

Education

Northwestern University

Ph.D. in Media, Technology, and Society

Advisor: [Dr. Yingdan Lu](#)

Evanston, IL

2024–2029 (Expected)

Nanyang Technological University

M.A. in Communication

Advisor: [Dr. Shirley S. Ho](#)

Singapore

2022–2024

Communication University of China

B.A. in French Literature

Beijing, China

2018–2022

Publications

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

- [2] **Liu, X.**, Lu, Y., Peng, Q., Qian, S., Peng, Y., & Shen, C (2026). Seeing the Surreal: Mapping Surrealism in Photorealistic AI-Generated Images Using Large Language Models *Computational Communication Research*, 8(2), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5117/CCR2026.2.6.LIU>
- [1] Peng, Q., Lu, Y., Peng, Y., Qian, S., **Liu, X.**, & Shen, C. (2025). Crafting Synthetic Realities: Examining Visual Realism and Misinformation Potential of Photorealistic AI-Generated Images. *Proceedings of the Extended Abstracts of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, CHI EA '25, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3706599.3719834>

Under Review

- [3] Lu, Y., **Liu, X.**, & Zhou, C. Recommending the State: How Social Media Algorithms Curate State-Created Content in China. (Revise and Resubmitted, *Journal of Communication*)
- [2] **Liu, X.**, Peng, Y., & Lu, Y. Mitigating Confounder Bias in Observational Studies of Visual Media Effects. (Under Review, *Human Communication Research*, Extended abstract accepted)
- [1] **Liu, X.**, Lin, C., & Lu, Y. Computational Visual Analysis in Communication Research: A Critical Examination of Methods, Challenges, and Opportunities. (Invited Chapter Under Review in *Critical Visual Research Methods for Social Media*).

Conference Presentations

- [11] **Liu, X.**, Peng, Y., & Lu, Y. Mitigating Confounder Bias in Observational Studies of Visual Media Effects. (2026, July). Scheduled at *2026 Annual Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology, Lansing, USA*
 - [10] **Liu, X.**, Peng, Y., & Lu, Y. Mitigating Confounder Bias in Observational Studies of Visual Media Effects. (2026, July). Scheduled at *12th International Conference on Computational Social Science, Burlington, USA*
 - [9] **Liu, X.**, Lu, Y., Peng, Q., Qian, S., Peng, Y., & Shen, C. (2026, July). Seeing the Surreal: Mapping Surrealism in Photorealistic AI-Generated Images Using Large Language Models. Scheduled at *12th International Conference on Computational Social Science, Burlington, USA*
 - [8] **Liu, X.**, Lu, Y., Peng, Q., Qian, S., Peng, Y., & Shen, C. (2026, May). Seeing the Surreal: Mapping Surrealism in Photorealistic AI-Generated Images Using Large Language Models. Scheduled at *Comm Horizons @UCD 2026, Sacramento, USA*.
 - [7] Lu, Y., **Liu, X.**, & Zhou, C. (2026, June). Recommending the State: How Social Media Algorithms Curate State Content in China. Scheduled at *76th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), Cape Town, South Africa*.
 - [6] **Liu, X.**, Lu, Y., Peng, Q., Qian, S., Peng, Y., & Shen, C. (2026, June). Seeing the Surreal: Mapping Surrealism in Photorealistic AI-Generated Images Using Large Language Models. Scheduled at *76th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), Cape Town, South Africa*.
 - [5] Lu, Y., **Liu, X.**, & Zhou, C. (2025, September). Recommending the State: How Social Media Algorithms Curate State Content in China. Presented at *2025 American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting & Exhibition, Vancouver, Canada*.
 - [4] Lu, Y., **Liu, X.**, & Zhou, C. (2025, July). Recommending the State: How Social Media Algorithms Curate State Content in China. Presented at *11th International Conference on Computational Social Science, Norrköping, Sweden*.
- [Best Lightning Talk Award]**
- [3] **Liu, X.**, & Ho, S. S. (2024, June). Human, AI, vs. synergy agency: How agency framing affects perceived uncertainty, controllability, and trust in AI in autonomous vehicles. *74th Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference*
 - [2] **Liu, X.**, Xiao, Q., Liang, D., & Pan, Y. (2023, Aug). Agency and modality interaction: Exploring the impact of multimodal AI-generated content on news credibility. *2023 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Annual Conference*
 - [1] **Liu, X.**, Liang, D., Tong-Laurence, G., Lin, S., & Kang, H. (2023, May). A false sense of reality: Effects of augmented reality (AR) filters on communication willingness. *73rd Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference*

Work in Progress

- [2] Understanding Visuals in Science (with Dashun Wang, Yingdan Lu, Yilang Peng, and Erzhuo Shao)
- [1] The Politics of Large Language Models: A Comparative Framework for Understanding Global LLMs (with Erik C. Nisbet and Yingdan Lu)

Awards and Grants

- 2025 OpenAI Researcher Access Program, \$1,000 worth API credits
- 2025 Best Lightning Talk Award, 11th International Conference on Computational Social Science (IC2S2)
- 2020 Excellent Student Journalist of Communication University of China
- 2020 Youth Leadership Project Grant (7,000 RMB), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) & National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC)

Teaching and Research Supervisor

Teaching Assistant

- COMM_ST 101-1: Communication in Context: Introduction 2026
Teaching Assistant and Lead Independent Lecture
- COMM_ST 379 / POLI_SCI 390: Digital Propaganda and Repression 2025
Teaching Assistant and Lead Independent Lecture

Research Mentorship (Research Assistant)

- Hana Javed, Department of Communication Studies, Early Research Experience Awardee, Northwestern (current)
- Zachary Gao, Department of Communication Studies, Early Research Experience Awardee, Northwestern (current)
- Xinlei Yan, Department of Communication Studies, Undergraduate Research Assistant Program Awardee, Northwestern (current)
- Bo Liu, Department of Computer Science, Northwestern (current)
- Tingyu Dai, Department of Sociology, Columbia University (current)
- Janell Contreras, Department of Communication, California State University Long Beach (current)

Research Experience

Northwestern University

- Lab Manager, [Computational Media and Politics \(COMAP\) Lab](#) (PI: Yingdan Lu) Evanston, IL 2024 –
- Lab Manager, [Computational Multi-Modal Communication \(CMMC\) Lab](#) 2024 –
(PI: Yingdan Lu, Yilang Peng, Cuihua (Cindy) Shen)

Graduate Research Assistant, Global LLM Values Benchmarking Working Group
(Funded by [Northwestern Buffett Institute for Global Affairs](#))

2025 –

Nanyang Technological University
Graduate Research Assistant (PI: Shirley S. Ho)

Singapore
2022–2024

Skills

Language: English (Fluent), French (B2), Mandarin (Native)

Programming: R, Python, SPSS, ATLAS.ti, L^AT_EX

Other Software: Adobe Creative Suite, Final Cut Pro

May 6, 2026