SARVIN ESHAGHI

Email: eshaghi2@illinois.edu **|** Google Scholar **| LinkedIn:** /sarvin-eshaghi **| ORCID ID:** 0000-0003-1754-7355 **|** itch.io **| Location:** Illinois, USA

EDUCATION

Ph.D. – Informatics (Fully funded Position) [GPA: 4.0/4.0] | 2024- Present
Department of Informatics, School of Information Science, **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (U of I)**, IL, USA,
Supervisor: Prof. Laura Shackelford; Field of Specialization: Design, Technology, and Society,

M.Sc. – Architecture (Fully funded Position) [GPA: 4.0/4.0] | 2022- 2024
Huckabee College of Architecture, **Texas Tech University (TTU)**, Lubbock, USA
Supervisor: Prof. Mahyar Hadighi | Thesis: ***"Cooperative Play in Historic Preservation Education: A Theoretical Framework and Game Implementation at the Silk Roads Using Unreal Engine."*** [Game]

M.Sc. - Landscape Architecture (100% English) [GPA: 3.7/4.0] | 2018- 2022
Department of Landscape Architecture, **Istanbul Technical University (ITU)**, Istanbul, Turkey
Supervisor: Prof. Muhammed Ali Örnek | Thesis: ***"The Use of Gamification to Enrich the Park Experience for the Visitors: Istanbul Atatürk Urban Forest Park Case Study."*** [Game]

Bachelor of Architecture [GPA: 16.0/20.0] | 2012-2016
Department of Architecture, **University of Tabriz**, Tabriz, Iran

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Game Studies, Game-Based Learning, Digital Heritage, Civic Open Data, Sense of Place, Cultural Analytics, Cooperative Play

PUBLICATIONS

- **Peer-reviewed Journal Articles:**

Mansourihanis, O., Hemmati, M., Afshar, S. V., **Eshaghi, S.**, Varinlioğlu, G. (2025). Exploring the Role of Location-Based Games in Managing Tourist Destinations Under Climate Change Challenges: A Gap Analysis Review. *Case Studies in the Environment (CSE) Journal,* 9(1). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/cse.2025.2439123

Wulansari, R. E., Fortuna, A., Marta, R., Primawati, P., Masek, A., Kaya, D., ... & **Eshaghi, S.** (2024). Revolutionizing learning: Unleashing the power of technology gamification-augmented reality in vocational education. TEM Journal, DOI: https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM133-65

Vaez Afshar, S., **Eshaghi, S.** & Kim, I. (2022). Pattern Analysis of Virtual Landscape within Educational Games. *Journal of Digital Landscape Architecture: HYBRID: Analog + Digital = The next normal, DLA 2022.* DOI: 10.14627/537724042

- **Book Chapters:**

Varinlioğlu, G., **Eshaghi, S.**, & Vaez Afshar, S. (forthcoming). Beyond Representation: Conversational AI and Narrative Immersion in Architecture. In O. Z. Güzelci & I. As (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Artificial Intelligence in Architecture* (2nd ed.). Routledge. **(Accepted, forthcoming)**

- **Peer-reviewed Conference Papers:**

Eshaghi, S. (2026). Situated Intelligence in Architectural Practice: Conversational AI and Interactive Virtual Environments as Emerging Tools for Project Delivery, *ASCAAD 2026: Situated Intelligence — Emerging Forms of Computational Practices*, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Türkiye. **(Accepted, forthcoming)**

Vaez Afshar, S., **Eshaghi, S.,** Hadighi, M., Varinlioğlu, G. (2024). From Past to Present: A study of AI-driven gamification in heritage education, *42nd International Conference of Education and Research in Computer Aided Architectural Design in Europe: Data-Driven Intelligence, eCAADe 2024 (WOS)*, Nicosia, Cyprus, 2, 249-258. [Read Here]

Vaez Afshar, S., **Eshaghi, S.**, Kim, I., Afshar, S. (2023). Leveraging Landscape Architecture and Environmental Storytelling for Next-Generation Gaming Experiences: A Holistic Approach to Virtual World Design, *11th International Conference of the Arab Society for Computer-Aided Architectural Design, ASCAAD 2023*, Amman, Jordan. [Read Here]

Vaez Afshar, S., **Eshaghi**, **S.**, & Hadighi, M. (2023). Echoes of Union Depot: A virtual reality educational game for historic preservation and public awareness, *9th eCAADe Regional International Symposium*, Tallinn, Estonia. [Read Here]

Eshaghi, S., Vaez Afshar, S., & Hadighi, M. (2023). A Framework Proposal for Developing Historical Video Games Based on Player Review Data Mining to Support Historic Preservation, *ARCC 2023 International Conference, The Research-Design Interface.* **(Awarded)** [Read Here]

Vaez Afshar, S., Aytaç, G., **Eshaghi, S.** & Vaez Afshar, S. (2022). Online Footprint - A serious game for reducing digital carbon emission, *XXVI International Conference of the Ibero-American Society of Digital Graphics: Designing Possibilities-Ubiquitous Conference, SIGraDi 2022*. DOI: 10.19083/978-612-318-444-5 [Read Here]

Varinlioğlu, G., Vaez Afshar, S., **Eshaghi, S.**, Balaban, Ö., & Nagakura, T. (2022). GIS-Based Educational Game through Low-Cost Virtual Tour Experience. *27th International Conference of the Association for Computer-Aided Architectural Design Research in Asia: Post Carbon, CAADRIA 2022.* 1, 69-78. [Read Here]

Vaez Afshar, S., Aytaç, G., & **Eshaghi, S.** (2021). SU: A Serious Game for Water Management - Based on Istanbul. *XXV International Conference of the Ibero-American Society of Digital Graphics: Designing Possibilities-Ubiquitous Conference, SIGraDi 2021*, 523-532. DOI: 10.5151/sigradi2021-205**.** [Read Here]

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Vaez Afshar, S., **Eshaghi, S.**, Varinlioğlu, G., & Balaban, Ö. (2021). Evaluation of Learning Rate in Serious Game: Based on Anatolian Cultural Heritage. *39th International Conference of Education and Research in Computer Aided Architectural Design in Europe: Towards a new, configurable architecture, eCAADe 2021*, 2, 273-280. **(Awarded)** [Read Here]

Vaez Afshar, S., **Eshaghi, S.**, & Örnek, M. A. (2021). A Game-Based Tool for Freshmen Design Students During the Pandemic Distance Learning. *4th International Symposium on Art and Design Education: Art and design during and after the Covid-19 Period, Başkent 2021*, 77-83. [Read Here]

Eshaghi, S., Vaez Afshar, S., & Varinlioğlu, G. (2021). THE SERICUM VIA: A Serious Game for Preserving Tangible and Intangible Heritage of Iran. *9th International Conference of the Arab Society for Computer-Aided Architectural Design: Architecture in the Age of Disruptive Technologies, ASCAAD 2021*, 306-316. **(Awarded)** [Read Here]

Eshaghi, S. & Örnek, M.A. (2020). Yedikule Bostans: A Serious Game for Cultural Heritage. *IDU SPAD'20 International Spatial Planning and Design Symposium, Izmir Democracy University,* 370-378. [Read Here]

SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS

- **Presentations and Posters**

Eshaghi, S. (2026). Heritage Invisibility: Designated Landmarks in the Blind Spot of Municipal Data, *Poster Presentation in the National Council for Preservation Education conference, NCPE 2026*, College Park, MD **(Awarded)**

Durmaz, O., Vaez Afshar, S., & **Eshaghi, S.** (2026). Intelligent Avatars in Language Learning, *SOCALLT 2026 Conference: From Chalkboards to Chatbots — Rethinking Language Education in the Age of A*I, Baylor University, Waco, Texas [Read Here]

Eshaghi, S. (2025). Pixel Quest: The Lost Archive – A Game-Based Approach to Digital Preservation Awareness, *Poster Presentation in the National Council for Preservation Education conference, NCPE 2025*, Milwaukee, WI **(Awarded)**

Eshaghi, S. (2024). SILK Whispers: AI-Driven Gamification for Immersive Heritage Education on the Silk Roads, *Poster Presentation in the National Council for Preservation Education conference, NCPE 2024*, New Orleans, LA **(Awarded)**

Ghazvinian, A., **Eshaghi S.**, & Vaez Afshar S. (2024). Play/Learn/Teach: New Realities and Playful Learning for Architectural Education, *Talk in the Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture (ACADIA) Conference Ideation Lab, Canada*

Eshaghi, S. (2023). Innovative Heritage Surveying: Unveiling the Potential of Digital Technologies, *Poster Presentation in the National Council for Preservation Education conference, NCPE 2023*, Washington, D.C. **(Awarded)**

Eshaghi, S., & Hadighi, M. (2023). The Use of Gamification to Enhance Understanding of Historic District Design Guidelines: The Case of Manhattan Heights, El Paso, *Presentation in the Association for Preservation Technology International Annual Conference, APTI 2023, Track 3 Cultural Heritage, CS3.4 Culture and Interpretation.* **(Awarded)**

- **Panels and Demos**

Panel: "Experiential vs. Simulated Learning," APT Academics & Research Committee session, *Association for Preservation Technology International Annual Conference (APTI)*, Indianapolis, IN | 2026. Panelists: Currie, L., Roth, M., Shackelford, L. L., Vaez Afshar, S., & **Eshaghi, S.**

Panel: "Building Communities of Practice in Game Development at University of Illinois," *MDEV 2026 Conference*, Madison, WI | 2026. Panelists: Starks, K., Sieczkowski, R., Wang, O., Vaez Afshar, S., Ghosh, R., & **Eshaghi, S.**

Panel: "The stu/dio Operating System: AI-Assisted Workflows from Vision to Production," *MDEV 2026 Conference*, Madison, WI | 2026. Panelists: **Eshaghi, S.**, Sieczkowski, R., Wang, O., Hidalgo Amat Y Leon, R., Ghosh, R., Zhang, J., & Duffoo, V.

Roundtable: "Designing Games for Cultural Heritage," *2026 Playful by Design International Symposium*, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain | 2026. Moderator: **Eshaghi, S.**; Discussants: Ferreira, L., Tikku, A., & Almeida, W.

Demo: "GSD stu/dio Games", *IMMERSE Symposium*, University of Illinois | 2026. Presenters: stu/dio Leads

Panel: "A Panel Discussion of the stu/dio: Contributions, Focus Areas, and Challenges in University Student-Driven Game Production," *MDEV 2025 Conference*, Madison, WI | 2025. Panelists: Cermak, D., Sieczkowski, R., **Eshaghi, S.**, Vaez Afshar, S., Wang, O., & Hidalgo, R.

Panel: "Academics and Research Committee Career Fair Panel Discussion*," Association for Preservation Technology International Annual Conference (APTI)*, Providence, RI | 2025. Panelists: Simple, T., Kaplan, M., Tracey, T., & **Eshaghi, S.**

Demo: "Transforming ArchViz: Enhancing User Engagement and Interaction in Architectural Visualization through Gamified AI Experiences," *3rd International Playful by Design Conference*, Illinois | 2024. Presenters: **Eshaghi, S.** & Vaez Afshar, S.

Exhibition: "Co-production of Liminal Spaces: Tectonics and Politics of Socio-Environmental Justice in Urban Thresholds," Venice 2023 Architecture Biennial: Time, Space, Existence, European Cultural Center, Venice, Italy | 2023. Exhibitors: Mostafavi, S., Mehan, A., **Eshaghi, S.**, Afshar, S. V., Stuckemeyer, J., Howell, C., & Etemadi, A., Representing the Texas Tech University; Role: Designing and developing a Web-Based Gamified AR Experience for the pavilion, Leading the project's poster design [Read Here | Virtual Tour | Link]

- **Organized Events and Workshops**

APTI Academics and Research Virtual Panel Discussion and Networking Webinar, **Organizer & Moderator**| 2026

AR Hackathon with GSD stu/dio and Hack4Impact**, Co-organizer**, USA | 2026 [Link]

University of Illinois Game Studies & Design Global Game Jam**, Organizer**, GSD stu/dio, USA | 2026 [Link]

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bo[AR]d GAME: Tools and Methods for Architectural Heritage Augmentation (Photogrammetry, Materials and Rendering, and Character Design), **Instructor and Moderator**, DigitalFUTURES Summer Workshops - 5 Days, USA | 2022 [Link]

Gamification in Architecture, Introductions to Twine Platform, **Instructor,** Developing Serious Game with Twine 2.00, Computing and Making (ARCH566, Graduate Course), Izmir University of Economics, Turkey, 8 Hours | 2021 [Link]

INVITED LECTURES

Silk Cities Urban Talk Series, Inaugural Session (online); *Digital Heritage: Opportunities, Challenges, and Future Directions*, invited speaker with Vaez Afshar, S. and Prof. Varinlioğlu, G. | 2026 [Link]

SourceLab Mondays, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Department of History, USA; *From Architecture to Informatics: A Journey Through Games and Heritage* | 2025

HEAT Open House Event, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Department of History, USA; *From Architecture to Informatics: A Journey Through Games and Heritage* | 2024

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, School of Architecture and Design, USA, Graduate Course ARCH 530: Advanced Building Systems, Instructor: Prof. Ghiai, *AR, VR, and MR; Innovation for Building Design* | 2024

MIT University, Department of Architecture, Graduate Course: 4.550/4.570 Learning from Design Heritage: Investigation of Data-driven Methods, *Gamification for Design Research*, USA | 2022

DigitalFUTURES.world/Talks, *Serious Games: Cultural Heritage Oriented Games*| 2022 [Link]

The World Environment Week, *SU: An educational Game for Water Management of Istanbul*, Turkey| 2022

Metametrik/Wednesday Meetups, *From Architecture to Digital Games*, Turkey | 2021 [Link]

RESEARCH/TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

- **Graduate Research Assistant,** Department of Informatics, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

Associate Producer and Quality Assurance Lead, The stu/dio Student-led Game Development Studio, Director: Dan Cermak | Summer 2025-Present [Link];

AP for: Difficult Conversation Simulator (DCS); A VR training tool for developing communication, empathy, and conflict-management skills., PIs: Prof. Justin Leiby and Jenny Ulla, University of Illinois, Gies College of Business [Link]

Online Course Development (Canvas Catalog & Coursera), GSD 390: Introduction to Unreal, Lisa Bievenue, Director of Informatics Programs | Fall 2026-Present

HEAT (Humanities, Entertainment, Art, and Technology) Initiative, Prof. Pintar | Fall 2024-Present

- **Graduate Research Assistant,** College of Architecture, Texas Tech University, USA

Gamification/Playful Design in Architectural Education, Prof. Ghazvinian | Spring 2024

Modernization of Space and Hybridization of Architectural Styles in Eastern Mediterranean, Prof. Hadighi | Summer 2023

Co-Production of Liminal Spaces, College of Architecture, Prof. Mostafavi | Spring 2023

- **Graduate Teaching Assistant,** Department of Informatics, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

The Basics of Game Design (GSD 103, Undergraduate Course) | Spring 2025

Narrative Games & Simulations (GSD 409, Graduate Course) | Fall 2024

- **Graduate Teaching Assistant,** College of Architecture, Texas Tech University, USA

Architectural Design + Research III (Arch 5604, Graduate Course) | Summer 2024

Architectural Technology Integration (ARCH 5304, Graduate Course) | Fall 2023

Smart Materials (ARCH 5303, Graduate Course) | Spring 2023

Advanced Architectural Technology 1 (ARCH 5354, Graduate Course) | Fall 2022

GRANTS / AWARDS / SCHOLARSHIPS

- **Grant**

U.S. Mission Turkey Grants Program, Federal Award, Sustainable Information Lifecycle of Kervansaray (SILK), Role: Game and VR Advisor, PI: Varinlioğlu., Partner: Nagakura, MIT | Oct 2022 - June 2024 [Link |YouTube| Sketchfab]; other funds of the SILK project:

- Funded partly by a grant from the U.S. Mission to Türkiye and MIT MISTI Global Seed Funds
- Partners and Sponsors: Chevening Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
- Abdullah Gül Visiting Scholar Program and Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism - Directorate General of Cultural Assets and Museums, Göreme Archeological Site

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey Grant, Online Platform Design Tool for the Digital Game's Virtual Landscape Project, TÜBİTAK 1512 ESP-BIGG Program, Grant amount: $25,000 | 2021

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- **Awards**

Collegiate Games Challenge Awards 2025, Interactive Category, Honorable Mentions (Innovative Concept) - Everybody's War #WW1 by Sarvin Eshaghi, Grant Ham, & Robbie Sieczkowski | 2025 [Link]

Ivan Petrovic Prize (Best Presentation by a Young Researcher), eCAADe Conference, Novi Sad, Serbia | 2021 [Link | News]

Best Presentation Award, ASCAAD Conference, Cairo, Egypt | 2021 [Link | News]

- **Scholarships**

Spatial Scholarship Field School, NSF Program in Science, Technology, and Society (#2444873), selected participant (one of fourteen scholars nationally), Interdisciplinary Media Arts Center, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, USA | Aug 2026 [Link]

NCPE Conference Student Scholarship, The National Council for Preservation Education, USA | 2023 - 2026

APT Student Scholarship, The Association for Preservation Technology International, Seattle, USA | 2023

ARCC Graduate Student Scholarship, International Conference Architectural Research Consortium, Dallas, USA |2023

Albert & Jackie Payne Memorial Scholarship in Historic Preservation, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA | 2023

Dr. Elizabeth Louden Scholarship in Historic Preservation, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA, 2023

Elizabeth Sasser AIA Scholarship, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA | 2023

Willard B. Robinson Memorial Scholarship, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA | 2023

College of Architecture Graduate Student Scholarship, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA | 2022, Amount: $15,000

PEER REVIEW CONTRIBUTION

- **Scientific Review Committee Member**

CAAD Futures | 2027-Present
xArch Symposium | 2026-Present

Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies (LLIDS) |2026-Present

Computers & Education: X Reality Journal |2026-Present

Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Journal (DAACH) |2025-Present

International Journal of Serious Games (IJSG) | 2023-Present

International Conference of the Association for Computer-Aided Architectural Design Research in Asia | 2023-Present

The Arab Society for Computation in Architecture, Art and Design (ASCAAD) | 2023-Present

International Conference of the Ibero-American Society of Digital Graphics (SIGraDI) | 2023-Present

International Conference of Education and Research in Computer-Aided Architectural Design in Europe| 2022-Present

- **Judge**

13th Annual Arts & Humanities Conference, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA | 2023

22nd Annual Graduate Student Research Poster Competition, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA | 2024

16th Annual Texas Tech University Undergraduate Research Conference (TTU URC), Lubbock, USA | 2024

SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Informatics Doctoral Student Association (Info DSA), University of Illinois, Role: Authorized Agent |2024 – Present

Association for Preservation Technology (APT), The Academics and Research Committee member, Role(s): Leader of the Gamification in Education section, USA | 2024-Present

DigitalFUTURES.world, Team Coordinator (Turkish Language), USA | 2023-Present [Link]

Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Honored Member, USA | 2023-2024

TTU - HCoA Robotic Lab, Researcher, College of Architecture, Texas Tech University, USA | 2022-2023

Tau Sigma Delta Honor Society, Honored Member, USA | 2022-2023

İTÜ Çekirdek Incubation Center (UBI Best World Incubation Center), Young Entrepreneur, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey | 2021-Present

WORK EXPERIENCES

Research & Development Internship, JHP Architecture, Dallas, USA | Jun 2023-Aug 2023

- Developing a Gamified ArchViz project incorporating AI using Unreal Engine for firm clients [YouTube]
- Proving the concept of transitioning architectural projects from ARCHICAD to Twinmotion and Unreal Engine

Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, OyuNest Digital Game and Design Technologies Inc., İTÜ ARI Teknokent Science Park, Istanbul, Turkey | Nov 2021-Aug 2022 [Blog1|Blog2|Instagram]

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- Developing a web-based platform providing digital game designers, developers, and artists a time and cost-efficient shared design language for virtual environment design (Methodology: Patented in South Korea
- Startup company: Funded in Turkey

RELEVANT SKILLS / LANGUAGES

Game Development: Unreal Engine, RPG Maker, Construct 3, Twine, Stornaway.io, Bitsy, 3DVista Virtual Tour Pro

Data Science & Spatial Analysis: RapidMiner, MS Office, Airtable, ArcGIS, QGIS

3D Modeling & Arch Viz: AutoCAD 2D/3D, Autodesk 3ds Max, Vray, Rhino, ArchiCAD, Twinmotion

Photo & Video Editing: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign

Languages: English (Advanced - Duolingo, IELTS, and TOEFL Certificates), Azerbaijani (Native), Persian & Turkish (Fluent)

REFERENCES

Prof. Laura Shackelford, Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois, USA | E-mail: llshacke@illinois.edu

Prof. Michael Tomlan, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University, USA | E-mail: mat4@cornell.edu

Prof. Güzden Varinlioglu, School of Architecture, University of Liverpool, UK | E-mail: Guzden.varinlioglu@liverpool.ac.uk