

Floris Holstege

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Summary

My professional ambition is to make a contribution towards the responsible and fair use of machine learning algorithms in society at large. Currently, I am pursuing this ambition as a PhD candidate, where I develop methods for making deep learning models more interpretable and robust. In addition, I am a researcher at Algorithm Audit, helping public organisations with the ethical use of algorithms. Before starting a PhD, I graduated Cum Laude with a research masters from the Tinbergen Institute at the intersection of econometrics, machine learning and finance. I have previously graduated Magna Cum Laude from Leiden University with a BSc in Governance, Economics and Development. I also have industry experience at the largest hedge fund in the world (Bridgewater), as well as a startup (Picnic), and a think tank. While at University, I was ranked as one of the top 10 university debaters in Europe, and spoke in the finals of the World University Debate Championships.

Education

PhD in Machine Learning

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, SECTION OF QUANTITATIVE ECONOMICS

Sep. 2022 - Sept. 2026 (Expected)

- Supervised by Prof. Cees Diks, Dr. Noud van Giersbergen, and Dr. Bram Wouters.
- I teach tutorials for the courses *Statistical Learning*, *Reinforcement learning*, and *Econometrics I*. I also supervise bachelor theses.

MPhil (Research Master) in Business Data Science, Tinbergen Institute

JOINT PROGRAM FROM THE ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM AND VRIJE

UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM.

Aug. 2020 - Aug. 2022

- Graduated Cum Laude. GPA: 8/10. I received a scholarship worth +€ 15.000 for my results in the first year.
- I follow PhD-level coursework Supervised, Unsupervised & Reinforcement Learning, Deep Learning, NLP, and Econometrics.

BSc in Governance, Economics and Development (Honours)

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, THE INTERNATIONAL HONORS COLLEGE OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

Sep. 2015 - Jun. 2018

- Graduated Magna Cum Laude with a final GPA of 3.8/4.
- My coursework focused on political science, economics, and quantitative research methods.
- My bachelor thesis was graded with an A, and was eventually accepted in *Democratization*, a top-15 political science journal ([link here](#)).

Minor in Computer Science

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Sep. 2017 - Jan. 2018

- Finished with a GPA of 8.5/10.
- An intensive minor where I learned the basics of writing clean code, algorithmic efficiency & data processing.

Work Experience

Researcher

ALGORITHM AUDIT

Sept. 2023 - Present

- Algorithm Audit is an NGO which serves as an independent knowledge platform for the ethical application of algorithms. As a part of the core team I have been part of two major projects.
 1. An external investigation into potential discrimination by an algorithm of the Dutch Ministry of education, to be found [here](#)
 2. Creating an open-source tool for unsupervised bias detection, to be found [here](#)

Investment Associate (full-time)

BRIDGEWATER ASSOCIATES

Aug. 2019 - Jul. 2020

- Bridgewater is the largest hedge fund in the world. I was selected out of +1000 candidates from top universities in the US and the UK based on my analytical abilities. Several of my reports were directly shared with the Chief Investment Officers. I also conducted research for Ray Dalio's upcoming book, part of which has been published [here](#).

Data Analyst Intern (full-time)

PICNIC ONLINE SUPERMARKETS

Feb. 2019 - Jul. 2019

- Picnic is the fastest growing startup in the Netherlands. My role was to advice new app features based on data-analysis. I set up A/B tests for new app features, analyzed the results, and presented these to managers.

Data Science Intern (full-time)

THE HAGUE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES (HCSS)

Aug. 2018 - Jan. 2019

- HCSS is a think-tank that advises ministries and companies on geopolitical trends. My role was to conduct statistical analysis and create visualizations using R. Part of my work was published as a part of a report for the Ministry of foreign affairs, to be found [here](#).

Research Assistant (part-time)

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

March. 2021 - Sep. 2022

- I assisted Professor Gui Liberali with a project on the usefulness of reinforcement learning methods for changing website content. I was responsible for overseeing an experiment, as well as writing replication code. The paper can be found [here](#).

Teaching Assistant (part-time)

SEVERAL COURSES

Oct. 2021 - Feb. 2022 & Jan. 2018 - May 2018

- Responsible for designing and teaching weekly tutorials for the courses 'Supervised Machine Learning' and 'Unsupervised Machine Learning' of the Tinbergen Research Master.
- Designed, taught and administered a weekly evening course on data-analysis. This pilot course was integrated into the curriculum of my undergraduate degree the next year.

Programming Languages

Python Comfortable: most familiar with libraries such as pytorch, sklearn.

R Comfortable: Very familiar with libraries such as ggplot, tidyverse and shiny.

SQL Moderate experience: received in-house training from Picnic to use SQL for analysis.

Scala Moderate experience: worked and received training in Scala while working at Bridgewater.

Javascript (D3.js) Moderate experience: combined D3.js with HTML and CSS to create web-based data visualizations.

Other tools Worked with STATA for my thesis and Tableau at the HCSS & Picnic.

Honors & Awards

Aug. 2021 **Business Data Science Scholarship** A monthly stipendium and tuition fee waiver worth +€ 15.000.

I have represented the Netherlands and Leiden University at various international debating tournaments. I reached the out-rounds of +20 of such tournaments. An interview about reaching the world championship final can be read [here](#). Below is a selection of awards I won during this time.

Aug. 2017 **Top ten speaker in Europe** European University debating Championships

Tallinn

Jan. 2017 **Finalist (English as a second language)** World University debating Championships

The Hague

Aug. 2016 **Finalist (English as a second language)** European University debating Championships

Warsaw

Jul. 2015 **3rd speaker in the world** World Schools debating Championships

Singapore

Extracurricular Activities

Public speaking and debating coach

THE DUTCH NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DEBATING TEAM

Sep. 2015 - Sep. 2019

- Voluntarily selected and guided a group of high school debaters towards the World Schools Debating Championships.
- I prepared training sessions, and spent on average between 12-16 hours per week coaching the team.
- I have given a TEDxTalk about my experience with debating and coaching that can be watched [here](#).

Board member

VARIOUS STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

Sep. 2016 - Jun. 2017

- Director of content at the Leiden Debating Union. Organised weekly debate evenings and tournaments with 100+ participants.
- Member of the advisory board of Fortuna, the study association of Leiden University College.
- During the academic year of 2016-2017, I spent on average between 12-16 hours per week on these positions.

Languages

Dutch Native.

English Fluent, entire university curriculum conducted in English. Passed Cambridge Proficiency Examination in 2015. Grade: A.

German Conversational, passed B2 examination from the Goethe Institute in 2015.

French Basic, followed an A2 level language course in preparation for travel to Senegal.