Zhiyuan Gao

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01 EDUCATION

London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) — London, UK

Bachelor of Arts in Social Anthropology — 2023 – 2026

Degree classification: Upper Second Class Honours (2:1)

Relevant coursework: Digital Anthropology, Economic Anthropology, Political Anthropology, Ethnography through Mixed Media, Psychological Anthropology, Research Methods.

University activities: Completed collaborative group projects, participated in student society activities.
Fieldwork in London: Conducted participant observation at Gégend, a multifunctional art space, for 3 months with 4 semi-structured interviews. Identified ambiguity's role in the space and its social dynamics.
Dissertation: "Navigating Virtual Intimacy: relation-making in the Chinese VTuber-fan community".

02 INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Yanlord Land · Nanjing Office — User Research Intern — Nanjing, China — Jun – Aug 2026

Market & competitive research: Analysed housing market data and investigated 10+ residential developments to identify trends, benchmark competitors and recommend product improvements.

Customer insights: Conducted multiple semi-structured interviews to understand purchase drivers and barriers, developing user personas covering household composition, geographic origins and housing needs.

Product positioning: Produced a site positioning report for a development in Baijiahu, Nanjing, recommending target customers and product features based on market and customer research.

New business research: Explored new products and revenue models through customer, supplier and competitor research; examined emerging channels for information discovery and consumption, and helped develop livestreaming and short-form video channels.

03 PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Student Exchange & Community Service Design — Personal Project — London, UK — Aug – Oct 2025

Research: Drew on participant observation while living in university halls and private student accommodation in London, supplemented by interviews and surveys involving 50 students, to identify barriers to social connection.

Service design: Applied anthropological ideas of reciprocity to connect second-hand exchange with social interaction, developing stakeholder maps, service blueprints and online–offline journeys.

Prototyping: Designed high-fidelity interfaces in Figma and developed an interactive mobile prototype with support from Codex, incorporating AI-powered item recognition, exchange workflows and community activities.

Hokkaido University Summer Research — Participant — Sapporo, Japan — Aug 2024

Research focus: Examined tourism and regional sustainability, analysed links between local economies, social structures and environmental factors.

Team research: Worked with international students, using Japanese local case studies and field data to analyse tourism, community development and the environment.

Outcome: Earned an A for the research report; recommended greater resident participation and community-based tourism to address local tourism challenges.

Renmin University of China Summer Programme — Participant — Beijing, China — Jul 2024

Research focus: Studied religion in contemporary China, conducted research about relationships between religious spaces, public experience and sociocultural practices.

Fieldwork: Visited Buddhist temples and mosques across Beijing and collected primary data through interviews.

Outcome: Independently produced a research report (95/100), using ethnographic methods to organise and analyse data and develop insights.

04 SKILLS

Languages: English, Mandarin Chinese

Software: Microsoft Office, Figma, Photoshop; proficient in a range of AI applications.

Research & operations: User research, qualitative research, data organisation and analysis, participant observation, in-depth interviews, digital ethnography, event planning, content operations and user growth.