# Pranshu Malik

Naturalistic Control — in Humans, also for Robots

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#### **Interests**

 $Sensorimotor\ Neuroscience \cdot Robotics \cdot Internal\ Models \cdot Generalizable\ Control \cdot Perception \cdot Embodied\ Intelligence$ 

#### **Education**

#### Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology

Okinawa, Japan

Ph.D. in Neuroscience and Robotics

Jan. '25 — Present

- Rotation project in the embodied cognitive science unit on investigating the role of noise in the emergence of structure and complex patterns in a wet artificial life setup
- Planned rotations with cognitive neurorobotics and neural computation research units

## **University of Western Ontario**

London, Canada

M.Sc. in Neuroscience; cGPA: 4.0/4.0

Sept. '22 — Oct. '24

- Thesis title: The Nature of Reflexes in Online Planning and Control ☑ [link]
- Advisors: Andrew Pruszynski, Paul Gribble
- Recipient of the Vector Scholarship in Artificial Intelligence (\$17.5k) and the BrainsCAN Graduate Studentship (\$50k)
- Selected coursework: Principles of Neuroscience, Reinforcement Learning

## **University of Toronto**

Toronto, Canada

B.A.Sc. in Electrical Engineering; cGPA: 3.92/4.0

Sept. '17 — Apr. '22

- Engineering International Scholar: received a full tuition fee waiver for the entire duration of the program (\$229k)
- Recipient of the Adel S. Sedra Gold Medal for achieving the highest cumulative average in the graduating class
- Graduated with High Honors and Minor in Robotics and Mechatronics; Dean's Honor List in all semesters
- Selected coursework (\*graduate-level): Linear Control Systems, Signals and Systems, Fields and Waves, Digital Systems,
  Digital Signal Processing, Probability, \*Random Processes, \*Sensory Communication, System Mapping, Machine Learning,
  Real-time Control Systems, Robot Modeling and Control, Mechatronics, Philosophy of Religion

# Selected Research & Professional Experiences

### Graduate Student, Western Institute for Neuroscience

London, Canada

Sensorimotor Superlab

Sept. '22 — Oct. '24

- Investigated the coupling between feedback and voluntary motor control by carefully estimating update times for both modalities; also tried investigating the reliance of implicit adaptation on motor variability
- Led multiple discussions on motor planning and control; also mentored and trained undergraduate research assistants

# Navigation Engineering Intern, Zebra Technologies

Mississauga, Canada

Path-Planning and Control Team

May '20 - Aug. '21

- Critiqued, implemented, and tested auto-navigation algorithms from literature for deployment on inventory scanning robots
- Redesigned path planner to improve aisle scan coverage and efficiency by robustly handling obstructions and curved aisles
- Developed tools for rapidly prototyping planners and controllers and benchmarking their performance; written in Julia
- Reviewed and fixed real-life behavior and performance bugs; identified, proposed, and applied planner improvements

# Undergraduate Research Assistant, Motion Adaptation Science Lab

Toronto, Canada

Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

May '18 - Aug. '18

- Developed finite element models (FEMs) of the lower leg for the computational study of electrostimulation applications
- Streamlined development workflow of bio-electric FEM studies from MRI data using Inventor, Comsol, and Matlab

#### **Invited Talks & Posters**

- 2. Stretch Reflexes Quickly Integrate Spatial Task Constraints During Reaching. Invited talk, Department of Cognitive and Brain Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar, 2024.
- 1. Computing Error-bounded Inverse Kinematics Solutions in Fixed-time using Low-Power Analog Circuits. Podium presentation, Undergraduate Engineering Research Day, University of Toronto, 2021. 2 [slides]

#### **Technical Skills**

Python · Julia · Matlab · C/C++ · Git · Typst · LaTeX · OpenCV · ROS · Graphics Design · 3D Design · Machining

## Miscellaneous

**Big Ideas Committee:** Led a club that is a part of the Society for Neuroscience Graduate Students (SONGS) at Western University, which historically organized panel events focusing on broad research trends or functioned as a neuroscience journal club. In my year, we pivoted the club's focus by also including graduate students in philosophy and hosted didactic discussions as well as regular sharewhat-you-read sessions on topics like philosophy of science and consciousness. We also organized a student-led panel discussion on the scientific and philosophical study of consciousness attended by 40+ graduate students and postdocs.

**Hobbies and Side Interests:** Photography and painting; systems thinking; citizen science; cognitive architectures; philosophy of mind, memory, and action; Indian philosophy; Sanskrit language; yoga and meditation.

**Sports and Outdoor Activities:** Love playing cricket and badminton, and have also played in local cricket leagues. I also enjoy running, hiking, camping, and long walks in nature.