



# SHUN ZHANG

✉ [shunzh@umich.edu](mailto:shunzh@umich.edu)    [shunzh.github.io](https://github.com/shunzh)    San Francisco Bay Area

**Research interests:** Reinforcement learning; large language models; automatic code generation.

## EXPERIENCE

---

**Research Scientist**, *MIT-IBM Watson AI Lab* Jun. 2022 - Present  
**Postdoctoral Researcher**, *MIT-IBM Watson AI Lab* Oct. 2021 - Jun. 2022  
**Postdoctoral Researcher**, *IBM-NJIT* Aug. 2020 - Oct. 2021

- Research and publish academic papers on **reinforcement learning** and **large language models**, with a focus on the applications of competitive-level code generation and AI for electric circuit design automation.

**Graduate Research Assistant**, *University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI) Sep. 2015 - Apr. 2020

- Conducted research and published papers on **preference elicitation** and **AI safety in reinforcement learning**.
- Designed active learning algorithms to improve a learning agent's performance and guarantee safety in domains with uncertain objectives.

**Software Development Engineer Intern**, *Amazon* (Seattle, WA) Jun. - Aug. 2014

- Created a WebRTC-related internal tool to resolve cross-departmental communication issues.

**Software Development Engineer Intern**, *Semantic Designs* (Austin, TX) Jun. - Aug. 2013

- Created a user interface for a programming language analysis tool for better visualization.

## EDUCATION

---

**Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering**, *University of Michigan* Sep. 2015 - Apr. 2020

- Dissertation: Efficiently Finding Approximately-Optimal Queries for Improving Policies and Guaranteeing Safety
- Advisors: Satinder Singh, Edmund H. Durfee

**M.S. in Computer Science**, *University of Texas at Austin* Aug. 2015

- Master Thesis: Parameterized Modular Inverse Reinforcement Learning
- Committee members: Dana Ballard, Peter Stone

**B.S. in Computer Science**, *University of Texas at Austin* May 2014

## PUBLICATIONS

---

- **Planning with Large Language Models for Code Generation**  
Shun Zhang, Zhenfang Chen, Yikang Shen, Mingyu Ding, Joshua B. Tenenbaum, and Chuang Gan  
*International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR), 2023*  
[paper](#)
- **Hyper-Decision Transformer for Efficient Online Policy Adaptation**  
Mengdi Xu, Yuchen Lu, Yikang Shen, Shun Zhang, Ding Zhao, and Chuang Gan  
*International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR), 2023*  
[paper](#)
- **Prompting Decision Transformer for Few-shot Policy Generalization**  
Mengdi Xu, Yikang Shen, Shun Zhang, Yuchen Lu, Ding Zhao, Joshua B. Tenenbaum, and Chuang Gan  
*International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML), 2022*  
[paper](#)

- **Power Converter Circuit Design Automation using Parallel Monte Carlo Tree Search**  
Shaoze Fan, **Shun Zhang**, Jianbo Liu, Ningyuan Cao, Xiaoxiao Guo, Jing Li, and Xin Zhang  
*ACM Transactions on Design Automation of Electronic Systems (TODAES)*, 2022  
[paper](#)
- **From Specification to Topology: Automatic Power Converter Design via Reinforcement Learning**  
Shaoze Fan, Ningyuan Cao, **Shun Zhang**, Jing Li, Xiaoxiao Guo, and Xin Zhang  
*International Conference on Computer Aided Design (ICCAD)*, 2021  
[paper](#)
- **Efficiently Finding Approximately-Optimal Queries for Improving Policies and Guaranteeing Safety**  
**Shun Zhang**  
*Ph.D. Dissertation*, 2020  
[paper](#)
- **Querying to Find a Safe Policy Under Uncertain Safety Constraints in Markov Decision Processes**  
**Shun Zhang**, Edmund H. Durfee, and Satinder Singh  
*AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI)*, 2020  
[paper](#)
- **Minimax-Regret Querying on Side Effects for Safe Optimality in Factored Markov Decision Processes**  
**Shun Zhang**, Edmund H. Durfee, and Satinder Singh  
*International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI)*, 2018  
[paper](#)
- **Approximately-Optimal Queries for Planning in Reward-Uncertain Markov Decision Processes**  
**Shun Zhang**, Edmund H. Durfee, and Satinder Singh  
*International Conference on Automated Planning and Scheduling (ICAPS)*, 2017  
[paper](#)
- **Modeling Sensory-Motor Decisions in Natural Behavior**  
Ruohan Zhang, **Shun Zhang**, Matthew H. Tong, Yuchen Cui, Constatin A. Rothkopf, Dana H. Ballard, and Mary M. Hayhoe  
*PLoS Computational Biology*, 2018  
[paper](#)
- **Determining Placements of Influencing Agents in a Flock**  
Katie Genter, **Shun Zhang**, and Peter Stone  
*Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems (AAMAS)*, 2015  
[paper](#)
- **Autonomous Intersection Management for Semi-Autonomous Vehicles**  
Tsz-Chiu Au, **Shun Zhang**, and Peter Stone  
*Handbook of Transportation*, 2015  
[paper](#)

## ACADEMIC SERVICES

---

### Conference Reviewer

- IEEE ITSC 2014, AAAI 2019, AISTATS 2023, CVPR 2023, ICML 2023, NeurIPS 2023.

## SKILLS

---

### Research

Reinforcement learning, optimization, deep learning, large language models, active learning, learning and planning under uncertainty.

**Programming languages**

Proficient in Python (numpy, PyTorch). Experienced in Java, C++, C, Matlab.