



University of  
Pittsburgh®

Informatics and Networked Systems  
School of Computing and Information

You are receiving this email because you are enrolled in the MSIS/MST graduate degree programs within the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems at the School of Computing and Information. Each weekly newsletter will feature important updates on career/academic and job opportunities, department and school events, enrollment guidance and upcoming academic deadlines.



Spring Term Office Hours-Starting Tuesday, January 31, 2023:  
Available in Person in IS Building Room 706  
Tuesday: 2pm-4pm  
Thursday: 11am-12pm or 1pm-2pm

## Announcements

**Interested in taking classes this summer? Here are some course suggestions which you might be interested in taking and count toward your degree:**

Department of Informatics and Networked Systems  
Graduate Courses Being Offered in Summer 2023

### Core Courses:

INFSCI 2150 Information Security and Privacy (18514)

### Special Topics Courses:

**INFSCI 2935 Special Topics Cognitive (18164)**

Course Title – Immersive Media Applications

Instructor – Brandon Hedges, Senior XR Software Engineer at BehaVR, INC.

Course Description: This course will introduce students to the implementation of immersive media applications, such as digital therapeutics, digital games, augmented/mixed reality, and virtual reality experiences. Students will gain the Software Engineering skills necessary to design, engineer, and deploy

immersive experiences to a variety of devices and platforms, using the Unity Game Engine and C#. They will also be introduced to UX design concepts, digital narrative, and basic animation sequencing.

### **INFSCI 2955 Special Topics Systems (18168)**

Course Title – Enterprise Cloud Computing

Instructor: Sandra Brandon, Strategic Research Liaison, University of Pittsburgh and former CIO of Crayola, Inc.

Course Description: This course will provide students with foundational knowledge and skills to enable them to actively engage in building and managing enterprise-level cloud infrastructures. The course begins with elements required to initiate the Cloud Infrastructure implementation, to include strategic planning, governance and design. Continuing from the initiation phase, students will learn requirements for basic architectural requirements such as network design, security, performance monitoring, and administration. Finally, students will gain exposure to building out solutions on multiple cloud platforms through hands-on deployment and interaction with industry experts. The course also introduces students to building hybrid cloud solutions for enterprise-wide flexibility and affordability.

## **Events**

### **Chat with OASIS and SCI Alum Brandon Hedges (SCI 2018)**

On Wednesday, March 22 at 7pm in Sennott Square Room 5317, in collaboration with the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems, the Official Association for Students of Information Science (OASIS) is hosting SCI alum Brandon Hedges (SCI 2018).

Brandon is a senior XR software engineer at BehaVR and an adjunct professor for the school. Come and chat with Brandon about his experiences working in the world of serious games, teaching and as an SCI student!

All SCI undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to attend.

Included here is an event flier, please feel free to pass along to any interested individuals.

### **DINS PhD Speaker Series: Alireza Javadian Sabet & Rr. Nefriana**

Thursday, March 23 at 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Information Sciences Building, 3rd Floor Theatre  
130 North Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, 15260

Skills Acquisition: How Higher Education Meets Workforce Activities?

Alireza Javadian Sabet, PhD Student

Education is one of the crucial factors contributing to economic growth and social progress. While labor economics has evolved to study workers' skills to explain labor trends, a similar lens has yet to be applied to workforce development at scale.

In this work, we investigate how college education mechanisms for workforce development.

To do so, we develop a framework to extract the skills being taught at higher education institutions using their curriculum and map them to work activities required by the labor market.

Since Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) should serve as an engine for upward mobility, using a large-scale dataset composed of more than 3M course syllabi, we compare the curriculum of MSI with Ivy League colleges in terms of skills.

The results show that in some fields of study (FOS) such as Computer Science, the skills' evolution in MSI is similar to as in Ivy League colleges. However, there are some FOS such as Marketing in which MSI follows the opposite approach of Ivy League Colleges for curriculum development.

The problem area is of huge significance as higher education stakeholders are seeking new guidelines to adapt themselves to the future of work.

I'm Exposed Therefore I Believe and I Believe Therefore I'm Exposed: Investigating the Interdependencies Among Exposure, Belief, and Spread of Hate-Based Conspiracy Theories  
Rr. Nefriana, PhD Student

As streams of hatred and violence targeted at specific groups have been motivated by conspiratorial beliefs, understanding the factors that lead individuals to become exposed to, adopt, and disseminate hate-based conspiracy theories becomes crucial. To address this challenge, we conducted a novel study on the interdependency among the exposure, belief, and spread of hate-based conspiracy theories, as well as the role of online social networks in this ecosystem. Specifically, we conducted an online survey from December 2022 to January 2023 to gather respondents' experiences in seeing four representative hate-based conspiracy theories, their beliefs, and their possibilities to spread. From 652 respondents' data, we found that 81.8% had been exposed to at least one of the hate-based conspiracy theories in social media, two-thirds believed in at least one, and 23.4% said they were likely to spread. Via our structural equation models, we showed that: 1) prior exposure was a significant factor in predicting belief, 2) prior belief was a significant factor in predicting exposure, and 3) belief was a significant factor in predicting spread. Above all else, our study contributes to understanding how online homophily in political views was significantly associated with the likelihood of spread.

Included here is an event flier, please feel free to pass along to any interested individuals.

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## DINS Seminar Series

*Speaker: Peter Sheridan Dodds, Professor, Department of Computer Science, Director of Vermont Complex Systems Center, University of Vermont*

*March 22, 2023*

*11:00 am to 12 noon*

*Virtual -- more details to come!*

You can find additional information at [DINS Seminar Series: 2022-23 | Department of Informatics and Networked Systems | University of Pittsburgh](#)

## Career/Academic Opportunities

Join the Pitt ULS in a two-year paid IT Residency designed to give you a practical career-building opportunity. This is an opportunity for recent graduates, including F-1 visa holders looking for Optional Practical Training. You'll gain directed, hands-on experience building out ULS information systems within a mutually chosen set of specialization tracks, including:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Business Intelligence
- Deployment Orchestration
- Discovery and Accessibility
- Open Source Development
- Smart Building User Experience
  - Systems Analysis

The Residency will feature hands-on work in real-life problem solving. You'll enhance the practical technical and professional skills which will prepare you for future pursuits within your Information Technology career. You'll find the freedom to explore, receive the direction to succeed, and will accumulate a portfolio of published, peer-reviewed work with application here at Pitt and beyond.

Come work where important conversations happen, curiosity and experimentation are encouraged, collaboration is key, and diversity and inclusion are fundamental.

To apply, see the [ULS IT Resident posting in Pitt Talent Center](#).

For more information see the [full program description](#)

## Enrollment Dates

March 17, 2023: Monitored Withdrawal Deadline for Spring Term 2023

March 27, 2023: Fall Term 2023 Enrollment Appointments begin

***For those planning on graduating in Spring of 2023 (otherwise known as term 2234 in PeopleSoft), you must apply to graduate to get your diploma (and, of course, successfully complete all appropriate coursework)!***

*Here is the timeline for Term 2234:*

*Graduation Application Opens – 10/1/22*

***Graduation Application Late Fee Begins – 12/1/22***

***Graduation Application Closes – 4/1/23***

***Final Day for ETD Paperwork & D-Scholarship Upload – 4/24/23***

***Please be advised that if you have not yet applied to graduate, you will be charged a \$25 late fee. I would also be aware of the ETD Paperwork and D-Scholarship deadline ([Complete Your Thesis or Dissertation | School of Computing and Information | University of Pittsburgh](#)) if you are working on a Master's Thesis.***

**\*\*\*\*\*Please be advised, that if you have any questions, you  
can always reach out to me via the email and phone number  
below. \*\*\*\*\***

Regards,

James Petraglia (Pa-trail-ya)