# Brandon Yifan Yang

brandonyifanyang.com

#### EDUCATION

University of Virginia

Charlottesville, VA

B.S. in Computer Science; Major GPA: 3.98/4.00; Cumulative GPA: 3.91/4.00

August 2021 - May 2025

Email: branyang@virginia.edu

• Relevant Coursework: ML, RL (G), NLP (G), Probabilistic ML (G), Learning for Interactive Robotics (G), Human-Robot Interaction (G), Optimization, Data Structures & Algorithms, Theory of Computation, Computer Systems Organization, Software Engineering

#### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

## Learning and Interactive Robotics, University of Virginia

Charlottesville, VA

Advisor: Prof. Yen-Ling Kuo

Aug 2024 - Present

- o Ongoing Senior Capstone: Vision-Language-Action (VLA) model for robotic manipulation.
- Investigating action-language grounding in VLAs for robotic manipulation tasks, focusing on interpretability and generalizability.

## University of Maryland

College Park, MD

Advisor: Prof. Jia-Bin Huang

May 2024 - Present

- o Semantically Aware 3D Gaussian Splatting
  - \* Developed novel method to inject semantically aware embeddings into 3D Gaussian Splatting (3DGS) scenes for 3D understanding and segmentation tasks.
  - \* Leveraged video segmentation from SAMv2 to maintain temporal consistency in injection of CLIP features from 2D training set to 3DGS scene, ensuring stable and accurate 3D embeddings.

## Collaborative Robotics Lab, University of Virginia

Charlottesville, VA

Advisor: Prof. Tariq Iqbal

May 2022 - May 2024

- Grounded Location for Object Manipulation (GLOMA)
  - \* Zero-shot image-editing model grounded by language instructions for object relocation and manipulation tasks, designed for downstream robotic applications using goal-conditioned RL.
  - \* Integrated language grounding with visual perception using bounding box guidance from pre-trained language models, enabling precise object relocation without external supervision.
  - \* Collected and annotated custom dataset for fine-tuning pre-trained language and vision models.
- o Centralized multi-agent RL for Collaborative Tasks
  - \* Developed long-horizon on/offline centralized MARL for robotic bolt screwing tasks.
  - \* Designed and optimized custom reward functions in multi-agent framework for task completion and agent collaboration.
  - \* Deployed and tested custom simulated environments in IsaacGym for training and evaluation.

## Honors

Dean's Engineering Research Scholarship (\$5000 stipend)

May 2023

University of Virginia School of Engineering and Applied Science

## University of Virginia Research Computing Exhibition Finalist

April 2024

University of Virginia Research Computing

Entrepreneurship Cup Winner (Received \$1000 in funding)

November 2023

University of Virginia Darden School of Business

Dean's List

University of Virginia

## PRESENTATIONS

#### • Mechanistic Interpretability in Large Language Models

o University of Virginia Research Computing Exhibition, Charlottesville, VA

April 2024

#### • GLOMA: Grounded Location for Object Manipulation

o University of Virginia Fall Engineering Research Expo, Charlottesville, VA

October 2023

o University of Virginia Spring Thornton Society Dinner, Charlottesville, VA

September 2023

o University of Virginia Summer Research Symposium, Charlottesville, VA

July 2023

#### • Robot Tool Grasping with AprilTag

• University of Virginia Engineering Open House, Charlottesville, VA

November 2023

o University of Virginia Engineering Open House, Charlottesville, VA

November 2022

#### Teaching Experience

### Teaching Assistant

Machine Learning w/ Prof. Rich Nguyen

University of Virginia

August 2024 - Present

- Authored comprehensive and interactive course notes to support student learning and understanding.
- Collaborated with course staff to develop and grade assignments, exams, and projects.

#### Teaching Assistant

Theory of Computation w/ Prof. Mark Floryan

University of Virginia

Jan 2024 - May 2024

• Held weekly office hours, one-on-one tutoring, and review sessions to assist students with course material.

#### Lab Lead Teaching Assistant

University of Virginia

Computer Systems Organization w/ Prof. John Hott

Jan 2023 - May 2023

- Led and co-lectured weekly lab sections on computer systems topics with interactive activities for 70+ students.
- Supervised and coordinated a team of 6 TAs to facilitate effective learning and lab management.
- Held office hours and whiteboard sessions to provide additional support for students.

#### SOFTWARE PROJECTS

- notie-markdown: Developed open-source React component for Markdown rendering using TypeScript. Used notie-markdown to create course notes and blog posts on machine learning topics.
- SmartOH: AI-assisted office hour queueing system, built with Python, PyTorch, and TypeScript. Placed 3rd overall at VTHacks11 (3/393).
- Voy: Collaborated with 7 non-profits to develop Voy, a volunteer and driver management platform using Python and TypeScript; received funding from UVA's Entrepreneurship Cup.

## Programming Skills

- Languages: Python, C/C++, CUDA, Java, JavaScript, TypeScript, HTML/CSS
- ML + Robotics: PyTorch, TensorFlow, OpenCV, MuJoCo, ROS, IsaacGym, Habitat, RLBench
- Other Tools & Frameworks: Git, Docker, Slurm, Linux, IATEX, React, Node.js, Express, Django