

Hank Gerba, PhD

PROFILE

I hold a PhD in Film & Media studies from Stanford University (specializing in the humanist study of computational media), and have many years experience researching emerging technologies for the entertainment industry. My deep theoretical and historical understanding of technology and its societal effects motivates both my practical research and desire to effectively educate about human-centered AI.

EDUCATION

Stanford University, Stanford CA – PhD in Film & Media Studies (2024)

Stanford University, Stanford CA– MA in Film & Media Studies (2020)

Reed College, Portland OR – BA in Art History (2016)

EXPERIENCE

LEAD PARTNER & PRODUCER, ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – 2016-PRESENT

ETC is a sort of skunkworks for Hollywood, where studios collaborate to look around the corner. Currently lead partner on the “Universal Character Model” project (sponsored by Disney, Epic, NBCUniversal, Amazon, and Dolby), producing a system which allows writers to bound generative content according to their authorial intent and narrative structure. Previously, produced *Wonder Buffalo: The VR Experience*, an Emmy-nominated VR short with research deliverables for virtual production, and wrote several white papers sponsored by the CTO’s of the “Big 5” film studios concerning the relationship between AI and storytelling.

PHD STUDENT, STANFORD UNIVERSITY – 2018-2024

Produced award-winning research in computational media philosophy. Organized high-profile conferences and speaker series. Liaised between students and faculty as graduate student representative, and served as secretary to a special interest group in philosophy and theory. Held fellowships at Stanford’s Human-Centered AI (HAI) institute and the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis (CESTA). Graduated with the Christopher Meier Prize, the Art & Art History Department’s highest award for a graduate student.

PROJECT MANAGER & ROBOT OPERATOR, HANSON ROBOTICS – 2016-2019

Managed a team of engineers, writers, and animators to upgrade Sophia the Robot’s physical and conversational capabilities. As Robot Operator, liaised with event coordinators, wrote and programmed Sophia’s speeches, and operated the robot live. Gained proficiency in communicating about AI and other technologies to professional, governmental, and popular audiences.