

Computer Science

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IMPORTANT DATES & REMINDERS

Friday, February 6, 2026 Application for degree due to The Graduate School to receive a degree in Spring

Friday, February 13, 2026 Last day to drop a FULL-TERM class for Winter in CAESAR.

Monday, February 16, 2026 Pre-registration for Spring quarter begins

Monday, February 23, 2026 Registration for Spring Quarter begins

Saturday, March 14, 2026 Winter classes end

Monday, March 16, 2026 Winter exams begin

Saturday, March 21, 2026 Spring Break Begins

We want to hear from you!

Please send any upcoming news and events to
news@cs.northwestern.edu to be included in future bulletins &/featured
on our socials/website.

Events for the bulletin must be emailed by Thursdays 12PM to be in that Friday's bulletin.

Missed a seminar? No worries!
View past seminars via the Northwestern CS Website
(northwestern login required).

[View Past Seminars »](#)

UPCOMING SEMINARS

February

TBA - Xiaorui Sun
25th - Austin Mordahl

March

2nd - Rana Hanocka

April

6th - Faez Ahmed (joint talk with ME & Segal Design)
13th - Arindam Banerjee

Please note the seminar scheduled for February 2nd has been postponed to later in the month. More details will be provided in a subsequent announcement.



Toward Faster Algebraic Computation: An Isomorphism Perspective

Xiaorui Sun, UIC

Abstract

"Over the past few decades, linear-algebraic techniques played a central role in the design of faster algorithms, with notable successes in many graph algorithms such as maximum flow and shortest paths. However, for many problems that are not yet known to admit polynomial-time algorithms—such as integer factoring and various isomorphism problems—linear methods alone are

often insufficient. In these settings, more general nonlinear algebraic structures, including groups, rings, and modules, naturally arise. Achieving further algorithmic progress requires a deeper understanding of these algebraic objects.

In this talk, I will discuss how algebraic representations have become essential to recent advances in isomorphism problems. I will highlight connections among several central isomorphism problems and survey the techniques that have led to more efficient algorithms. I will conclude by discussing open challenges and outlining promising directions for future research."

Biography

Xiaorui Sun is an Associate Professor of Computer Science at the University of Illinois Chicago. His research interests lie in theoretical computer science, with an emphasis on the intersection of algorithms and algebraic computation. After earning his PhD from Columbia University, he worked at Simons Institute for the Theory of Computing and Microsoft Research. He is a recipient of the NSF CAREER Award, and his work have been featured in Communications of the ACM and Quanta Magazine.

Research Interests: theoretical computer science, algorithms, and algebraic computation

🕒 TBA
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM CT


📍 Mudd Hall, 3514,
2233 Tech Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

CS Department Events

SAVE THE DATE: PHD PROSPECTIVE STUDENT VISIT DAY

Details to come

🕒 Friday, March 6, 2026
08:00 AM - 05:00 PM CT


 Mudd Hall, 3rd Fall,
2233 Tech Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

Other Events & Opportunities

"GENAI FOR MOLECULES & MATERIALS"

AI tools such as AlphaFold and GNoME are accelerating discovery in chemistry, materials science, and drug development—enabling researchers to identify disease targets, design novel molecules, and predict material properties faster and more efficiently than ever before. This Distinguished Panel will examine how generative AI is reshaping molecular and materials design across disciplines.

Featuring: Julius Lucks and Chris Wolverton, moderated by Chris Schuh

 **Thursday, February 5, 2026**
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM CT


 **Chambers Hall, Ruan Conference Room, 600 Foster St, Evanston, IL 60208**

[More Information »](#)

TURING MINDS PRESENTS: PAT HANRAHAN, TURING AWARD WINNER & PIXAR FOUNDING EMPLOYEE

As part of the Turing Minds lecture series, Turing Minds will be hosting Pat Hanrahan: Turing Award recipient and Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at Stanford for a public talk this semester.

This will be the 15th Turing Award winner hosted by Turing Minds.

 **Monday, March 30, 2026**
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM CT

[More Information »](#)

OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN CROWDLISTEN, A NORTHWESTERN STUDENT STARTUP!

Crowdlisten is a personalized AI research and creation agent grounded in real online discussions. Instead of starting from a blank prompt, users start from evidence—using tools and style kits that capture their own analytical approach and voice.

We've just launched v0.8 and are actively testing with hundreds of beta users. We're moving fast and tackling problems across agent systems, context engineering, and large-scale media understanding. We're looking for engineers, designers, and user researchers interested in building serious AI tools (not demos) with a product-driven team.

Learn more: crowdlisten.com

Interested or have questions? Contact: terrychen2026@u.northwestern.edu

[More Information »](#)

Awards



Canyu Chen wins Best Paper Award at the AAAI 2026 TrustAgent Workshop

Award Details

CS News



Convening Leading Voices in Data Science and AI

The Northwestern Network for Collaborative Intelligence Distinguished Speaker Series launched this month with events featuring Inderpal Bhandari and Judge Xavier Rodriguez.

[Read More](#)



Three Students Receive Honorable Mention in CRA Undergraduate Research Awards

Shraeya Iyer, Xi-Aan Loh, Nalin (Fai) Pongpeth made significant contributions to undergraduate research projects.

[Read More](#)



Building Community Among Early-Career Researchers in Theoretical Computer Science

The Northwestern CS Theory Group and Toyota Technological Institute at Chicago co-hosted the Junior Theorists Workshop held Dec. 8-9.

[Read More](#)



Northwestern Department of Computer Science
Mudd Hall, 2233 Tech Drive, Third Floor
Evanston, Illinois 60208

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