Safe Reinforcement Learning for Smart Grid Control and Operations
Organizers: Ming Jin (Virginia Tech), Shangding Gu (UC Berkeley), Vanshaj Khattar (Virginia Tech)

The increasing complexity of modern power systems necessitates advanced control and decision-making techniques to ensure reliable, efficient, and secure grid operations. Reinforcement learning (RL) has emerged as a promising data-driven approach for developing intelligent control policies in various domains. However, deploying RL in safety-critical infrastructure like power systems requires careful consideration of operational constraints and potential risks.

This tutorial aims to provide a comprehensive overview of safe reinforcement learning techniques tailored specifically for smart grid applications. Attendees will gain a solid understanding of core safe RL algorithms, their algorithmic and theoretical foundations, and practical considerations for addressing safety challenges in grid control. The tutorial will emphasize the application of safe RL methods to real-world power system use cases, such as frequency regulation, voltage control, optimal power flow, energy trading, and microgrid management.

Throughout the 3-hour session, we will cover the following topics:
1. Introduction to Safe RL in Power Systems
   - Opportunities and safety concerns in applying RL to power systems
   - Overview of safe RL methods
2. Model-based Safe RL for Power Systems
   - Control-theoretic methods
   - Primal-dual methods
   - Gaussian process methods
   - Case studies
3. Model-free Methods for Power Systems
   - Constrained Policy Optimization (CPO)
   - Projection-based CPO (PCPO)
   - First Order Constrained Optimization (FOCOPS)
   - Lyapunov-based Methods
   - Gaussian Process (GP) Methods
   - Case studies
4. Safe Multi-Agent RL (MARL) for Power Systems
   - Safe MARL Formulation
   - Methods and applications
5. Practical Considerations and Open Challenges
   - Smart grid simulation environments
   - Handling high-dimensional data
   - Human-in-the-loop learning for safe RL in grid control
   - Scalability and communication constraints

The tutorial will maintain a strong emphasis on practical applications and discussions centered around power systems. Attendees will gain insights into the current state-of-the-art in safe RL for smart grid control, as well as the key challenges and open problems that require further research and innovation.