Yifei (Evanna) Gao

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Address: 125 East State Street, Ithaca, NY, US

EDUCATION

Cornell University   Aug. 2023-May. 2025 (Expected)

Master of Regional Planning   Ithaca, NY

- **Core Modules:** Urban Theory, Climate Adaptation & Social Justice, Social Psychology of Race and Racism, Inferential Statistics, Health Environment Analysis, Urban Everyday

University of Sheffield   Sept. 2020 - Jun. 2023

BA Urban Studies and Planning (First Class Honors)   Sheffield, UK

- **Core Modules:** Housing & Urban Inequalities, Sustainable City, Researching the City: Applied Skills for Practice

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Project: VR Locomotion and Indoor Wayfinding   Oct. 2024-Present

Research Assistant, Supervisor: Prof. Saleh Kalantari, Cornell Design &   Ithaca, NY
Augmented Intelligence Lab (DAIL)

- Investigate how virtual locomotion techniques impact spatial learning, decision-making, and cybersickness using Simulated Sickness Questionnaire (SSQ) and MEC-SPQ assessments.
- Facilitate immersive VR tasks, ensuring precise data collection on spatial awareness and emotional responses.
- Synthesize and interpret navigation performance, sketch maps, and wayfinding behaviors to assess virtual environmental influences on spatial cognition.

Research Project: Environmental Design and User Experience in Outpatient   Aug. 2023-May. 2024
Rehabilitation Therapy Centers

Course Project, Supervisor: Prof. Mardelle McCuskey Shepley, Cornell Institute   Ithaca, NY
for Healthy Futures, Cornell University

- Analyzed the impact of spatial configurations, privacy, and environmental stressors on patient recovery and staff efficiency.
- Designed and administered structured surveys (n=43) and interviews (n=21), applying statistical analyses (ANOVA, t-tests) and thematic coding.
- Co-authored a research manuscript published in Health Environments Research & Design Journal (HERD).

Research Project: Socioeconomic & Demographic Predictors of Violent Crime   Aug. 2023-Dec. 2023
in the U.S.

Course Project, Supervisor: Prof. Nancy Brooks, Cornell University   Ithaca, NY

- Constructed predictive models employing linear and log-transformed regression to examine correlations between violent crime rates and socio-economic variables.
- Conducted data manipulation and statistical diagnostics in Stata, applying variance inflation factor (VIF), Ramsey RESET, and heteroskedasticity corrections.
- Developed evidence-based policy recommendations to mitigate violent crime.

Research Project: Child-friendly Environment in China Historical   Sept. 2022-Apr. 2023
Community

Dissertation, Supervisor: Dr. Michael Martin, University of Sheffield   Sheffield, UK

- Investigated the redevelopment of Shanghai's Caoyang Workers' New Village to enhance child-friendly urban spaces.
- Conducted site analysis, stakeholder interviews, and SWOT analysis to formulate sustainable urban design solutions.

University of Sheffield MDH Student Mental Health Project   June. 2023-July. 2023
Student Researcher, Supervisor: Dr. Chris Blackmore   *Sheffield, UK*
- Co-developed a narrative, paper-based mental health support tool using life-storying principles to assist students in university transition.
- Evaluated the efficacy of student-led mental health interventions through qualitative research.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Planning Department of Orange County, NY   June. 2024-July. 2024
Planning Intern   *Goshen, NY*
- Contributed to the Open Space Plan by integrating updated maps and enhancing ArcHub usability.
- Conducted spatial analysis of planning permissions, incorporating environmental, hydrological, and traffic impact assessments.
- Synthesized research findings to support evidence-based sustainable development strategies.

People & Planet   July. 2024-Aug. 2024
Sustainable Researcher   London, UK
- Conducted systematic policy analysis of over 70 university sustainability frameworks weekly, focusing on climate justice and institutional responsibility.
- Applied qualitative research methodologies to evaluate sustainability policies, contributing to national benchmarking assessments.

SKILL & CERTIFICATE

- **Research Skills:** Mixed-methods research, survey design, participant recruitment, thematic analysis, statistical modeling
- **Data Analysis:** ArcGIS Pro, Stata, Python, R Studio, Microsoft Office Suite
- **Design Software:** AutoCAD, SketchUp, Adobe Suite

PUBLICATION

- Shepley, M., Joyce, K., Ashour, M., Radmanesh, N., **Gao, Y**., Liu, Z., Shao, Y.C., & Thai, J. (2024). "Staff, Patient, and Designer Perspectives on Outpatient Rehabilitation Therapy Environments: A Pilot Study." Health Environments Research & Design Journal.