

I chose to pursue an academic career due to my firm belief that knowledge has value that is meant to be shared, not hoarded for commercial gain. I want to bring new scholars with new perspectives into our field and help them contribute to the community effort: nothing excites me more than students pointing out a key assumption, often taken for granted, that is ripe to be broken. I like to discuss my research with everyone, and I put time and effort into learning how to explain my field to *anyone*—family, friends, and Uber drivers. This practice has helped me hone techniques for finding just the right analogy and example to teach diverse audiences and bridge cultural gaps.

I served as a teaching assistant twice during my time at the University of Washington. For the Natural Language Processing class, I lectured for the weekly recitation, where I had free range to design sessions myself. I tried different strategies and settled on a combination of lectures and student-led explanations of how and why different systems worked, allowing participants to debate their ideas with each other using evidence. The second class focused on quarter-long projects where groups of 2-3 students would learn about a specific subfield of natural language processing, then build-on published results to create their own novel system. I held weekly check-ins with individual teams, where I got to see students struggling and succeeding to come to grips with the fact that we are always working with partial knowledge in highly empirical fields. These were valuable learning experiences for me; I learned that by far the most effective teaching method was guiding students to refute their own hypotheses so that results in the literature and their own experiments made practical sense to their current context.

I also have pedagogical experience from one-on-one mentorship with undergraduates and Master's students. I have guided and published papers with six incredibly talented students from diverse backgrounds, helping them develop research skills both in pursuing their own projects and understanding their field and its literature. Of those, I worked particularly closely with two undergraduates, both first-generation American immigrants, with whom I co-authored papers; they were accepted in Ph.D. programs at Johns Hopkins University and the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Furthermore, every year I establish deep mentorships with a handful of incoming Ph.D. students. In addition to answering basic questions and assisting with project problems and deadlines, I developed strategies for helping them gain independence as researchers. I found that one of the key challenges for new Ph.D. students is getting used to keeping multiple competing hypotheses in their head, but pushing forward with provisional experiments that don't necessarily address all the unknown variables. I helped students find sustainable ways to continuously orient themselves in their own findings and the literature, focusing on skills for identifying the constantly shifting gap between published work, common knowledge, and competing theories that are always present in a rapidly changing field. The opportunity to continue helping bright young researchers identify how to do this and reformulate their originally vague ideas into clear and rigorous research questions is one of the main factors in my pursuit of an academic position.

As a professor, I am interested in teaching courses on natural language processing, machine learning, AI, probability, and statistical modeling. I especially look forward to customizing classes so they address areas that have been re-imagined in the last decade, such as generative modeling, black-box analysis of neural models, and the philosophy of science in the age of machine learning.