Michael Piseno

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Curriculum Vitae

Research Interests

My research focuses on learning models for human and object motion. I work on whole-body human motion tracking, dexterous manipulation, and generative motion models. I am also interested in human and object pose estimation from video.

Education

2025 - Present **Stanford University**
PhD Student in Computer Science
Advisor: Prof. Karen Liu

2021 - 2024 **Stanford University**
MS in Computer Science

2017 - 2021 **Georgia Institute of Technology**
BS in Computer Science with highest honors
Minor in Mathematics
Minor in Chinese Language
Major GPA: 4.0

Current Positions

The Movement Lab, Stanford
PhD Student in Computer Science (Sept 2025 - Present)
Advisor: Prof. Karen Liu.
Working on human and object motion tracking and dexterous manipulation.

MS Student in Computer Science and Research Assistant (Jan 2024 - Sept 2025)
Advisor: Prof. Karen Liu
Worked on compliant control methods for contact-rich human object interaction. Submitted to ICRA 2026. (more info)
Worked on generative motion models for physics-based character animation. Accepted to SIGGRAPH Asia 2024. (more info)

The AI Policy Forum
Founding Member and Lead Contributor
Faculty Advisor: Prof. Allison Okamura
HAI Student Affinity Group dedicated to developing connections between students and key actors in government, industry, and academia to discuss policy related to AI and robotics. Organizing reading groups and invited talks.

Past Positions

2024 - 2025 **Hybrid Robotics Lab, UC Berkeley**
Research Associate, Reinforcement Learning
Principle Investigator: Prof. Koushil Sreenath
Worked on training policies for stylized locomotion humanoid robots. Work culminated in a technical report. (more info)

2022 **DeepMind**
Student Researcher
Principal Investigators: Atil Iscen (DeepMind) and Prof. Koushil Sreenath (UC Berkeley)
Worked on training infrastructure for humanoid robot locomotion.

2021 **IBM Research**
Research Intern
Manager: Dr. Alberto Valdes Garcia
Worked on reinforcement learning for optimizing millimeter-wave communications in 5G cellular networks.

2020 **Dropbox**
Software Engineer Intern
Manager: Tom Kleinpeter
Worked on ML infrastructure for a Chrome extension that organizes tabs based on personalized user activity. Built data-logging infrastructure, trained and served ML models, and built front-end components.

2020 **Facebook AI Research**
Software Engineer Intern
Manager: Prof. Dhruv Batra
Worked on AI infrastructure for AI Habitat. Trained semantic segmentation models and wrote a shader to render meshes based on semantic "colors".

2019 **Amazon**
Software Engineer Intern
Manager: Michael Lou
Developed novel neural network architectures with an inductive bias for segmenting images along linear boundaries for downstream augmented reality features in the Amazon app.

2018 **Georgia Tech Research Institute**
Research Associate
Manager: Dr. Jason Zutty
Developed neural network primitives for a genetic algorithm-based optimization library.

Publications and Preprints

1. Takara E. Truong, **Michael Piseno**, Zhaoming Xie, and C. Karen Liu. "PDP: Physics-Based Character Animation via Diffusion Policy". In Proceedings of SIGGRAPH Asia, 2024. DOI.

2. Qingzhou Lu*, Yao Feng*, Baiyu Shi, **Michael Piseno**, Zhenan Bao, and C. Karen Liu. "GentleHumanoid: Learning Upper-body Compliance for Contact-rich Human and Object Interaction". 2025. (Under review)

3. Tara Sadjadpour*, **Michael Piseno***, Diana Poplacenel, Justin Yu, Abigail O'Niell, Rika Antovona, and Jeannette Bohg. "Topological and Geometric Representations of Deformable Point Clouds". 2025. (Under review)

4. **Michael Piseno**, Zhongyu Li, Alejandro Escontrela, Pieter Abbeel, Koushil Sreenath, Xue Bin Peng, and Atil Iscen. "Learning Stylized Locomotion for Bipedal Robots with Adversarial Motion Priors". Technical Report, 2025. Available at https://www.michaelpiseno.com/biped_ctrl.github.io/static/stylized_biped_ctrl.pdf.

Awards and Honors

Apr 2022 **National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NDSEG) Fellowship**
Graduate fellowship award to pursue research on intelligent robotics. Acceptance rate: 2%

May 2021 **Highest Honors, BS Computer Science, Georgia Institute of Technology**
Graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology with a BS in Computer Science with highest honors.

Jul 2020 **Intel SHPE Undergraduate Scholarship**
Scholarship sponsored by Intel awarded through the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). More info here.

Jul 2020 **Tapia Conference Scholarship**
Awarded a scholarship to cover the cost of attendance to the ACM Richard Tapia Conference.

Jul 2020 **LSAMP Scholarship**
Scholarship awarded primarily to underrepresented students in STEM. Awarded by the LSAMP program through Georgia Tech.

Apr 2020 **Generation Google Scholarship**
Awarded by Google for accomplishment in Computer Science. More info here.

Nov 2019 **Cisco Enterprise Scholarship**
Awarded a Cisco Enterprise Business Group Scholarship through a program in Georgia Tech's College of Computing.

Aug 2019 **SHPE Undergraduate Scholarship**
Awarded a SHPE Undergraduate Scholarship for my involvement in the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). This scholarship was awarded to roughly three dozen students.

Teaching

2021 **Stanford University**
Course Assistant (Autumn 2021)
CS 221: Artificial Intelligence: Principles and Techniques
Topics: Machine Learning, Search, Markov Decision Processes, Game Theory, Constraint Satisfaction Problems, Bayesian Networks, Logic.

2019 - 2021 **Georgia Institute of Technology**
Teaching Assistant (Autumn 2019 - Spring 2021)
CS 7643: Deep Learning
Topics: CNNs, RNNs, Transformers, Generative modeling, Deep RL.