TIANQI KOU

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RESEARCH FOCUS

I study the **construction and mitigation of AI hype** within the communicative dimension of the machine learning ecosystem. Using philosophical and qualitative methods, I **analyze how hype emerges** as claims about contributions and capabilities circulate through interconnected communities and **develop norms of responsible communication** to counter it. Currently, I situate this inquiry in the context of carceral AI.

RESEARCH KEY WORDS

Philosophy of Science and Technology, Science and Technology Studies, AI Hype, Communication Norm, Accountability, Tech Policy

EDUCATION

2020- M.S., Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University
Information Science (Advisor: Dana Calacci)
Committee: Daniel Susser, Cindy Lin, Andrea Miller
Dissertation: *Toward a Feminist Conception of Replicability for Machine Learning*

2017-18 M.S., Dean's Fellowship, Fordham University
Computer Science (Advisors: Yijun Zhao, Chaitra Nagaraja)

2013-17 B.S., with high honors, Harbin Institute of Technology, Monash University
Economics

APPOINTMENTS & AFFILIATIONS

LOGIC(S)
2024-25 Fact Checker, Editorial Fellow

Critical Technocultures Lab, Georgia Institute of Technology
2023- Visiting Scholar
Director: Cindy Lin

Center for Socially Responsible Artificial Intelligence, Penn State University
2022- Student Affiliate

Google
2018-20 Machine Learning Engineer
(Industry Employment)

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

2025	Dean's Travel Award
2025	Sloan Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow Finalist
2024	Liberatory Tech Scholar Fellowship, LOGIC(S)
2024	FAccT Student Travel Award
2023	Dean's Travel Award, Penn State IST
2022	Microsoft PhD Research Fellowship Nomination, Penn State IST
2019	Graduate Academic Excellence Award, Fordham University
2017-19	Dean's Fellowship, Fordham University
2016-17	Chinese Scholarship Council First Class Scholarship
2013-17	National People's Scholarship

SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS

1. "Implementing Social Claim Accountability in Machine Learning: Challenges and Opportunities"
   Tianqi Kou and Dana Calacci
2. "What is the Hype? A Relational Conception Hype in AI-based Tools in Policing Contexts."
   Tianqi Kou, Dana Calacci, Nasser Eledroos, Dasha Pruss, David Gray Widder

PUBLICATIONS

Note: In computer and information science, papers published in major conference proceedings are double-anonymously peer reviewed and recognized as equivalent research contributions to journal articles.

Articles and proceedings

1. Dead Zone of Accountability: Why Social Claims in Machine Learning Research Should Be Articulated and Defended.
   Proceedings of the AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society (AIES), 2025, forthcoming. [Paper] or [Proceeding Poster]
   Tianqi Kou, Dana Calacci, and Cindy Lin
2. From Model Performance to Claim: How a Change of Focus in Machine Learning Replicability Can Help Bridge the Responsibility Gap.
   Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT), 2024, Pages 1002 - 1013. [Paper]
   Tianqi Kou

Preprints

3. A Quantitative Machine Learning Approach to Master Students Admission for Professional Institutions.
   [Preprint available upon request]
   Tianqi Kou

TALKS / PANELS / WORKSHOPS/ SYMPOSIUMS

1. What is the Hype: A Relational Conception of Hype in AI-based Tools in Policing Context.
   Workshop Presentation. Hype Studies Conference; Barcelona, Spain. Sept. 2025.
   Tianqi Kou, Dana Calacci, Nasser Eledroos, David Gray Widder, Dasha Pruss
2. Claim Replicability and the Responsibility Gap.
   Invited Talk, Digital Life Initiative, Cornell Tech, NYC. Oct. 2024.
   Tianqi Kou
3. A Feminist Conception of Replicability for Machine Learning Research
   Poster. Institute for Computational and Data Sciences Symposium. Oct. 2024.
   Tianqi Kou
4. The Function of Replication Studies in Machine Learning Research.
   Workshop Presentation. Philosophy of Science Meets Machine Learning; Tübingen, Germany. Sept. 2025.
   Tianqi Kou
5. The Underestimation and Overestimation of Reproducibility in Machine Learning Research Claims.
   Poster. Institute for Computational and Data Sciences Symposium (2023)
   Tianqi Kou

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

2025	AAAI/ACM Conference on Artificial Intelligence Ethics and Society, Madrid, Spain. Author
	Hype Studies Conference, Barcelona, Spain. Author
	Privacy Law Scholars Conference, Los Angeles, CA.
2024	ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency. Author
	Northeast HCI, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.
2023	Association for Library and Information Science Education, Pittsburgh, PA.
2022	Workshop on the Reproducibility Crisis in ML-based Science, Princeton University.

TEACHING

Penn State University

AY23-24	IST 402: Emerging Issues and Technologies / Teaching Assistant
AY23-24	DS 200: Intro to Data Science / Teaching Assistant
AY22-24	IST 230: Language, Logic, and Discrete Mathematics (three times) / Teaching Assistant
AY21-22	DS 310: Machine Learning / Teaching Assistant

Fordham University

AY17-18	CIS S5800: Machine Learning (two times) / Teaching Assistant
AY18-19	SDGB 7844: Statistical Methods and Computation II / Teaching Assistant

Harbin Institute of Technology, eHealth Research Institute

AY14-15	Intro to Python and R for Digital Health / Instructor Assistant

SERVICE

2025	Reviewer / CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
	Student Track Mentor / AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society
	Panel Chair / Hype Studies Conference
	Reviewer / AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society
	Program Committee / ACM Conference on Fairness Accountability and Transparency
	Reviewer / Big Data & Society
2024	Reviewer / ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
2024	Panelist / Queer Graduate Student in STEM, Penn State College of Engineering.