Dear Digital Economics and AI Tutorial Committee,

I am writing to apply for the 2026 Digital Economics and AI Tutorial at Stanford University. I am a fifth-year PhD candidate in the Business Economics program jointly held by the LSA Department of Economics and Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan (enrolled Fall 2021).

Graduate Coursework

My training includes the full sequences of PhD-level microeconomic theory, macroeconomic theory, and econometrics. I completed both Industrial Organization field courses (structural estimation and digital economics) and four quantitative marketing seminars covering causal inference, Bayesian statistical learning, digital marketing, and conjoint analysis. I have also taken three statistics courses: Machine Learning, Deep Learning, and Reinforcement Learning.

Research Interests and Projects

My research examines platform policy design and its effects on platform users. I have a working paper titled "When Professionals Become Influencers: The Impact of Live Streaming on Service Demand" (joint with Xu Zhang, London Business School; Yi Zhang, University of International Business and Economics; and Puneet Manchanda, University of Michigan). A growing number of professionals—including physicians, lawyers, nutritionists, and financial advisors—are leveraging social media platforms to offer live-streamed consultations and promote their services. This emerging trend raises important questions about the effectiveness of live streaming as a demand-generation tool for professional services and the content attributes that drive its success. Focusing on physicians in China, we analyze observational data on their service demand and live streaming adoption. Using a generalized synthetic control approach, we find that physicians who adopt live streaming experience a significant increase in demand for their services. To understand the heterogeneity of this effect, we draw on a multimodal content analysis of 2771 live-streamed sessions, comprising approximately 0.2 million minutes of text, audio, and video content. We then examine how various aspects of these sessions—such as content specificity, professional cues, emotional language, and facial expressions—influence service demand. We extend our analysis to investment fund managers and find consistent positive effects of live streaming adoption on investor engagement, demonstrating the generalizability of our findings across professional service domains. The findings highlight the potential of live streaming as an effective promotional channel for professionals and offer actionable insights into content design strategies that enhance its impact

Dissertation Research

My dissertation examines how short-term profit-oriented ownership—particularly private equity—affects product provision and social welfare in industries with public interest implications. I challenge the regulatory assumption that non-consolidating acquisitions pose minimal welfare threats, demonstrating that ownership changes can substantially harm social welfare even when market structure is preserved.

My dissertation committee consists of Jagadeesh Sivadasan (Chair, Buzz and Judy Newton Professor of Business Administration), Yesim Orhun (Professor of Marketing), Ying Fan (Professor of Economics), and Puneet Manchanda (Isadore and Leon Winkelman Professor of Marketing).

Sincerely,

Yuqing Gu
PhD Candidate
LSA Department of Economics & Ross School of Business
University of Michigan
guyuqing@umich.edu
734-800-6095