Research Methods

Contextual Inquiry, Interpretation Sessions, Affinity Diagramming, Speed Dating, Storyboarding, Prototyping, Think Alouds, Classroom Studies

### ▲ Languages

English, Albanian, Italian, French, Greek, Korean