

# Saeed Najafi

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## CONTACT

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## RECENT INTERESTS

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### Natural Language Processing:

Question Generation, Relation Extraction, Reading Comprehension, Semantic Parsing, Sequence Labeling, Structured Prediction

### Machine Learning:

Time Series, State-Space Models, Approximate Inference

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### Software Engineering Intern (Summer 2022)

*Google, Mountain View, United States.*

- User Journey Analysis for Business Messaging.
- Modified production code to collect actual data for user-business conversations (FlumeJava)
- Sequence models for discovering patterns around user intents in conversations.

### Machine Learning Engineer

*2018-2020*

*BenchSci, Toronto, Canada*

- Developing NLP models for entity and relation extraction within bio-medical papers in order to gather use cases of protein reagents.
- Developing big data pipelines applying ML models in a distributed environment.

**Tech Stack:** PySpark, Airflow, Ansible, BigQuery

## EDUCATION

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### Ph.D. in Computing Science

*2020 -*

*University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada*

- **Advisor:** [Alona Fyshe](#)
- Current Project: “Weakly-Supervised Questions for Unseen Relations”
- **Taken Courses:**  
Probabilistic Graphical Models (A), Combinatorial Optimization (A-), Reinforcement Learning I & II (A-)

### M.Sc. in Computing Science

*2016-2018*

*University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada*

- **Advisors:** [Greg Kondrak](#) & [Colin Cherry](#)

- **Thesis:** “Sequence Labeling and Transduction with Output-Adjusted Actor-Critic Training of RNNs”
- **Taken Courses:**  
Natural Language Processing (A), Data Mining in Rich Data (A)  
Software Product Lines (A), Managing Big Text Data (A-), Teaching & Research Methods

## Bachelor of Science in Software Engineering

2012-2016

Amirkabir University of Technology, Tehran, Iran

- **GPA:** 17.69/20
- **Advisor:** [Reza Safabakhsh](#)
- **Thesis:** “Predicating ATM Machines Faults”

## PUBLICATIONS

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- “Weakly-Supervised Questions for Zero-Shot Relation Extraction.”  
(submitted to EMNLP 2022, [paper](#))
- “Efficient Sequence Labeling with Actor-Critic Training”  
(CAIAC 2019, [paper](#))
- “String Transduction with Target Language Models and Insertion handling”  
(SIGMORPHON @ EMNLP 2018, [paper](#))
- “Combining Neural and Non-Neural Methods for Low-Resource Morphological Reinflection”  
(CoNLL-SIGMORPHON @ EMNLP 2018, [paper](#))
- “Comparison of Assorted Models for Transliteration”  
(NEWS @ ACL 2018, [paper](#))
- “If you can’t beat them, join them: the University of Alberta system description”  
(CoNLL-SIGMORPHON @ ACL 2017, [paper](#))

## TEACHING ASSISTANT

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- Introduction to Database Systems – U of Alberta (*Falls 2016 & 2017 & 2020*)
- Advanced Database Systems – U of Alberta (*Winters 2017 & 2018 & 2022*)
- C Programming Language – U of Alberta (*Winter 2018*)
- Web Development – Amirkabir U of Technology (*Fall 2015*)
- Computer Architecture – Amirkabir U of Technology (*Spring 2015*)

## HONOURS & AWARDS

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- The University of Alberta Doctoral Recruitment Award (\$5000 - *September 2020*)
- Travel grant for CAIAC conference. (*May 2019*)
- Travel grant for ACL conference. (*August 2017*)
- Honorary direct admission to the graduate school of Amirkabir U of Technology having high undergraduate GPA (10/120). (*June 2015*)
- Ranked among the top 0.5% in the university entrance exam. (*July 2012*)
- Semi-finalist at Iranian National Mathematics Olympiad (2010 and 2011)

## MISC.

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- **Talks:**  
*Bag of Tasks in NLP (Summer School, U of Alberta, Summer 2018)*  
*Introduction to NER (CMPUT 650, U of Alberta, Fall 2018)*
- **Reviewer:** *ACL, NAACL-HLT, EMNLP, IJCNLP, EACL*
- **TOEFL:** *106/120*
- **Languages:** *English, Persian, Azeri*
- **Sports:** *Soccer, Running, Cycling, Volleyball, Ski, Hiking*
- **Citizenship:** *Iranian (Citizen), Canadian (Permanent Resident)*