dr. Lize Alberts (D.Phil, M.A, B.A. Hons, B.A.)

Assistant Professor AI & Behaviour

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

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Work Experience

Assistant Professor — April 2025-

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, NL

Assistant Professor of AI & Behaviour in the Department of Computer Science. My research combines theory and methods from computer science, HCI and behavioural psychology in the careful design and evaluation of systems involving human-AI interaction, emphasising individual empowerment and flourishing.

I co-designed and teach a novel interdisciplinary course, *Modelling Human Behaviour*, giving BSc AI students a strong foundational introduction to approaches and methods for **understanding** and **modelling** human behaviour, as well as the tools to critically reflect on the **responsible application** of behavioural science in computing. I also teach *Project Socially-Aware Computing*, teaching students how to use agent-based models to simulate societal phenomena involving social interaction. I also designed and teach *Research Design*, a course guiding students in the critical, ethical, and rigorous execution of independent scientific research.

Associate Editor, Research Assistant — Sept 2024-

Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, Cambridge, UK

While completing my doctorate, I worked part-time as a research and editorial assistant to the director of the Leverhulme CFI, Prof. Stephen Cave. My role was to assist with editing and proofreading books for an upcoming Cambridge University Press book series on AI Ethics & Society, as well as identify and liaise with potential collaborators. I am still working ad hoc to assist with this series as an associate editor.

Graduate Assessor — Sept 2024-Nov 2024

Ellison Institute of Technology, Oxford, UK

Assessing graduate applications for Ellison Scholarships under the theme 'Build Foundation Models for AI-enabled Care'.

Student Ambassador — Apr 2024-Jun 2024

Jesus College, the University of Oxford, UK

Designed and led a workshop for Welsh state schoolchildren for Jesus College's annual Women in Sciences Day on 'dark patterns' and ethical software design.

Royal Institution Masterclass in Computer Science Leader — 2023-2024

The Royal Institution, UK

Designed and led a Masterclass on dark patterns and behavioural design ethics for the Royal Institution in London.

Student Researcher — July-October 2023

Google London, UK

Led a project on contextualising the alignment of social AI agents, sparking a growing area of research that has since been termed socioaffective alignment.

Graduate Research Assistant

Responsible Technology Institute, University of Oxford, UK — 2020-2021

Conducting multi-stakeholder engagement and speculative design workshops for the EPSRC-funded RoboTIPS project on responsible social robot development.

Lecturer and Teaching Assistant

- *University of Oxford, UK* — 2020-2021
  Software Engineering: *Interaction Design, Requirements Engineering*
  Comp. Science: *Ethical Computing in Practice, Ethics & Responsible Innovation*

- *Stellenbosch University, ZA*   2018-2019
  I helped administer two Philosophy modules, leading seminars thrice a week for groups of 5 to 80 first to third-years.

- *North-West University, ZA*   2015-2017
  I was the course assistant for several modules in Philosophy and Art History.

Education

D.Phil. Computer Science   Jan 2025
University of Oxford, UK
My DPhil focused on the ethics of human-AI social interaction, with an emphasis on **LLM-based agents**. Project goals included supporting individual autonomy, creativity, and wellbeing, anticipating novel risks related to conversational/agentic AI, and developing **context-sensitive and personalised alignment** strategies.

M.A. (Thesis) Philosophy   Dec 2020
Stellenbosch University, ZA
Type: Full research thesis (140 pages)
My master's thesis focused on supporting multi-modal grounded language learning in AI, drawing from 4E/embodied cognition theories in cognitive science. Domains: Philosophy of Mind and Language, Cognitive Science, Cognitive and Computational Linguistics, NLP/NLU
Title: 'Towards grounded language learning in artificial intelligence'
Final grade: **Distinction 84%**

B.A. (Hons.) Philosophy   Mar 2019
Stellenbosch University, ZA and *University of Bristol, UK (Study Abroad)*
My honours dissertation focused on the use of constructed language to facilitate human-AI interaction, and the effects of prolonged interaction with AI on human language conventions and was published in a peer-reviewed journal.
University of Bristol courses: Philosophical Issues of the Physical Sciences, Probability and Rationality
Stellenbosch University courses: Philosophy of Language, Nietzsche   Average: **80%**
Dissertation: 'Altering language conventions to facilitate human-robot interaction'
(18566 words)   Mark: **88%**
Final grade: **Cum Laude 82%**

B.A. Humanities   Mar 2018
North-West University (Potchefstroom), ZA
Majors: **Philosophy**, History of Art, **Social Anthropology**
Minors: English, History, Communication Studies
Extra modules: 9 (152 extra credits)
Final grade: **Distinction 82%**, **Top of class**

Eldoraigne High School, *ZA*   Nov 2012
Final marks: **IT** (Object-Oriented Programming, SQL) **(87%)**, **Maths (83%)**, English (85%), Afrikaans (89%), LO (81%), Design (97%), Dramatic Arts (81%)
Final grade: **Distinction 87%** (US GPA 4.0)

Research Workshops

Google's Techno-Moral Scenarios for Responsible Innovation 17-19 Oct 2023
Google Research/Responsible Innovation, Google Amsterdam, the Netherlands
I was a part of a select group of experts from academia and industry tasked with critically discussing the use of responsible innovation to advance a vision of AI that is empowering, meaningful, and beneficial. We used a combination of RI methods (e.g. design fiction, speculative design, and Google's own *techno-moral scenario* approach) to imaginatively and reflexively engage with ethical concerns regarding new technologies.

Generative AI and Its Impact on Human Creativity   1 Feb 2024
Google and the Graziano Lab, Princeton University, NJ, US
I was invited to join a group of academics and Googlers to generate a set of responsible and ethical recommendations regarding GenAI. We reflected on the nature and processes of human creativity, and how GenAI may affect, and ideally support it.

Self-Determination Theory in HCI: Shaping a Research Agenda 9 May 2022
The ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Hawaii, US
I participated in a CHI workshop with other HCI researchers to explore how Self-Determination Theory could aid the design of user-centred technologies.

Talks and Panels

- Panellist on **Dark Patterns as Hostile Scaffolding**   28 June 2024
  Scaffolding Bad Working Group, University of KwaZulu-Natal, UK
- Panellist on **Balancing the benefits and harms of AI**   25 May 2024
  Kellogg College, University of Oxford, UK
- **Computers as Bad Social Actors**   8 Mar 2024
  Princeton ETHICOM AI & Ethics Seminar, Princeton University, NJ, USA
- **Dark and Anti-Patterns in Social Interfaces**   13 Sep 2023
  Google-Cambridge University Reading Group on Conversational Agents, Google London, UK
- **Dark and Anti-Patterns in Social Interfaces**   10 Sep 2023
  TL/UXR, Google, London, UK
- **Respect as a Value for Human-Computer Interaction**   21 Mar 2022
  Institute for Ethics in AI gathering with Accenture, University of Oxford, UK
- **Altering Language Conventions to Facilitate HRI**   28 Oct 2019
  Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, Cambridge University, UK

Skills

- **Machine Learning:** ML/DL theory and practice; LLM alignment and fine-tuning; developing benchmarks for conversational agent evaluation
- **Programming:** Python (NumPy, Pandas, PyTorch, Transformers); MATLAB; R; JavaScript; HTML; PHP; SQL; C#; Object Pascal
- **Research Methods:** Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodology; systematic reviews; interdisciplinary research; critical and conceptual analysis; user-centred design; requirements engineering; responsible innovation; empirical HCI methods; theory-informed design
- **AI Ethics and Governance:** Applied AI ethics; multi-stakeholder engagement; speculative design for AI futures; value-sensitive design
- **Communication and Management:** Technical writing; academic paper authorship and peer review; data visualisation; presenting complex ideas to diverse audiences, managing and organising large societies, lecturing and supervising university graduates

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Additional Certification

- **Generative AI with LLMs** by deeplearning.ai on Coursera — Jun 2024
- **Neural Networks and Deep Learning** by deeplearning.ai on Coursera
  Grade: **100%** — Dec 2018
- **Diploma in Web Development** by Shaw Academy — Jul 2016

Organisational Experience

Co-founder and Organiser of RTI Student Network — 2020-2024
The Responsible Technology Institute (RTI), The University of Oxford, UK
The RTI is an international centre of excellence on responsible technology. I co-founded its international student network connecting researchers interested in RI. I help to organise reading groups, expert panel discussions, and work-in-progress seminars.

President of Oxford University CompSoc — 2021-2022
The Oxford University Computer Society (CompSoc)
I was elected as president of CompSoc (est. 1978), one of Oxford University's largest and oldest societies for computer science-related interests. I delegated work, engaged with industry sponsors, and helped organise a university-wide hackathon.

Awards and Achievements

Graduate Lighthouse Scholarship — 2020
The RTI and Department of Computer Science, University of Oxford, UK
I was awarded a highly competitive scholarship from the Responsible Innovation Institute at Oxford University to fund my doctorate.

Awards for Academic Achievement
- *Department of Philosophy, North-West University, ZA* — Mar 2018
  Merit certificate for excellent academic achievement in Philosophy (top of class)
- *School of Social and Gov. Studies, North-West University, ZA* — Mar 2016
  Merit certificate for best academic achievement in Medical Anthropology
- *School of Social and Gov. Studies, North-West University, ZA* — Mar 2016
  Merit certificate for best academic achievement in Urban Anthropology

Member of Golden Key International Honour Society — 2016
North-West University (Potchefstroom), ZA
For ranking in the top 15% of North-West University's sophomores.