

Ruchen Wen

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*Assistant Professor of Computer Science
 Colgate University*

Research Interests

My research centers on **human-robot interaction (HRI)**, with a particular emphasis on **robot ethics**, **linguistic HRI**, and **social robotics**. My primary goal is to develop morally and socially competent robots that can exert a positive influence and cultivate a healthier moral ecosystem.

Education

- 2018 – 2023 **Ph.D., Computer Science**, *Colorado School of Mines*, Advisor: Tom Williams
 Dissertation: Context-Sensitive Representations, Reasoning, and Communication for Morally and Socially Competent Robots
 Committee: Tom Williams, Tracy Camp, Neil Dantam, Kevin Moore, Ana Paiva, Qin Zhu
- 2016 – 2018 **M.S., Software Engineering**, *University of Wisconsin-La Crosse*
- 2013 – 2016 **B.E., Software Engineering**, *South-Central Minzu University, China*

Employment

- Jul. 2025 → **Assistant Professor**, *Colgate University*
- Aug. 2023 → Jun. 2025 **Postdoctoral Research Associate**, *University of Maryland, Baltimore County*
- Aug. 2018 → May. 2023 **Graduate Research Assistant, Teaching Assistant & Adjunct Faculty**, *Colorado School of Mines*

Honors and Awards

Honors and Awards

- 2024 **Accepted Participant**, *The 2024 Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) Rising Stars Workshop*, University of Virginia
 Towards Morally and Socially Competent Human-Robot Interaction
- 2024 **Invited Speaker**, *Future Leaders in Robotics and AI: Celebrating Diversity and Innovation Seminar Series*, The Maryland Robotics Center, University of Maryland
 Designing language-capable robots for ethical and socially adaptive human interactions
- 2023 **Rath Research Award Nominee**, Colorado School of Mines
 Dissertation: Context-Sensitive Representations, Reasoning, and Communication for Morally and Socially Competent Robots
- 2023 **1st Place Winning Team**, *Roboethics Competition*, ICRA 2023
 NICE: An ethically-sensitive design framework for fetch robots in care contexts
- 2023 **Best Paper Award Nominee**, *International Conference on Persuasive Technology*, Wen, Kim, Phillips, Zhu & Williams
 On Further Reflection... Moral Reflections Enhance Robotic Moral Persuasive Capability
- 2023 **Outstanding Graduate Student**, *Department of Computer Science*, Colorado School of Mines

- 2021 **Accepted Participant**, *Human-Robot Interaction Pioneers Workshop*
Toward Hybrid Relational-Normative Models of Robot Cognition
- 2019 **Accepted Participant**, *CRA-W Graduate Cohort*
- 2018 **Best Talk Runner Up**, *Rocky Mountain Celebration of Women in Computing*
Towards a Role-Based Framework for Moral Robots

Honors and Awards to Mentees

- 2025 **Alyssa Hanson**, *Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Finalist*, CRA
- 2022 **Nichole Starr**, *Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Honorable Mention*, CRA

Publications

Journal Articles

- [J1] Cynthia Matuszek, Tom Williams, Nicholas DePalma, Ross Mead, **Ruchen Wen**, Eike Schneiders, Casey Kennington, and Alemitu Bezabih. “Reporting Guidelines for Large Language Models in Human–Robot Interaction”. In: *ACM Transactions on Human-Robot Interaction* 15.2 (2026), pp. 1–24.
- [J2] Boyoung Kim, **Ruchen Wen**, Ewart J de Visser, Chad C Tossell, Qin Zhu, Tom Williams, and Elizabeth Phillips. “Can robot advisers encourage honesty?: Considering the impact of rule, identity, and role-based moral advice”. In: *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* (2024).
- [J3] **Ruchen Wen**, Boyoung Kim, Elizabeth Phillips, Qin Zhu, and Tom Williams. “Comparing Norm-Based and Role-Based Strategies for Robot Communication of Role-Grounded Moral Norms”. In: *ACM Transactions on Human-Robot Interaction (T-HRI)* (2022).
- [J4] Qin Zhu, Tom Williams, and **Ruchen Wen**. “Role-based Morality, Ethical Pluralism, and Morally Capable Robots”. In: *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia* (2021).
- [J5] Qin Zhu, Tom Williams, Blake Jackson, and **Ruchen Wen**. “Blame-Laden Moral Rebukes and the Morally Competent Robot: A Confucian Ethical Perspective”. In: *Science and Engineering Ethics* (2020).

Refereed Conference Papers

- [C1] Alyssa Hanson, Gordon Briggs, **Ruchen Wen**, Yifei Zhu, and Tom Williams. ““Stealing is wrong... and too hard to pull off successfully”. Inclusion of Moral versus Capacity Information in Robot Command Rejection”. In: *Proceedings of the AAAI/ACM Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Society (AIES)*. 2025.
 - [C2] Alyssa Hanson, Nichole Starr, Cloe Emmett, **Ruchen Wen**, Bertram F. Malle, and Tom Williams. “The Power of Advice: Differential Blame for Human and Robot Advisors and Deciders in a Moral Advising Context”. In: *Proceedings of the 19th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI)*. 24.9% acceptance rate, 2024.
 - [C3] **Ruchen Wen**, Francis Ferraro, and Cynthia Matuszek. “GPT-4 as a Moral Reasoner for Robot Command Rejection”. In: *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Human-Agent Interaction*. 36% acceptance rate, 2024.
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- [C4] Yifei Zhu, **Ruchen Wen**, and Tom Williams. “Robots for Social Justice (R4SJ): Toward a More Equitable Practice of Human-Robot Interaction”. In: *Proceedings of the 19th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI)*. 24.9% acceptance rate, 2024.
 - [C5] Boyoung Kim, **Ruchen Wen**, Qin Zhu, Tom Williams, and Elizabeth Phillips. “The impact of different ethical frameworks underlying a robot’s advice on charitable donations”. In: *IEEE International Symposium on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)*. 2023.
 - [C6] **Ruchen Wen**, Alyssa Hanson, Zhao Han, and Tom Williams. “Fresh Start: Encouraging Politeness in Wakeword-Driven Human-Robot Interaction”. In: *Proceedings of the 18th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI)*. 25.2% acceptance rate, 2023.
 - [C7] **Ruchen Wen**, Boyoung Kim, Elizabeth Phillips, Qin Zhu, and Tom Williams. “On Further Reflection... Moral Reflections Enhance Robotic Moral Persuasive Capability”. In: *International Conference on Persuasive Technology*. 37.7% acceptance rate, 2023.
 - [C8] **Ruchen Wen**, Brandon Barton, Sebastian Faure, and Tom Williams. “Unpretty Please: Ostensibly Polite Wakewords Discourage Politeness in both Robot-Directed and Human-Directed Communication”. In: *ACM International Conference on Multimodal Interaction (ICMI)*. 32.5% acceptance rate (oral), 2022.
 - [C9] **Ruchen Wen**, Zhao Han, and Tom Williams. “Teacher, Teammate, Subordinate, Friend: Generating Norm Violation Responses Grounded in Role-based Relational Norms”. In: *Proceedings of the 17th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI)*. 24.8% acceptance rate, 2022.
 - [C10] Cailyn Smith, Charlotte Gorgemans, **Ruchen Wen**, Saad Elbeledy, Sayanti Roy, and Tom Williams. “Leveraging Intentional Factors and Task Context to Predict Linguistic Norm Adherence”. In: *Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (CogSci)*. 2022.
 - [C11] Boyoung Kim, **Ruchen Wen**, Qin Zhu, Tom Williams, and Elizabeth Phillips. “Robots as Moral Advisors: The Effects of Deontological, Virtue, and Confucian Ethics on Encouraging Honest Behavior”. In: *Companion Proceedings of the 16th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (alt.HRI)*. 21.7% acceptance rate, 2021.
 - [C12] **Ruchen Wen**, Mohammed Aun Siddiqui, and Tom Williams. “Dempster-Shafer Theoretic Learning of Indirect Speech Act Comprehension Norms”. In: *Proceedings of the 34th AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence*. 20.6% acceptance rate, 2020.
 - [C13] Tom Williams, Daniel Grollman, Mingyuan Han, Ryan Blake Jackson, Jane Lockshin, **Ruchen Wen**, Zachary Nahman, and Qin Zhu. ““Excuse Me, Robot”: Impact of Polite Robot Wakewords on Human-Robot Politeness”. In: *International Conference on Social Robotics*. 2020.
 - [C14] Tom Williams, Qin Zhu, **Ruchen Wen**, and Ewart J. de Visser. “The Confucian Matador: Three Defenses Against the Mechanical Bull”. In: *Companion Proceedings of the 15th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (alt.HRI)*. 19% acceptance rate, 2020.
 - [C15] Ryan Blake Jackson, **Ruchen Wen**, and Tom Williams. “Tact in Noncompliance: The Need for Pragmatically Apt Responses to Unethical Commands”. In: *Proceedings of the AAAI/ACM Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Society (AIES)*. 15% acceptance rate (oral), 2019.
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Lightly Refereed and Invited Workshop, Symposium, and Conference Papers

- [W1] **Ruchen Wen** and Tom Williams. “Hidden Complexities in the Computational Modeling of Proportionality for Robotic Norm Violation Response”. In: *Proceedings of the AAAI Fall Symposium on AI for HRI (AI-HRI)*. 2022.
- [W2] Boyoung Kim, **Ruchen Wen**, Ewart J. de Visser, Qin Zhu, Tom Williams, and Elizabeth Phillips. “Investigating Robot Moral Advice to Deter Cheating Behavior”. In: *Proceedings of the RO-MAN 2021 Workshop on Robot Behavior Adaptation to Human Social Norms (TSAR)*. 2021.
- [W3] **Ruchen Wen**. “Toward hybrid relational-normative models of robot cognition”. In: *Companion of the 2021 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction*. 2021, pp. 568–570.
- [W4] **Ruchen Wen**, Boyoung Kim, Elizabeth Phillips, Qin Zhu, and Tom Williams. “Comparing Strategies for Robot Communication of Role-Grounded Moral Norms”. In: *Companion Proceedings of the 16th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI): Late Breaking Reports*. 2021.
- [W5] Tom Williams and **Ruchen Wen**. “Human Capabilities as Guiding Lights for the Field of AI-HRI: Insights from Engineering Education”. In: *AAAI Fall Symposium on Artificial Intelligence for Human-Robot Interaction (AI-HRI)*. 2021.
- [W6] **Ruchen Wen**, Mohammed Aun Siddiqui, and Tom Williams. “Poster: Dempster-Shafer Theoretic Learning of Indirect Speech Act Comprehension Norms”. In: *Advances in Cognitive Systems*. Non-archival Poster Presentation. 2020.
- [W7] **Ruchen Wen**, Ryan Blake Jackson, Tom Williams, and Qin Zhu. “Towards A Role Ethics Approach to Command Rejection”. In: *Proceedings of the 2019 HRI Workshop on the Dark Side of Human-Robot Interaction*. 2019.
- [W8] Qin Zhu, Tom Williams, and **Ruchen Wen**. “Confucian Robot Ethics”. In: *Computer Ethics - Philosophical Enquiry*. 2019.

Teaching Experience

- Spring 2026 **Instructor**, COSC 480, *Topics in Computer Science: Human-Robot Interaction*
Colgate University
 - Spring 2026 **Instructor**, COSC 101, *Introduction for Computing I*
Colgate University
 - Fall 2025 **Instructor**, COSC 101, *Introduction for Computing I*
Colgate University
 - Fall 2022 **Co-Instructor**, CSCI/EENG 437/507, *Introduction to Computer Vision*
With Tom Williams, Colorado School of Mines
 - Fall 2021 **Co-Instructor**, CSCI/EENG 437/507, *Introduction to Computer Vision*
With Ryan Blake Jackson, Colorado School of Mines
 - Spring 2020 **Teaching Assistant**, CSCI/HASS 432, *Robot Ethics*
Taught by Tom Williams, Colorado School of Mines
 - Spring 2019 **Teaching Assistant**, CSCI 306, *Software Engineering*
Taught by Mark Baldwin, Colorado School of Mines
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Fall 2018 **Teaching Assistant**, *CSCI 306, Software Engineering*
 Taught by Mark Baldwin, Colorado School of Mines

Guest Lectures

- Spring 2025 **Franklin & Marshall College**, “Towards Morally and Socially Competent Human-Robot Interaction”, CPS Topic: Teaching and Learning Machine Ethics
- Fall 2024 **Purdue University Northwest**, “Towards Morally and Socially Competent Human-Robot Interaction”, CS 46800: Human Robot Interaction
- Fall 2024 **University of Maryland, Baltimore County**, “Machine Learning: Decision Trees and Information, Evaluating ML Models”, CMSC 671: Principles of Artificial Intelligence
- Fall 2024 **University of Maryland, Baltimore County**, “Robotics and Human-Robot Interaction”, CMSC 671: Principles of Artificial Intelligence
- Fall 2023 **University of Maryland, Baltimore County**, “Context-Sensitive Representations, Reasoning, and Communication for Morally and Socially Competent Robots”, CMSC 691: Principles of Human-Robot Interaction
- Spring 2023 **University of Chicago**, “Teacher, Teammate, Subordinate, Friend: Generating Norm Violation Responses Grounded in Role-based Relational Norms”, CMSC 33281: Topics in Human-Robot Interaction

Professional Service

Workshop and Symposium Organization

Workshop Organizer, *Rebellion and Disobedience in Artificial Intelligence (RaD-AI)*
 Co-organizers: David W. Aha (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Gordon Briggs (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Peta Masters (King’s College London), Reuth Mirsky (Tufts University), Sarath Sreedharan (Colorado State University), Mor Vered (Monash University). *International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems (AAMAS 2026)*, will be held in Paphos, Cyprus, in May 2026

Symposium Organizer, *Unifying Representations for Robot Application Development (UR-RAD)*

Co-organizers: David Porfirio (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Saad Elbeleidy (Peerbots), Laura Hiatt (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Ross Mead (Semio), Andrew Schoen (Semio), Willie Wilson (Franklin & Marshall College), , Laura Stegner (University of Wisconsin-Madison). *AAAI Fall Symposium*, held in Arlington, VA, in November 2025

Symposium Organizer, *Unifying Representations for Robot Application Development (UR-RAD)*

Co-organizers: David Porfirio (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Saad Elbeleidy (Peerbots), Laura Hiatt (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Mark Roberts (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Willie Wilson (Franklin & Marshall College), Ross Mead (Semio), Laura Stegner (University of Wisconsin-Madison). *AAAI Fall Symposium*, held in Arlington, VA, in November 2024

Workshop Panel Moderator, *Human-Machine Integration Workshop*

University of Maryland, Baltimore County, held in Baltimore, MD, in August 2024

Workshop Organizer, *Scarecrows in Oz: Large Language Models in HRI*

Co-organizers: Cynthia Matuszek (University of Maryland, Baltimore County), Nick DePalma (Independent Researcher), Ross Mead (Semio), Tom Williams (Colorado School of Mines). *International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction*, held in Boulder, CO, in March 2024

Symposium Volunteer, *The International Symposium on Technological Advances in Human-Robot Interaction (TAHRI)*

held in Boulder, CO, in March 2024

Symposium Organizer, *Unifying Representations for Robot Application Development (UR-RAD)*

Co-organizers: David Porfrio (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Ross Mead (Semio), Laura Stegner (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Laura Hiatt (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Mark Roberts (U.S. Naval Research Lab), Amin Atrash (Amazon Lab126), Nick DePalma (Independent Researcher). *AAAI Fall Symposium, held in Arlington, VA, in October 2023*

Symposium Organizer, *Artificial Intelligence for Human-Robot Interaction (AI-HRI)*

Co-organizers: Zhao Han (Colorado School of Mines), Emmanuel Senft (Idiap Research Institute), Muneeb I. Ahmad (Swansea University), Shelly Bagchi (National Institute of Standards and Technology), Justin W. Hart (University of Texas at Austin), Daniel Hernández García (Heriot-Watt University), Boyoung Kim (George Mason University), Matteo Leonetti (University of Leeds), Ross Mead (Semio), Reuth Mirsky (Bar Ilan University), Ahalya Prabhakar (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne), Jason R. Wilson (Franklin & Marshall College), Amir Yazdani (University of Utah Robotics Center), Megan L. Zimmerman (National Institute of Standards and Technology). *AAAI Fall Symposium, held in Arlington, VA, in November 2022*

Referee Service

Referee for Journal Articles

ACM Transactions on Human-Robot Interaction (T-HRI)

External Referee for Conference Proceedings

ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI)

ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)

IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)

International Conference on Social Robotics (ICSR)

Late-Breaking Reports of the ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI-LBR)

External Referee for Workshop and Symposia Proceedings

Human-Robot Interaction Pioneers Workshop of the ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI Pioneers)

AAAI Fall Symposium on Artificial Intelligence for Human-Robot Interaction (AI-HRI)

Professional Society Membership

ACM

AAAI

IEEE

University Service

CS@Mines Graduate Visit Days, Panelist/Volunteer, Colorado School of Mines, 2023

Computer Science Graduate Visit Days, Volunteer, Colorado School of Mines, 2020

Graduate Experience Mentor (GEM) Program, Mentor, Colorado School of Mines, 2019

Computer Science Board of Graduate Students, Member, Colorado School of Mines, 2019

Mentoring

Padraig Higgins (Ph.D., CS, University of Maryland, Baltimore County), 2024-2025

Kasra Darvish (Ph.D., CS, University of Maryland, Baltimore County), 2023-2025, *Senior Research Scientist*, *CCC Intellignet Solutions*

Aidan Newell (Masters, CS, University of Maryland, Baltimore County), 2023-2024

Alyssa Hanson (Undergraduate, CS, Colorado School of Mines), 2022–2023

Cloe Emmett (Undergraduate, CS, Colorado School of Mines), 2022–2023

Anjana Radha (High School Summer Scholar, Peak to Peak Charter School), 2022 Summer, *Student*, *Northwestern University*

Brandon Barton (Undergraduate, CS, Colorado School of Mines), 2021–2022, *Master Student*, *Applied Mathematics and Statistics* \rightarrow *Ph.D. Student*, *Physics*, *ETH Zürich*

Sebastian Fauré (Undergraduate, CS, University of Florida), 2021–2022, *Software Engineer*, *Amazon Lab126*

Nichole Starr (Undergraduate, CS, Colorado School of Mines), 2020–2021, *Software Engineer Associate*, *Lockheed Martin*

Katherine Aubert (Undergraduate, CS, Colorado School of Mines), 2020–2021, *Graduate Student*

Levi Ortega (Undergraduate, CS, Colorado School of Mines), 2019–2020, *Software Engineer*, *Microsoft*

Aun Siddiqui (Masters, MechE, Colorado School of Mines), 2017–2019, *Machine Learning Engineer*, *Terra Chem Laboratory*

Outreach

Invited Talks and Presentations

Guest Panelist, CPS 367: Artificial Intelligence, Franklin & Marshall College, 2023

Panel discussion on sharing the experiences of individuals from diverse backgrounds pursuing various career paths.

Invited Speaker, “*Fresh Start: Encouraging Politeness in Wakeword-Driven Human-Robot Interaction*”, CS Graduate Student’s Seminar, Colorado School of Mines, 2022
Presentation on the HRI 2023 publication [C6].

Presenter, “*How to Move a Robotic Arm*”, “Girls Lead the Way” Conference, Colorado School of Mines, 2022

K-12 interactive presentation on robotic.

Presenter, “*How to Move a Robotic Arm*”, Shelton Elementary Math & Science Night STEM Fair, Shelton Elementary, 2021

K-6 interactive presentation on robotic.

Invited Speaker, “*It’s Time to Talk, Humans*”, Computing For Good (C4G) Program, Colorado School of Mines, 2021

K-12 talk on ethics while developing CS projects.

Panelist, *CS Research Workshop*, Google ExploreCSR Hidden Talents Research Project, Colorado School of Mines, 2021

Discussion on pursuing graduate school and research in computer science for undergraduate students who applied for the Hidden Talents program.

Presenter/Panelist, “*MIRROR Lab’s Research on Robotics & AI*”, Academic Panel: AI & Robotics Research at Mines, Colorado School of Mines, 2020

Public talk on MIRROR Lab’s research.

Presenter, “*How to Train Your Robot (To be Socially and Morally Good)*”, NCWIT Aspirations Event, Colorado School of Mines, 2020

K-12 talk on Human-Robot Interaction and Robot Ethics.

Targeted Programs

Volunteer, Hour of Code, Colorado School of Mines, 2022

Outreach program targeted at K-9 to K-12 students.

Mentor, Google ExploreCSR Hidden Talents Project, Colorado School of Mines, 2020-2021

Google-Funded program for academically talented undergraduate students in U.S. to work with graduate students from the Colorado School of Mines on CS research project.

Selected Press Coverage

Mines Newsroom, 2023

Research covered in “Women in computer science at Mines are rising stars in research and innovation”

Radical AI Podcast, 2020, Episode 001

Research covered in “Can a Machine Ever be Moral? Robot Politeness and Persuasion with Tom Williams”

<https://youtu.be/BM0Y7I-rKTM>

Mines Newsroom, 2020

Research covered in “Improving the human-robot relationship, one successful conversation at a time”
