

# Sungmin Kang

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## Research Interests

- **Trustworthy Machine Learning:** Interpretability and Uncertainty Quantification (UQ) in Large Language Models (LLMs)
- **Scalable Machine learning:** Parameter-Efficient Fine-Tuning, Communication-Efficient Federated Learning (FL)

## Education

### University of Southern California (USC)

M.S. in Electrical Engineering (Advisor: *Prof. Salman Avestimehr*)  
GPA: 4.00/4.00

Los Angeles, United States  
Aug. 2024 - May. 2026 (Expected)  
*MS Honors Fellow*

### Sogang University

B.S. in Electronic Engineering, Micro-degree in Artificial Intelligence  
GPA: 3.91/4.3

Seoul, Republic of Korea  
Mar. 2018 - Feb. 2024  
*Magna Cum Laude*

## Publications

1. **Reconsidering LLM Uncertainty Estimation Methods in the Wild** [PDF] [Poster] [Slides] [Video]  
Yavuz Faruk Bakman\*, Duygu Nur Yaldiz\*, **Sungmin Kang**, Tuo Zhang, Baturalp Buyukates, Salman Avestimehr, Sai Praneeth Karimireddy  
63rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2025)
2. **TruthTorchLM: A Comprehensive Library for Predicting Truthfulness in LLM Outputs** [PDF] [github]  
Duygu Nur Yaldiz\*, Yavuz Faruk Bakman\*, **Sungmin Kang**, Alperen Ozis, Hayrettin Eren Yildiz, Mitash Shah, Zhiqi Huang, Anoop Kumar, Alf Samuel, Daben Liu, Sai Praneeth Karimireddy, Salman Avestimehr  
The 2025 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP 2025 System demonstrations)
3. **GEM: A Scale- and Distribution-Aware Sparse Fine-Tuning Framework for Effective Downstream Adaptation** [PDF]  
**Sungmin Kang**, Jisoo Kim, Salman Avestimehr, Sunwoo Lee  
*Under review* at The 40th Annual AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2026)
4. **Layer-wise Update Aggregation with Recycling for Communication-Efficient Federated Learning** [PDF]  
Jisoo Kim, **Sungmin Kang**, Sunwoo Lee  
*Under review* at The Thirty-Ninth Annual Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2025)
5. **Uncertainty as Feature Gaps: Epistemic Uncertainty Quantification of LLMs in Contextual Question-Answering**  
Yavuz Faruk Bakman\*, Duygu Nur Yaldiz\*, **Sungmin Kang**, *et al.*  
*Submitted to* The Fourteenth International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR 2026)
6. **Uncertainty Quantification in Generative LLMs: Methods and Applications for Hallucination Detection**  
**Sungmin Kang**, Duygu Nur Yaldiz, Yavuz Faruk Bakman, Baturalp Buyukates, Salman Avestimehr  
*Submitted to* IEEE BITS the Information Theory Magazine, 2025

## Research Experiences

### Grauate Research Assistant, University of Southern California

Oct. 2024 - Present

Advisor: *Prof. Salman Avestimehr*, Information Theory and Machine Learning (vITAL) Lab

- Explored the behavior of LLM uncertainty estimation methods across four realistic scenarios: threshold sensitivity, robustness to query transformations, long-form applicability, and ensemble effectiveness. [PDF]
- Proposed a UQ method for contextual QA that measures feature gaps along honesty, contextual reliance, and resolvability via contrastive prompts and representation analysis
- Developed an open-source library with 30+ methods for evaluating LLM truthfulness [github] [PDF]

### Grauate Research Intern, Inha University

May. 2024 - Present

with *Prof. Sunwoo Lee*, Large-Scale Machine Learning Systems Lab

- Designed a communication-efficient FL algorithm that selectively updates high-variability layers by monitoring gradient-to-weight ratio, reducing communication costs by up to 83% while maintaining model accuracy [PDF]
- Proposed a scale- and distribution-aware fine-tuning method, achieving 1.5% higher accuracy than full fine-tuning with 0.1% tunable parameters via gradient-to-weight ratio and entropy-based masking [PDF]

**Undergraduate Research Assistant**, Sogang University Jul. 2023 - Apr. 2024  
Advisor: *Prof. Hongseok Kim*, Networking for Intelligence Computing and Energy (NICE) Lab

- Built a server-client system upon 8 separate devices through wireless socket communication to implement federated learning, enabling server to handle multiple clients by multi-threading [github]
- Designed a FL algorithm that predicts future gradients via 2D optimization modeling, achieving 1.3x faster convergence and improved accuracy [link]
- Implemented a federated learning algorithm to forecast power in a newly constructed solar power plant in South Korea, deploying the model on four Raspberry Pis

**Undergraduate Research Intern**, Seoul National University Jan. 2023 - Apr. 2023  
with *Prof. Taesup Moon*, Machine Intelligence and Data science (M.IN.D) Lab

- Built a multimodal binary classification model on 1,796 sMRI images by pretraining on age prediction and fine-tuning for MCI-to-AD conversion, achieving an AUROC of 0.84 while addressing label imbalance and data scarcity

## Projects

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**TruthTorchLM: Open-Source Hallucination Detection Library**, USC & Capital One Oct. 2024 - May 2025

- Developed an open-source library with 30+ methods for evaluating LLM truthfulness [github] [PDF]
- Provides a unified interface to run, evaluate, calibrate, and extend hallucination detection methods with minimal code, supporting both API-based and HuggingFace models

**Industry-Academia Collaborative Undergraduate Intern**, Mortrex & Sogang University Aug. 2023 - Dec. 2023

- Developed an AI model to fill missing data and classify symptom descriptions of diverse product issues from global branches of *Mortrex Corporation* (*an automotive parts manufacturer*)
- Led a team of four people to predict future trends using the model, and automate effective graph visualizations

**AI Capstone Design Project Course**, LG Electronics & Sogang University Mar. 2023 - Jun. 2023

- Developed a image classification model to recognize real-time views from moving vehicles in the Unity game engine
- Designed a conversational chatbot that integrates an image classification model to provide real-time information about classified landmarks based on the model outputs [video]

## Honors and Awards

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- Best Poster Award (out of 50+ teams), Viterbi PhD Visit Day, USC Apr. 2025
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize (out of 50+ teams), Senior Thesis Project Contest, Sogang University Dec. 2023
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize (out of 40+ teams), Capstone Design Project Contest, Sogang University Jun. 2023
- Daesang Foundation Scholarship (Merit-based scholarship, 5M KRW/semester) Spring 2019 - Fall 2023

## Teaching Experiences

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- Grader, EE 503: Probability for Engineers (PhD-recommended course) by *Prof. Kosko Bart*, USC Fall 2025
- Teaching Assistant, EEE 4171: AI Communications by *Prof. Hongseok Kim*, Sogang University Spring 2024
- Teaching Assistant, COR 1010: AI Programming by *Prof. Naeun Jang*, Sogang University Summer 2023
- Education Volunteer Services for financially disadvantaged teenage students 2019, 2021

## Invited Talks & Poster Presentations

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- Poster Presentation on “Reconsidering LLM Uncertainty Estimation Methods in the Wild” at ACL 2025 [link] Jul. 2025
  - “Federated Learning Implementation through Socket Communication”, Sogang University [link] May 2024
- Host: *Prof. Hongseok Kim*

## Leadership Experiences

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**Sergeant, Korean Augmentation to the US Army (KATUSA)**, Camp Hovey Oct. 2019 - May 2021

- Led a battalion of 104 KATUSAs as an elected representative, honorably discharged as a Sergeant