

Laura Biester

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EDUCATION	<i>Ph.D.</i> , Computer Science and Engineering University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI Advisor: Dr. Rada Mihalcea	Expected 2023
	<i>M.S.</i> , Computer Science and Engineering University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI GPA: 4.0	May 2020
	<i>B.A.</i> , Computer Science Carleton College, Northfield, MN GPA: 3.85	June 2016
EXPERIENCE	<i>Graduate Student Research Assistant</i> University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI Reserach assistant for Dr. Rada Mihalcea, focusing on natural language processing and computational social science. Worked on using NLP techniques to encode location data from students at the University of Michigan to predict student academic success and mental health, and understanding changes in mental health subreddits during the COVID-19 pandemic.	September 2018 - Present
	<i>Instructor</i> University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI Primary instructor for EECS 198, Discover Computer Science. Responsibilities include weekly lectures, grading, curriculum/assignment design, and managing undergraduate teaching assistants.	September 2019 - December 2020
	<i>Software Engineer</i> Pinterest, San Francisco, CA Worked primarily on large scale storage systems on top of MySQL and HBase. Projects included an inconsistency detection framework for distributed graph databases, and sharding strategies/implementation for advertiser data.	August 2016 - August 2018
	<i>Computer Science Prefect</i> Computer Science Department, Carleton College Spent three terms as a prefect for Mathematics of Computer Science and two terms as a prefect for Data Structures. Responsibilities included preparing worksheets and leading twice-weekly study sessions for 10-40 students (depending on the class), in addition to providing 1-1 tutoring for students as requested.	April 2014 - March 2016
	<i>Computer Science Grader</i> Computer Science Department, Carleton College Graded three assignments per week for 30 students in Mathematics of Computer Science, the introductory discrete mathematics course for computer science majors.	April 2016 - June 2016
	<i>Software Engineering Intern</i> Gumroad, San Francisco, CA Worked on a feature to allow creators to display their Gumroad page on their own	June 2016 - September 2016

domain, and a feature to auto-populate metadata for mp3 files.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

NLP COVID-19 Workshop at ACL July 2020
Flash talk: “Quantifying the Effects of COVID-19 on Mental Health Support Forums”

Michigan AI Symposium October 2019
Poster presented: “The Applicability of Embeddings to Location Time Series Data”

NextProf Pathfinder September 2019
Workshop to prepare 1st and 2nd year PhD students in engineering to build a competitive CV for a career in academia.

Midwest Speech and Language Days May 2019
Poster presented: “The Applicability of Embeddings to Location Time Series Data”

SERVICE

AI4All Instructor July 2020
Taught Python programming to twenty high school students, with a focus on applications in artificial intelligence.

AI4All Project Lead July 2019
Developed a NLP project and provided guidance for seven high school students as they learned Python and completed the project.

Girls Encoded September 2018 - Present
One of five organizers of the “Explore CS Research Program,” which aims to introduce students from underrepresented backgrounds to computer science research. Reviewed applications, assigned faculty mentors to students, and answered ongoing questions from students.

Computer Science Student Departmental Advisor September 2015 - June 2016
Chosen as one of two student departmental advisors by CS faculty. Advised students each term on picking classes, and organized a weekly “CS at the Tavern” social event.

Lovelace Board Member and Chair January 2015 - June 2016
Was a member of the board of Carleton’s women in CS group. Helped to organize weekly lab sessions, dinners, and Carleton’s first diversity in CS workshop.

Girls Who Code Volunteer Instructor January 2015 - June 2016
Spent an hour each week teaching middle school girls at Northfield Middle School to code, using code.org and Scratch.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Languages: Java, Python, Ruby, Javascript
Data/Machine Learning: PyTorch, SKLearn, Hadoop, Hive, SQL, HBase, Vitess
Web Technologies: HTML, CSS, Ruby on Rails, Flask

HONORS AND AWARDS

Phi Beta Kappa
Magna Cum Laude
Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers Engineering Fellow
Grace Hopper Conference Scholarship Recipient
Tapia Conference Scholarship Recipient