

Laura Biester

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EDUCATION

University of Michigan Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering, Advisor: Rada Mihalcea	Ann Arbor, MI Expected 2023
University of Michigan M.S. in Computer Science and Engineering, GPA: 4.0	Ann Arbor, MI May 2020
Carleton College B.A. in Computer Science, GPA: 3.85	Northfield, MN June 2016

PUBLICATIONS

[†]joint first authorship

- [1] **L. Biester**, K. Matton, J. Rajendran, E. Mower Provost, and R. Mihalcea, “Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on Online Mental Health Forums”, in *ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems: Special Issue on Using AI and Data Science to Handle Pandemics and Related Disruptions*, Dec. 2021.
- [2] **L. Biester**, C. Banea, and R. Mihalcea, “Building Location Embeddings from Physical Trajectories and Textual Representations”, in *2020 AAACL-IJCNLP*, Dec. 2020.
- [3] **L. Biester[†]**, K. Matton[†], J. Rajendran, E. Mower Provost, and R. Mihalcea, “Quantifying the Effects of COVID-19 on Mental Health Support Forums”, in *1st Workshop on NLP for COVID-19 (Part 2) at EMNLP*, Nov. 2020.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

IBM Research Intern	Remote Summer 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Matching patient descriptions to clinical trials (2021 TREC Clinical Trials challenge)– Part of the EMRA (electronic medical records analysis) team, mentored by Bharath Dandala	
Pinterest Software Engineer	San Francisco, CA August 2016 - August 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Database sharding strategies/implementation for advertiser data– Inconsistency detection framework for distributed graph databases	
Gumroad Software Engineering Intern	San Francisco, CA Summer 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– API to allow creators to track sales data– Feature to auto-populate mp3 metadata– Feature to allow users to display their Gumroad site on their own domain	

TEACHING AND MENTORSHIP

- **Instructor of Record** at University of Michigan
Discover Computer Science (EECS 198) Fall 2019, Fall 2020
- **Prefect** at Carleton College
Mathematics of Computer Science (CS 202) Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Winter 2016
- **Prefect** at Carleton College
Data Structures (CS 201) Winter 2015, Spring 2015

Mentorship

- Yujian Liu (Master's Student at University of Michigan)
Temporal Effects in Depression Classification Methods Winter 2021-Present
- Axel Avram (High School Student)
Inter-country Sentiment During COVID-19 Summer 2020-Fall 2020
- Shiyu Qu (Undergraduate at University of Michigan)
Location Embeddings from Reddit Fall 2019-Winter 2020
- Camilo Muñoz (Master's Student at The University of Waterloo)
Ads API Team Intern at Pinterest Winter 2018

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Poster Presentations and Flash Talks

- Self-Reported Mental Health Status for Classification Labels: Effects of Data Collection
CRA-WP Grad Cohort for Women Workshop April 2021
- Changes on Mental Health Forums during the COVID-19 Pandemic
Michigan AI Symposium October 2020
- Quantifying the Effects of COVID-19 on Mental Health Support Forums
NLP COVID-19 Workshop at ACL July 2020
- The Applicability of Embeddings to Location Time Series Data
Midwest Speech and Language Days May 2019

Program Committee Member

- ACL 2021
- NLP for Positive Impact Workshop (@ACL) 2021
- SocialNLP Workshop (@NAACL) 2021
- Natural Language Processing and Computational Social Science Workshop (@EMNLP) 2020

Subreviewer

- ACII 2021

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- ECSEL+ Treasurer
As a board member of ECSEL+ (Ensemble of CSE Ladies+), managed the group's finances and completed budget requests. Fall 2021-Present
- ECSEL+ Professional Development Chair Fall 2020-Summer 2021

As a board member of ECSEL+, organized practice prelim talks for students in CSE at the University of Michigan.

- AI4All Instructor July 2020
Taught Python programming to twenty high school students, with a focus on applications in artificial intelligence.
- AI4All Project Lead July 2019
Developed a NLP project and provided guidance for seven high school students as they learned Python and completed the project.
- Explore CS Research Organizer Fall 2018–Winter 2019
One of five organizers of the “Explore CS Research Program,” which aims to introduce students from underrepresented backgrounds to computer science research. Reviewed applications, assigned faculty mentors to students, and answered ongoing questions from students.
- Student Departmental Advisor Fall 2015–Spring 2016
Chosen as one of two student departmental advisors at Carleton College by CS faculty. Advised students each term on picking classes, and organized a weekly “CS at the Tavern” social event.
- Lovelace Board Member and Chair Winter 2015–Spring 2016
Served as a member of the board of Carleton’s women in CS group. Helped to organize weekly lab sessions, dinners, and Carleton’s first diversity in CS workshop.

SKILLS

- **Programming Languages:** Python, Java, Ruby, Javascript
- **Data/Machine Learning:** PyTorch, Transformers, SKLearn, Numpy, Hadoop, Hive, SQL, HBase, Vitess
- **Web Technologies:** HTML, CSS, Flask, Ruby on Rails

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

- Phi Beta Kappa 2016
- Magna Cum Laude 2016
- Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers Engineering Fellowship 2015
- Grace Hopper Conference Scholarship Recipient 2015
- Tapia Conference Scholarship Recipient 2015