

KULBIR SINGH AHLUWALIA

[Website](#) ♦ [Google scholar](#) ♦ [GitHub](#)

Urbana, Illinois, USA ♦ ksa5@illinois.edu

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Computer Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA (June 2022-Present), GPA: 3.91/4

M.Eng. in Robotics, University of Maryland, College Park, USA (Aug 2019-May 2021), GPA: 3.88/4

B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering, Punjab Engineering College, India (Aug 2015-May 2019), GPA: 8.12/10

RESEARCH PAPERS

- Cuaran, J.; **Ahluwalia, K.S.**; Koe, K.; Uppalapati, N.K.; Chowdhary, G. Active Semantic Mapping with Mobile Manipulator in Horticultural Environments. (Accepted to ICRA 2025) [[Project Website](#)] [[arXiv PDF](#)] [[arXiv](#)]
- Rangwala, M.; Liu, J.; **Ahluwalia, K.S.**; Ghajar, S.; Dhami, H.S.; Tracy, B.F.; Tokekar, P.; Williams, R.K. DeepPaSTL: Spatio-Temporal Deep Learning Methods for Predicting Long-Term Pasture Terrains Using Synthetic Datasets. Agronomy 2021, 11, 2245. (published in Agronomy as part of the Special Issue AI and Agricultural Robots) [[Link to published paper](#)] [[PDF](#)]
- Liu, J.; Rangwala, M.; **Ahluwalia, K.S.**; Ghajar, S.; Dhami, H.S.; Tracy, B.F.; Tokekar, P.; Williams, R.K. “Intermittent Deployment for Large-Scale Multi-Robot Forage Perception: Data Synthesis, Prediction, and Planning”, 2021. [[arXiv](#)] [[PDF](#)] (published at IEEE TASE, Transactions on Automation Science and Engineering)

WORK EXPERIENCE

AI Intern, Earthsense Inc., Urbana, IL, USA

May 2025-Present

- Developing a natural language conditioned waypoint generation pipeline for 2D and 3D motion planners for enhancing outdoor robot navigation.
- Created an automatic labeling pipeline for large outdoor robot navigation datasets using Grounded SAM2, streamlining data processing.
- Deployed and integrated open-source Visual Language Models (Molmo-7B-demo, Gemma-3-27B, and Qwen-2.5-VL-72B, Qwen3-30B, Llama4-Scout, Spatial-VLM) for robot reasoning in image space and open-world natural language instruction conditioned question answering for 4 wheeled skid steer outdoor robots.

Teaching Assistant, CS444, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Jan 2024 - May 2024, Jan 2025 -

May 2025 **Course:** Deep Learning for Computer Vision (CS444) **Instructor:** Dr. Svetlana Lazebnik

- Updated assignment starter code and assessed student submissions using Canvas.
- Provided support during in-person office hours and via Campuswire, addressing student queries and concerns.
- Designed and developed multimodal (Reasoning LLM/VLM proof) quiz questions, including single-choice, multiple-choice, and matching formats for students.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois, Distributed Autonomous Systems Lab

Aug 2022-present

Graduate Research Assistant

Mentors: Dr. Girish Chowdhary & Dr. Julia Hockenmaier

- Investigated 3D semantic representations for robot environment mapping and relocalization after failure.
- Categorized recovery action sequences for various failure cases and constructed topological maps for visual language navigation.

University of Illinois, Distributed Autonomous Systems Lab

May 2021-Sep 2023

Graduate Research Assistant

Mentors: Dr. Girish Chowdhary & Dr. Julia Hockenmaier

- Fine-tuned CodeT5 for natural language grounding and code generation.
- Created datasets for grounding natural language commands and analyzed location data distributions.
- Developed a Python package for the farmbot agricultural robot.

University of Maryland, Robotics Algorithms & Autonomous Systems Lab

Jul 2020-Aug 2021

Independent Study

Mentor: Dr. Pratap Tokekar

- Processed point clouds from LiDAR-mounted quadcopters for pasture simulation.
- Automated gazebo world construction for grass pastures with unique plant poses.

University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Mar-Jul 2018

Visiting Scholar

Mentor: Dr. Simarjeet Saini

- Developed an orange sweetness detector using scaled conjugate gradient backpropagation.

- Designed, programmed and 3D printed low-cost photonic devices, including a urea-in-milk detector and a fundus eye camera.

Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Jun-Jul 2016

Research Intern

Mentor: Dr. Dharmendra Singh

- Investigated the effect of radio wave absorbers on Radar Cross Section using Ansys HFSS.

RESEARCH ARTICLES AND ABSTRACTS

- Cuaran, Jose; Ahluwalia, Kulbir Singh; Koe, Kendall; Chowdhary, Girish. “Active Semantic Mapping with Mobile Manipulator in Horticultural Environments”, 2024, Accepted at 40th Anniversary of the IEEE Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA@40)
- The multispectral Fundus Eye camera prototype was featured in the Optics and Photonics News (OPN) in February 2019 in “Saini, Simarjeet Singh, Aneesh Sridhar, and Kulbir Ahluwalia. “Smartphone optical sensors.” Optics and Photonics News 30, no. 2 (2019): 34-41.” [\[Link to article\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

- Yuqi Li, Kulbir S. Ahluwalia, and Simarjeet S. Saini. “Reinforcement learning integrated with supervised learning for training of near infrared spectrum data for non-destructive testing of fruits.” In Sensing for Agriculture and Food Quality and Safety XII, vol. 11421, p. 114210J. International Society for Optics and Photonics, 2020. [\[Link to conference presentation\]](#)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages	Python, MATLAB, C++
Analysis & Design	Simulink, Blender, AutoCAD, Solidworks, Ultimaker Cura, Adobe Premiere Pro
Libraries	Torch, Transformers, Numpy, Pandas, OpenCV, SciPy
Other	ROS, Gazebo, RViz, CUDA, Linux, Docker, Git, Doxygen, Anaconda, LaTeX

PROJECTS

- [Enhancing Stereo Depth Maps through RGBD-Conditioned Generative Models](#):
 - Conditional diffusion model fusing RGB and noisy depth for metric maps.
 - Fine-tuned Stable Diffusion V2 (similar to Marigold Training Pipeline) using SimSense simulation to generate depth data.
 - Outperforms Marigold/Depth-Anything-V2 on IRS, VKITTI, NYUv2 by up to 46 % Abs Rel
- [SLAM from 2D LiDAR data using split and merge line extraction algorithm](#)
- [State estimation using Extended Kalman Filter for GPS+IMU+Encoder sensor fusion](#)
- [Processed data from RTK-GPS, IMU and encoders to plot trajectory of a field robot](#)
- [Autonomous Vaccine Delivery Robot](#)
- [Image segmentation using superpixels](#)
- [Persistent-Monitoring using Multi-Robot \(UAV-UGV\) Coordination](#)
- [Optimized a GestureGAN for resource constrained settings](#)
- [Self-adjusting roadmaps](#) - Navigation in unknown environments using LD-PRM.
- [Estimated the motion of a car using Visual odometry](#)

COURSEWORK

Graduate (UIUC): CS598SHW: 3D Vision, CS598YL: Deep Learning for Robotic Manipulation, Advanced NLP (CS546), Machine Learning (CS446), Deep learning for Computer vision (CS444), Natural language processing (CS447), Mobile Robotics (CS498GC), Autonomous Systems and Robots.

Graduate (UMD): Autonomous robotics, Decision making for robotics, Visual Learning and recognition, Planning for Autonomous Robots, Perception for Autonomous Robots, Control of Robotic systems, Robot modelling, Robot programming, Building Robot software systems.

Undergraduate (PEC): Neural networks and fuzzy systems, Advanced control systems, Microprocessors and interfacing, Power electronics, Mechatronics, Engineering analysis and design, Manufacturing, Biomedical engineering, Electromagnetic theory, Python Programming.

LEADERSHIP AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Served as **Technology Head for Hardware domain** for IEEE PEC Student branch. Conducted workshops on making a “[Pick n Place Transporter Robot](#)” and “[Using the Raspberry Pi](#)” to share our team’s experiences and techniques with our juniors in PEC.
- Taught Math and Science to government high school students as part of “PUNARKRITI Welfare Society” (Jan-Apr 2016) and “Junior Einstein” (Dec 2018) social welfare organizations.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

- First prize in MAJOR PROJECT in the B.Tech. Examination of Electrical Engineering, 2015-19 for “Teleoperated Gesture controlled Robotic arm”. [May 2019]
- Received Certificate of Appreciation for contributions to IEEE PEC. [Aug 2017, Aug 2018]
- Awarded with the **National Bal Shree Award in Creative Scientific Innovations** by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India conferred by the President of India.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

- **AR-Tag detection** - superimposed an image and virtual cube on an AR tag.
- **Tracked moving objects using Lucas-Kanade Tracker**
- **Baxter transporting cubes in Gazebo**
- **Implemented A star algorithm for Path Planning on Turtlebot 3**
- **Path planning for point and rigid robot using Djikstra's Algorithm**
- **Lane detection and Turn prediction for self driving car**
- **Agile Robotics for Industrial Automation Competition (ARIAC) 2019**
- **Designed a PID controller for Turtlebot 3**
- **Modelled a UR 5 arm with Parallel Gripper in Rviz**
- **Teleoperated gesture controlled robotic arm**
- **Pick n place transporter bot**
- **Smart Garden**