

Zahra (Mona) Ghassemi

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PROFILE:

- Extensive and varied teaching experience, including 7 semesters as a teaching assistant.
- Experience working with students aged 6-87, including students with special needs.
- Experience working in leadership and instructional roles with youth in community and academic settings.
- Experience giving tutorials and designing lesson plans, assignments and quizzes, and evaluating student progress.
- Trained in active listening and harm reduction, as well as emergency response.

EDUCATION:

Master of Arts: Social and Cultural Anthropology

Concordia University (Montreal, QC)

2017

- 3.94/4.30 Cumulative GPA

• Thesis: *Reproducing The Virginity Imperative: Women's Collusion and Men's Complicity Among Young Iranians Living in Montreal*

Bachelor of Science: Computer Science and Biology

McGill University (Montreal, QC)

2014

International Baccalaureate in Science

CEGEP Vanier College (Ville-St-Laurent, QC)

2007-2009

AWARDS AND HONOURS:

- Concordia Conference and Exposition Award 2017
- Carrie Boucock Memorial Award (Department of Sociology and Anthropology) 2017
- Governor General's Bronze Medal (for top graduating grade at high school) 2006

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages:

Human:

English, French, Farsi/Persian

Machine:

Javascript (Node.js), Java, Python, Bash (shell script), Ruby on Rails

Computer Networking:

Ping, NetCat, NMap, Wireshark

Virtualization:

Virtualbox, VMWare, Docker

Automation:

Infrastructure and CI:

AWS, Terraform, Github Actions, Bitbucket Pipelines, Datadog

Testing Tools:

K6, Appium / Selenium, WebdriverIO, chai, mocha, Cucumber / BDD, RSpec

Test Management:

Postman (scripting), TestRail, Saucelabs, Browserstack

Databases and Backend:

MySQL, PostgreSQL, REST, GraphQL

FrontEnd Development:

HTML5 / CSS, React.js

Miscellaneous:

Git/GitHub, Linux / Terminal, Scrum / Kanban, JIRA, Confluence, VSCode, LaTeX

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

English Second Language Teacher

VIPkid (remote, China)

2018 - 2019

- Taught over 100 one-on-one ESL classes to more than 40 Chinese children aged 5-12; 5/5 rating from parents.
- Personalized and extended lessons appropriately for student level with creative use of teaching aids.

Tutor and Test Prep Teacher

Prep Academy Tutors of Montreal (Montreal, QC)

August 2018 - January 2019

- Tutored students in high school math, science (physics, chemistry), psychology, and SATs.

Computer Teacher

Communicaid for Hearing-Impaired Persons (Montreal, QC)

September 2018 - December 2018

- Taught fundamental computer skills to hard-of-hearing seniors.
- Planned and delivered a 10-week curriculum, adapting lesson content to student needs.

Note-Taker and Tutor (Access Centre for Students With Disabilities)

Concordia University (Montreal, QC)

2017-2018

- Tutored students of differing needs for various courses (Statistics, Interviewing).
- Wrote and illustrated clean class notes and sent to students in timely fashion.

Teaching Assistant (Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology)

Concordia University Department of Sociology and Anthropology (Montreal, QC)

2016-2017

- Evaluated weekly assignments, term paper and final exam.
- Created new questions for quizzes and assignments.

Course Assistant (Logic and Computability)

McGill University (Montreal, QC)

2013

- Developed questions for use in course assignments.

Note-Taker (Office for Students With Disabilities)

McGill University (Montreal, QC)

2012

- Transcribed clean class notes in LaTeX and uploaded them for student in timely fashion.

Teaching Assistant (Introduction to Computing)

McGill University (Montreal, QC)

2010-2012

- Evaluated programming assignments (Java).
- Responded to student questions during weekly office hours and on online discussion board.
- Taught and reviewed core course concepts with students during interactive tutorials.

Grader (Java)

Private Contract (Montreal, QC)

Summer 2011

- Assessed programming assignments (Java).
- Communicated with instructor to ascertain what was expected of students.

Volunteer Tutor and Biology Camp Coordinator at McGill Computer Science Summer Camp

McGill University (Montreal, QC)

Summers 2010-2014

- Coached camp participants during programming activities.
- Adapted and delivered a lesson on the Java programming language.
- Coordinated a small team to ensure the smooth running of the biology section of the camp.

Drawing Teacher

South Asian Women's Community Centre (Montreal, QC)

2004-2005

Noor Cultural Centre (Montreal, QC)

Relais Côte-des-Neiges (Montreal, QC)

- Taught weekly or biweekly drawing lessons to children aged 6-12.
- Designed lessons appropriate for the children in attendance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING:

TEACHING WORKSHOPS:

Peer Instruction: Engaging Students in Small and Large Classrooms <i>GradProSkills, Concordia University</i>	2018
Designing your Course: Aligning Learning Outcomes, Assessment, and Learning Activities <i>GradProSkills, Concordia University</i>	2018
Best Practices for Grading and Giving Effective Feedback to Students <i>GradProSkills, Concordia University</i>	2018
32-hour Graduate Seminar in University Teaching <i>GradProSkills, Concordia University</i>	2017
T-Pulse Teaching Workshop <i>Tomlinson Project in University-Level Science Education, McGill University</i>	2010

LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION, AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

Peer Support and Advocacy Training <i>Centre for Gender Advocacy (Montreal, QC)</i>	2017-2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended over 50 hours of weekly workshops and practice sessions on topics including active listening, harm reduction, mental health, and intersectional issues including race and gender.	

Leadership Certificate <i>GradProSkills, Concordia University</i>	2017-2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended workshops on Foundations of Leadership, Navigating Emotional Intelligence, Leading Teams for Success, Professional Negotiation and Persuasion Skills, Solving Problems and Seeing the Big Picture, and Motivating and Inspiring as a Leader.	

French Language Courses - Level 10 Writing; Level 8 Speaking <i>Formation de Base Pour le Developpement de la Main-d'Oeuvre, Montreal</i>	July 2022- November 2023
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COMPUTING:

Certified Cloud Practitioner <i>Amazon Web Services</i>	April 2023
AWS Cloud Quest: Cloud Practitioner <i>Amazon Web Services</i>	March 2023
Mastering Container Security <i>NorthSec (Montreal, Quebec)</i>	May 2020

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE:

Code of Conduct Committee Lead <i>NorthSec (Montreal, Quebec)</i>	June 2023 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributed continual updates and improvements to the Code of Conduct.• Trained Committee members and volunteers on Responding to Code of Conduct Violations.• Followed up on incident reports.	
Vice President of the Board of Directors, Vice Chair of Communication and PR Department <i>Iranian-Canadian Congress (Canada)</i>	Apr 2023 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributed to high-level decision-making, including chairing committees and developing projects.• Wrote letters to policymakers and did interviews with the media on issues of relevance to the organization.• Represented the organization to Canada's Public Commission on Foreign Interference (2024).	

Volunteer: Logistics; Training Moderator; Diversity Program Selection Committee*NorthSec (Montreal, Quebec)*

May 2023, March - May 2021

- Assisted in gaffing and dressing of stage, serving food, and cleanup for an event with hundreds of attendees.
- Moderated a workshop hosted on Zoom (assisted trainer in addressing questions).
- Selected winning participants among applicants to the Diversity Outreach program.

President of the Board of Directors*QPIRG Concordia (Montreal, QC)*

October 2019-October 2021

- Participated in board meetings and collective decision-making related to the organization.
- Contributed to the resolution of a staff conflict and acted as liaison to a staff member.
- Served on hiring committees and made decisions regarding funding allocations.

Reading Club Organizer and Discussion Lead (Chapter Host)*#BecauseWeveRead Montreal (Montreal, QC) and JooJoo Azad*

2018-2020

- Hosted events and promoted through social media and intentional outreach to POC communities.
- Coordinated outreach and created partnerships with local bookstores and other organizations.
- Applied for and received funding from community organizations.
- Communicated with an international team.

Robotics Team Leader for CRC competition*Vanier College (Montreal, QC)*

2007-2009

- Constructed, with a team, a 12' by 12' kiosk to represent school during competition (both years).
- Arranged team meetings, invited guest speakers, and coordinated task distribution between members.
- Purchased materials and created illustrations for journal, website and video teams.

Leadership Team Member*Fang-Shen-Do Kung Fu School (Montreal, QC)*

2007-2009

- Taught warmups and children's classes regularly, and a full adult class on emergency notice.
- Keyholder; in charge during absence of head instructors.
- Communicated with public and demonstrated techniques during special events.

WRITING, EDITING, AND TRANSLATION EXPERIENCE:**Editor: *Stories from Montreal Student Journal****SASU, Concordia University (Montreal, QC)*

2017-2018

- Edited writer's contribution and provided several rounds of feedback.
- Attended team meetings regarding the progress of the journal.

Translator (Farsi to English)*Smart Solution Systems, Inc. (Montreal, QC)*

2013

- Translated a 650-page catalogue of technical and educational supplies.

Private Editor (Montreal, QC)

2006-2017

- Edited letters of intent, essays, and articles.

Language Officer: Model United Nations*Vanier College (Montreal, QC)*

2008-2009

- Edited delegates' position papers in preparation for McMUN competition.
- Attended club meetings and debriefings.
- Represented VMUN during Vanier clubs' day and to the student council.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE:

Software Developer *Vori Health (Montreal, QC)*

Dec 2023 - Present

- Designed and implemented automated solutions for workflows handling sensitive documents using AWS lambda, Docker and gnupg.
- Communicated and implemented solutions to bugs and customer issues.
- Contributed significantly to improvements of technical documentation.

DevOps SRE

Internal Projects @ AlleyCorp Nord (Montreal, QC)

Jan 2022 - Present

- Researched observability tooling, implementation and best practices.
- Researched implementation of privacy-preserving LLM-based tooling, implemented MLOps infrastructure.
- Assembled and tested robotics parts; worked with Viam Robotics' SDK.
- Experimented on ChatGPT's capability at engineering interview tests.
- Wrote blog posts and delivered talks on research results.

Capable Health via AlleyCorp Nord (Montreal, QC)

May 2022 - Jan 2023

- Automated AWS infrastructure and implemented security controls through Terraform, resulting in achievement of SOC2 type 2 certification.
- Secured infrastructure through implementation of linting and static analysis tools in CI and in shared developer environments.
- Led research, documentation, and implementation of e2e test framework (Terraform and Datadog Synthetics).
- Designed, implemented, ran, and created reports for load tests with K6.
- Managed DNS and http redirects through Cloudflare.
- Automated database seeding for test environments (Ruby on Rails).

Lead Quality Assurance Developer

Rally.io through AC781

April 2020 - May 2022

- Implemented test framework for an API project (REST/GraphQL).
- Implemented e2e framework for a web/mobile application (Appium/Selenium).
- Managed release testing process and release schedule.
- Implemented process improvements through retrospectives, post-mortems and inter-team communication.
- Performed acceptance and stress testing of various products.

Quality Assurance Developer

Workjam, Inc. (Montreal, QC)

January 2019 - April 2020

- Implemented e2e testing framework in Javascript using REST API calls, Appium, and Saucelabs integration.
- Implemented front-end mobile tests and contributed to improvement of QA processes.
- On-boarded test developers and mentored an intern working on the localization project.

Quality Assurance and Support Specialist

Peerio (Montreal, QC)

October 2018 - December 2018

- Tested software and website on multiple platforms and reported bugs to the development team.
- Created documentation and automated testing scenarios.
- Responded to customer support requests.

Programmer/Data Analyst

Lechowicz Lab, McGill University (Montreal, QC)

2014

- Translated code for an ecological simulation from Delphi (Pascal) to Python.
- Streamlined code and added comments to improve reusability.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEER WORK:

Peer Support Volunteer

Centre for Gender Advocacy (Montreal, QC) 2018-2020

- Listen actively to visitors seeking peer support.
- Assist drop-in visitors with services such as library, binders, safer sex and injection kits, and outside referrals.
- Keyholder.

CERT Volunteer

Concordia University (Montreal, QC) 2018

- Responsible during on-campus emergencies to assist individuals in proper emergency response, evacuate floors, and report to other members of emergency response team.

Participant in Concordia University Public Conversation on Sexual Assault April 2018

- Brainstormed and communicated possible improvements to university sexual assault response

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

Revolution or Stasis? Marriage and sexual values among the Iranian diaspora in Montreal
CASCA/IUAES 2017: "Mo(u)vement", Ottawa University (Ottawa, ON) May 2017

Red and White: A Discussion of Hymeneal Blood Ritual as Gendered Violence
AGSA Conference: "Colour, Tint, Tone", McGill University (Montreal, QC) April 2017

Mary's Life on Mars: A Theoretical and Ethnographic Discussion of "The Virginity Imperative"
SAGSA Conference: "To Boldly Go", Concordia University (Montreal, QC) March 2017

PUBLIC LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS:

Bisexuality Workshop - co-presenter on biphobia and bi erasure
Centre Communautaire LGBTQ de Montreal (Montreal, QC) September 2017

Reproducing The Virginity Imperative: Women's Collusion and Men's Complicity
CafeLitt (Montreal, QC) August 2017

Reproducing The Virginity Imperative: Women's Collusion and Men's Complicity
Three-Minute Thesis Competition, Concordia University (Montreal, QC) March 2017

MEDIA APPEARANCES:

Interview ("Navigating Identity and Culture as an Iranian-Canadian")
ICC Podcast with Daniel Bagheri Sarvestani September 3, 2023

Follow-up Interview (on the aftermath of the tragedy of UIA flight PS752)
with Mike Finnerty, CBC Radio Daybreak Jan 13, 2020

Interview ("Iranian Montrealers on Tensions between Iran and the United States")
with Mike Finnerty, CBC Radio Daybreak Jan 6, 2020

Interview (on Trump's exit from the Iran Nuclear Deal)
with Mike Finnerty, CBC Radio Daybreak May 10, 2018

Interview (on sexual violence)
with Mehdi Fallahi, Radio Namaashoum February 12, 2018

Interview (regarding my thesis research, feminism and virginity)
with Mohammad Rad, Hodhod August 23, 2016