

Si Liu

Assistant Professor | Department of Computer Science & Engineering | Texas A&M University
+1 9796768877 | si.liu@tamu.edu | siliunobi.github.io

Research Interests

Si Liu's research lies at the intersection of **formal methods**, **systems**, and **security**, with a strong focus on **leveraging formal verification techniques to build reliable, secure, and performant distributed systems**. In recent years, he has worked on verifying and validating both the **designs and deployments** of **databases** and **DNS**, addressing not only **qualitative** (e.g., reliability and security) but also **quantitative** (e.g., availability and scalability) aspects. He is also interested in the intersection of these areas with AI: both in applying AI techniques to strengthen verification, and in developing rigorous methods for verifying AI-powered systems themselves.

Education

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)

PHD IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Aug. 2012 – May 2019

- Advisor: Prof. Dr. José Meseguer

East China Normal University (ECNU)

MASTER IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Sep. 2009 – May 2012

East China Normal University (ECNU)

BACHELOR IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Sep. 2005 – Jun. 2009

Professional Experience

Aug. 2025 – present	Tenure-track Assistant Professor , Texas A&M University
May 2023 – July 2025	Senior Researcher (Deutsch: Oberassistent) , ETH Zurich
Aug. 2019 – May 2023	Postdoc Researcher , ETH Zurich
Oct. 2014 – Sep. 2018	Research Assistant , Assured Cloud Computing Center, UIUC
Jun. 2011 – Aug. 2011	Research Intern , National Cyber-Physical Systems Camp, USTC
Sep. 2009 – May 2012	Research Assistant , Danish-Chinese Research Center, ECNU
May 2008 – Feb. 2009	Software Engineering Intern , Dept. of Talent House, Hewlett-Packard Co. Ltd.

Awards & Honors

Mar. 2024 –	Official Project Partner on the grant for Project “Formal Verification of Isolation Guarantees in Database Systems” , SNSF (Swiss National Science Foundation)	CHF 181,099
Aug. 2024 –	Career Seed Award , ETH Zurich	CHF 30,000
2024	Thesis supervisor for Luca Multazz, recipient of the ETH Medal for his Master thesis (Top 2.5%) , ETH Zurich	
2023	Thesis supervisor for Lukas Heimes, recipient of the ETH Medal for his Master thesis (Top 2.5%) , ETH Zurich	
2012	Outstanding Graduate Award (Ranked 1st) , East China Normal University	
2011	Excellent Student Award (Ranked 1st) , East China Normal University	

Publications

* I contributed equally as a co-first author † indicates the students I supervised

- FM/SE x DATABASES (RECENT)

- [SIGMOD'26] Zijing Yin[†], **Si Liu**, David Basin. Testing Graph Databases with Synthesized Queries
- [VLDB'25] Shabnam Ghasemirad[†], **Si Liu**, Christoph Sprenger, Luca Multazzu, David Basin. Verlso: Verifiable Isolation Guarantees for Database Transactions
- [ICDE'25] Hengfeng Wei, Jiang Xiao, Na Yang, **Si Liu**, Zijing Yin, Yuxing Chen, Anqun Pan. Boosting End-to-End Database Isolation Checking via Mini-Transactions
- [TACAS'25] Shabnam Ghasemirad[†], Christoph Sprenger, **Si Liu**, Luca Multazzu, David Basin. Pushing the Limit: Verified Performance-Optimal Causally Consistent Database Transactions
- [OOPSLA'24] **Si Liu**, Long Gu, Hengfeng Wei, David Basin. Plume: Efficient and Complete Black-box Checking of Weak Isolation Levels
- [SIGMOD'24] **Si Liu**, Luca Multazzu, Hengfeng Wei, David Basin. NOC-NOC: Towards Performance-optimal Distributed Transactions
- [VLDB'24] Long Gu[†], **Si Liu**, Tiansheng Xing, Hengfeng Wei, Yuxing Chen, David Basin. IsoVista: Black-box Checking Database Isolation Guarantees. **Demo Track**
- [VLDB'23] **Si Liu**^{*}, Kaile Huang^{*}, Zhenge Chen, Hengfeng Wei, David Basin, Haixiang Li, Anqun Pan. Efficient Black-box Checking of Snapshot Isolation in Databases
- [OSDI'23] Zu-Ming Jiang, **Si Liu**, Manuel Rigger, Zhendong Su. Detecting Transactional Bugs in Database Engines via Graph-Based Oracle Construction
- [OOPSLA'22] **Si Liu**, Jose Meseguer, Peter Csaba Olveczky, Min Zhang, David Basin. Bridging the Semantic Gap between Qualitative and Quantitative Models of Distributed Systems
- [TOSEM'22] **Si Liu**. All in One: Design, Verification, and Implementation of SNOW-Optimal Read Atomic Transactions

Under Revision:

- [VLDB'26] Zhiheng Cai[†], **Si Liu**, Hengfeng Wei, Yuxing Chen, Anqun Pan. Fast Verification of Strong Database Isolation

• FM x SECURITY (DNS AND BEYOND)

- [POPL'25] Dhruv Nevatia[†], **Si Liu**, David Basin. Reachability Analysis of the Domain Name System.
- [USENIX SEC'24] Huayi Duan, Marco Bearzi, Jodok Vieli, Adrian Perrig, David Basin, **Si Liu**, Bernhard Tellenbach. CAMP: Compositional Amplification Attacks against DNS
- [SIGCOMM'23] **Si Liu**, Huayi Duan, Lukas Heimes, Marco Bearzi, Jodok Vieli, Adrian Perrig, David Basin. A Formal Framework for End-to-End DNS Resolution
- [NSDI'23] Huayi Duan, Fischer Ruben, Lou Jie, **Si Liu**, David Basin, Adrian Perrig. RHINE: Robust and High-performance Internet Naming with E2E Authenticity
- [CSF'22] **Si Liu**^{*}, Thilo Weghorn^{*}, Christoph Sprenger, Adrian Perrig, David Basin. N-Tube: Formally Verified Secure Bandwidth Reservation in Path-Aware Internet Architectures
- [Book Chapter] David Basin, Tobias Klenze, **Si Liu**, Christoph Sprenger. *Design-Level Verification in The Complete Guide to SCION: From Design Principles to Formal Verification*. 2022
- [Book Chapter] Giacomo Giuliani, Markus Legner, **Si Liu**, Adrian Perrig, Thilo Weghorn, Marc Wyss. *Extensions for the Data Plane in The Complete Guide to SCION: From Design Principles to Formal Verification*. 2022

• OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- [NN'25] Shi Peng, **Si Liu**, Dapeng Zhi, Peixin Wang, Chenyang Xu, Cheng Chen, Min Zhang. ATA: An Abstract-Train-Abstract approach for explanation-friendly deep reinforcement learning. Neural Networks, 2025
- [CAV'24] Dapeng Zhi, Peixin Wang, **Si Liu**, Luke Ong, Min Zhang. Unifying Qualitative and Quantitative Safety Verification of DNN-Controlled Systems
- [VMCAI'24] Jiaxu Tian, Dapeng Zhi, **Si Liu**, Peixin Wang, Guy Katz, Min Zhang. Taming Reachability Analysis of DNN-Controlled Systems via Abstraction-Based Training

- [NeurIPS'23] Jiaxu Tian, Dapeng Zhi, **Si Liu**, Peixin Wang, Cheng Chen, Min Zhang. Boosting Verification of Deep Reinforcement Learning via Piece-Wise Linear Decision Neural Networks
- [CVPR'23] Zhaodi Zhang, Zhiyi Xue, Yang Chen, **Si Liu**, Yueling Zhang, Jing Liu, Min Zhang. Boosting Verified Training for Robust Image Classifications via Abstraction
- [ISSTA'23] Zhiyi Xue, **Si Liu**, Zhaodi Zhang, Yiting Wu, Min Zhang. A Tale of Two Approximations: Tightening Over-Approximation for DNN Robustness Verification via Under-Approximation
- [ASE'22] Zhaodi Zhang, Yiting Wu, **Si Liu**, Jing Liu, Min Zhang. Provably Tightest Linear Approximation for Robustness Verification of Sigmoid-like Neural Networks
- [TASE'21] Lei Liang, **Si Liu**. Exploring Design Alternatives for Replicated RAMP Transactions Using Maude
- [NFM'20] **Si Liu**, Atul Sandur, Jose Meseguer, Peter Olveczky, Qi Wang. Generating Correct-by-Construction Distributed Implementations from Formal Maude Designs
- [TACAS'19] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Olveczky, Min Zhang, Qi Wang, Jose Meseguer. Automatic Analysis of Consistency Properties of Distributed Transaction Systems in Maude.
- [FAoC'19] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky, Qi Wang, Indranil Gupta, José Meseguer. Read Atomic Transactions with Prevention of Lost Updates: ROLA and Its Formal Analysis. *Formal Aspects of Computing*
- [CCS'19] Qi Wang, Pubali Datta, Wei Yang, **Si Liu**, Carl Gunter, Adam Bates. Charting the Attack Surface of Trigger-Action IoT Platforms.
- [FASE'18] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky, Keshav Santhanam, Qi Wang, Indranil Gupta, José Meseguer. ROLA: A New Distributed Transaction Protocol and Its Formal Analysis.
- [LITES'17] **Si Liu**, Jatin Ganhota, Muntasir Raihan Rahman, Son Nguyen, Indranil Gupta, José Meseguer. Quantitative Analysis of Consistency in NoSQL Key-value Stores. *Leibniz Transactions on Embedded Systems*
- [ICFEM'17] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky, Jatin Ganhota, Indranil Gupta, José Meseguer. Exploring Design Alternatives for RAMP Transactions through Statistical Model Checking.
- [JLAMP'16] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky, José Meseguer. Modeling and Analyzing Mobile Ad hoc Networks in Real-Time Maude. *Journal of Logical and Algebraic Methods in Programming*
- [SAC'16] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky, Muntasir Raihan Rahman, Jatin Ganhota, Indranil Gupta, José Meseguer. Formal Modeling and Analysis of Ramp Transaction Systems.
- [QEST'15] **Si Liu**, Son Nguyen, Jatin Ganhota, Muntasir Raihan Rahman, Indranil Gupta, José Meseguer. Quantitative Analysis of Consistency in NoSQL Key-value Stores. *Nominated for Best Paper*.
- [ICFEM'14] **Si Liu**, Muntasir Raihan Rahman, Stephen Skeirik, Indranil Gupta, José Meseguer. Formal Modeling and Analysis of Cassandra in Maude.
- [PRDC'14] Xi Wu, **Si Liu**, Huibiao Zhu and Yongxin Zhao. Reasoning about Group-Based Mobility in MANETs.
- [ComSIS'13] Xi Wu, Huibiao Zhu, Yongxin Zhao, Zheng Wang, **Si Liu**. Modeling and verifying the Ariadne protocol using process algebra. *Computer Science and Information Systems Journal*
- [ECBS'12] Xi Wu, **Si Liu**, Huibiao Zhu, Yongxin Zhao, Lei Chen. Modeling and Verifying the Ariadne Protocol Using CSP.
- [HASE'11] **Si Liu**, Yongxin Zhao, Huibiao Zhu, Qin Li. A Calculus for Mobile Ad Hoc Networks from a Group Probabilistic Perspective.
- [SSIRI'11] **Si Liu**, Xiaofeng Wu, Qin Li, Huibiao Zhu, Qian Wang. Formal Approaches to Wireless Sensor Networks.
- [TASE'11] **Si Liu**, Yongxin Zhao, Huibiao Zhu, Qin Li. Towards a Probabilistic Calculus for Mobile Ad Hoc Networks.
- [TASE'11] Mengying Wang, Huibiao Zhu, Yongxin Zhao, **Si Liu**. Modeling and Analyzing the μ TESLA Protocol Using CSP.
- [ICECCS'11] Yongxin Zhao, Yanhong Huang, Jifeng He, **Si Liu**. Formal Model of Interrupt Program from a Probabilistic Perspective.
- [UTP'10] Qin Li, Yongxin Zhao, Xiaofeng Wu, **Si Liu**. Promoting Models.

WORKSHOP PAPERS

[WRLA'18] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky, Qi Wang, José Meseguer. Formal Modeling and Analysis of the Walter Transactional Data Store.

[SSS'15] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky and José Meseguer. Formal analysis of Leader Election in MANETs Using Real-Time Maude.

[WRLA'14] **Si Liu**, Peter Csaba Ölveczky and José Meseguer. A Framework for Mobile Ad hoc Networks in Real-Time Maude.

[SSIRI'11] Han Zhu, Huibiao Zhu, **Si Liu**, Jian Guo. Towards Denotational Semantics for Verilog in PVS.

OTHER Book CHAPTERS

- Rakesh Bobba, Jon Grov, Indranil Gupta, **Si Liu**, José Meseguer, Peter Csaba Ölveczky, Stephen Skeirik. Survivability: Design, Formal Modeling, and Validation of Cloud Storage Systems using Maude. 2018.

PHD THESIS

- Design, Verification and Automatic Implementation of Correct-by-Construction Distributed Transaction Systems in Maude. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. 2019

Teaching Experience

Fall 2024	Computer Systems , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Spring 2024	Data Modeling and Databases , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Fall 2023	Computer Systems , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Spring 2023	Data Modeling and Databases , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Fall 2022	Information Systems for Engineers , Head Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Spring 2022	Data Modeling and Databases , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Fall 2021	Applied Security Lab , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Spring 2021	Data Modeling and Databases , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Fall 2020	Computer Systems , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Spring 2020	Data Modeling and Databases , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Fall 2019	Applied Security Lab , Teaching Assistant	ETH Zurich
Fall 2016	Distributed Systems , Teaching Assistant	UIUC
Fall 2011	Process Algebra , Teaching Assistant	ECNU
Spring 2011	Algorithms and Data Structures , Teaching Assistant	ECNU
Fall 2010	Discrete Mathematics , Teaching Assistant	ECNU
Spring 2010	Algorithms and Data Structures , Teaching Assistant	ECNU

Mentoring

- I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the following talented students:
- **PhD students (6 in total)**
 - Dhruv Nevatia (co-advising with Prof. David Basin), ETH Zurich
 - Shabnam Ghasemirad (co-advising with Dr. Christoph Sprenger and Prof. David Basin), ETH Zurich
 - Zijing Yin, ETH Zurich
 - Ziwei Zhou, ECNU
 - Shi Peng, ECNU
 - Zhaodi Zhang, ECNU
- **Graduate students (21 in total, including two who were awarded the ETH Medal)**

- Kumaran Gowrisankar, Texas A&M University
 - Sahithi Duppatti, Texas A&M University
 - Jaelen Dixon, Texas A&M University
 - Shashank Chandavarkar, Texas A&M University
 - Wenyuan Jiang, ETH Zurich
 - Rongchuan Liu, ETH Zurich
 - Theodor Moroianu, ETH Zurich
 - Yunxin Sun, ETH Zurich
 - Yufei Zhang, ETH Zurich
 - Rolando Grave de Peralta, ETH Zurich
 - Zhou Zhou, ECNU
 - Long Gu, Nanjing University
 - Qiuhan Xiong, Nanjing University
 - Luca Multazz, ETH Zurich
 - * honoured with the ETH Medal for his Master thesis “NOCS-Optimal Distributed Transactions and Beyond” (top 2.5%)
 - Lukas Heimes, ETH Zurich
 - * honoured with the ETH Medal for his Master thesis “A Formal Framework for End-to-End DNS Resolution” (top 2.5%)
 - Jodok Vieli, ETH Zurich
 - Marco Bearzi, ETH Zurich
 - Shabnam Ghasemirad (now PhD at ETH Zurich), ETH Zurich
 - Jiang Xiao, Nanjing University
 - Jiaxu Tian, ECNU
 - Zhiyi Xue, ECNU
- **Undergraduate students (11 in total)**
- Bosheng Peng, Nanjing University
 - TIANCHENG XING, Nanjing University
 - Zhiheng Cai, Nanjing University
 - Long Gu, Nanjing University
 - Zhenge Chen, Nanjing University
 - Zhou Zhou, ECNU
 - Ziwei Zhou, ECNU
 - Ruiyang Liu, ECNU

- Lei Liang, ECNU
- Plamen Stefanov, ETH Zurich
- Keshav Santhanam, UIUC

Professional Activities

- **Program Committee:** DASFAA'26, NSDI'25, ICFEM'24, ICFEM'23, ICFEM'22
- **Journal Reviewer:** The VLDB Journal, Journal of Logical and Algebraic Methods in Programming, Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems
- **Sub-Reviewer:** ICFEM ('16, '14, '13, '12, '11, '10), FM ('21, '18), FASE'14, TASE ('12, '11)
- **Judge:** Student Research Competition (SPLASH 2024), Texas Junior Academy of Science (TJAS) 2025
- **Dagstuhl Seminar:** “Ensuring the Reliability and Robustness of Database Management Systems (21442)” 2021 (participant)
- **Grant:**
 - Official Project Partner on the SNSF grant for Project “Formal Verification of Isolation Guarantees in Database Systems” (CHF 181,099; 2024–2027)
 - Preparing the proposal for NSF CNS 1409416 (\$584,508; 2014–2018), Availability-Consistency Trade-offs in Key-Value and NoSQL Storage Systems

Invited Talks & Presentations

- Making Database Transactions Reliable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. Department of Computer Science, Aarhus University, 2025.
- Making Database Transactions Reliable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. Department of Computer Science, UC Irvine, 2025.
- Making Database Transactions Reliable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Texas A&M University, 2025.
- Making Database Transactions Reliable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. Department of Computer Science, UT Dallas, 2025.
- Making Database Transactions Reliable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. School of Computer Science and Engineering, UNSW Sydney, 2025.
- Making Database Transactions Reliable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. School of Computer Science, University of Sydney, 2025.
- Making Database Transactions Reliable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. School of Data Science, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), 2025.
- Making Distributed Systems Dependable and Performant: from Design to Deployment. School of Computer Science and Technology, Nanjing University, 2024.
- Plume: Efficient and Complete Black-box Checking of Weak Isolation Levels. OOPSLA'24, Pasadena, USA, 2024.
- NOC-NOC: Towards Performance-optimal Distributed Transactions. SIGMOD'24, Santiago, Chile, 2024.

- Generating Correct-by-Construction Distributed Implementations from Formal Maude Designs. NFM'20, Virtual, 2020.
- Design, Verification and Automatic Implementation of Correct-by-Construction Distributed Transaction Systems in Maude. University Paris Diderot, France, 2019.
- Design, Verification and Automatic Implementation of Correct-by-Construction Distributed Transaction Systems in Maude. ETH Zurich, Switzerland, 2019.
- Automatic Analysis of Consistency Properties of Distributed Transaction Systems in Maude. TACAS'19, Prague, Czech Republic, 2019.
- Exploring Design Alternatives for RAMP Transactions through Statistical Model Checking. ICFEM'17, Xi'an, China, 2017.
- Design, Formal Modeling, and Validation of Cloud Storage Systems using Maude. Huawei, Urbana-Champaign, USA, 2017.
- Exploring Design Alternatives for the RAMP Transaction System Through Statistical Model Checking. Assured Cloud Computing Center, Urbana-Champaign, USA, 2017.
- Formal Modeling and Analysis of Ramp Transaction Systems. SAC'16, Pisa, Italy, 2016.
- Formal Modeling and Analysis of Ramp Transaction Systems. Assured Cloud Computing Center, Urbana-Champaign, USA, 2016.
- Quantitative Analysis of Consistency in NoSQL Key-value Stores. QEST'15, Madrid, Spain, 2015.
- Quantitative Analysis of Consistency in NoSQL Key-value Stores. Assured Cloud Computing Center, Urbana-Champaign, USA, 2015.
- A Framework for Mobile Ad hoc Networks in Real-Time Maude. WRLA'14, Grenoble, France, 2014.
- Formal Modeling and Analysis of Cassandra in Maude. Assured Cloud Computing Center, Urbana-Champaign, USA, 2014.
- A Calculus for Mobile Ad Hoc Networks from a Group Probabilistic Perspective. HASE'11, Boca Raton, USA, 2011.
- Towards a Probabilistic Calculus for Mobile Ad Hoc Networks. USTC, Suzhou, China, 2011.
- Towards a Probabilistic Calculus for Mobile Ad Hoc Networks. TASE'11, Xi'an, China, 2011.
- Formal Approaches to Wireless Sensor Networks. SSIRI'11, Jeju Island, Korea, 2011.

Referees

Prof. José Meseguer

Department of Computer Science
 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
 agk@illinois.edu¹
 +1 2173006645

Prof. David Basin

Department of Computer Science
 ETH Zurich
 basin@inf.ethz.ch
 +41 446327245

¹Ms. Allison Mette is managing emails on behalf of Prof. José Meseguer, and this is her email address (along with her phone number).

Prof. Zhendong Su

Department of Computer Science
ETH Zurich
zhendong.su@inf.ethz.ch
+41 446337772

Prof. Indranil Gupta

Department of Computer Science
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
indy@illinois.edu
+1 2172655517