

Cheng Tang

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EDUCATION BACKGROUND

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Ph.D. in Computer Science, GPA: 4.0/4.0

Tsinghua University

B.S. in Mathematics, B.Ec. in Economics and Finance

Graduation Commencement Speaker for the School of Economics and Management

Champaign, Illinois

08/2025 - present

Beijing, China

09/2021 - 06/2025

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Reinforcement learning and sequential decision-making, with a focus on policy optimization, data-efficient learning, and stochastic optimization. I am particularly interested in extending these ideas to policy-learning and post-training settings.

PUBLICATIONS (*equal contribution)

- RL-Inf: Tracking Non-local Training Data Influence for Online Reinforcement Learning
Shixuan Liu*, **Cheng Tang***, Yuzheng Hu, Fan Wu, Han Zhao, Jiaqi-W Ma
Accepted in AIW workshop at COLM 2026
Accepted in NeurIPS 2026
- Adaptive Delightful Policy Gradient in Linear Softmax Bandits: Fast Escape and Global Convergence
Cheng Tang, Changsheng Chen, Zhengjun Huang, Siwei Wang
Manuscript under review, 2026
- Steering the Feedback Loop: Policy Gradients for Online Performative Optimization
Changsheng Chen, **Cheng Tang**, Lanran Fang, Grani A. Hanasusanto
Manuscript under review, 2026
- Finite-Time Queue Peak Laws in Stochastic Networks: Logarithmic Scaling After Geometric Thresholds
Hao Liang, **Cheng Tang**, Yunzong Xu (alphabetical order)
Under review at Operation Research (OR)
- Robust Offline Reinforcement Learning with Linearly Structured f-Divergence Regularization
Cheng Tang*, Zhishuai Liu*, Pan Xu
Accepted in NeurIPS ORxML workshop 2025
Accepted in ICML 2025
- MedQPA-Gen: Medical Question Proposing and Answering for Report Generation
Weijie Liang, Xiyue Zhu, Ruike Zhu, Chenhao Li, **Cheng Tang**, Zhiyu Liu, Zhihua Gong, Shirui Luo, Yudu Li, Volodymyr Kindratenko
Accepted in ACL 2026 Findings
- CAMEL: Collaborative Agentic Memory via Evidence Linking across Speakers and Time
Zhengjun Huang, Zhoujin Tian, Junle Chen, **Cheng Tang**, Wenxuan Liu, Fangyuan Zhang, Qintian Guo, Liyi Zeng, Xiaofang Zhou, Zhaoquan Gu
Submitted to ICLR 2027

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Intern, Microsoft Research Asia

05/2026 - 08/2026

Machine Learning Group

Proposed and led a research project adaptive delightful policy-gradient methods in linear softmax bandits, focusing on fast escape and global convergence. Paper submitted to AISTATS 2027.

Research Intern, Carnegie Mellon University

08/2024 - 10/2024

Advisor: Prof. Ding Zhao

Developed offline safe RL methods for learning high-reward policies from imbalanced datasets under safety constraints, led the project from formulation through theoretical and empirical evaluation. Technical report: [[link](#)]

Research Intern (remote), Duke University

03/2024 - 11/2024

Advisor: Prof. Pan Xu

Studied robust offline RL under linear function approximation using f-divergence regularization, leading to an ICML 2025 paper.

Research Intern, ModelBest

10/2023 - 02/2024

Advisor: Prof. Zhiyuan Liu

Redesigned LLaMA's generation module and decoding logic, then benchmarked the proposed methods on LongBench and LEval to evaluate improvements in text-generation performance.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- CS PhD Fellowship Addendum, UIUC 10/2025
- Dean's Award of Zhili College (highest honor for students in Zhili College) 11/2024
- Excellent Comprehensive Scholarship of Tsinghua University 10/2024
- Outstanding Student in Top Open Program 08/2024
- 1st Prize in China Undergraduate Mathematical Contest in Modeling 07/2023
- Silver Medal in Chinese Mathematical Olympiad 01/2020

OTHER ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

- Volunteer at ICML 2025, Vancouver, Canada 08/2025
- Host at QingLi academic festival, Tsinghua Univeristy, China. 11/2023