

BRYON TJANAKA

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Robotics, (Hierarchical) Reinforcement/Imitation Learning, Clustering, Human-Robot Collaboration, Algorithms

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Computer Science Aug. 2020 - Present
University of Southern California (Los Angeles, California, USA)
Advisor: Stefanos Nikolaidis

B.S. Computer Science (ICS Honors program, AI specialization) Sept. 2017 - Jun. 2020
University of California, Irvine (Irvine, California, USA)
GPA: 4.0/4.0 • GRE: 170/170 quant., 161/170 verbal, 5/6 writing

High School Aug. 2013 - May 2017
Bellarmine College Preparatory (San Jose, California, USA)
GPA: 4.3/4.0 • SAT: 2350/2400

HONORS AND AWARDS

USC Graduate School Fellowship for Incoming Students Feb. 2020
Summa Cum Laude, UCI School of ICS Jun. 2020
NSF GRFP Honorable Mention Mar. 2020
UCI Dean's Honor List Sept. 2017 - Mar. 2020
UCI Regents' Scholarship Sept. 2017 - Jun. 2020
UCI UROP Fellowship for *Improving Molecular Simulations* Jan. 2020
UCI UROP Fellowship for *Improving Molecular Simulations* Jan. 2019
UCI UROP Honorary Fellowship for *Implications of Mall Security Robots* Jan. 2018
7th/88 at ACM ICPC 2019 SoCal Regional Nov. 2019
9th/98 at ACM ICPC 2018 SoCal Regional Nov. 2018
16th/105 at ACM ICPC 2017 SoCal Regional Nov. 2017
39th/4103 in world, 4th/202 in US at IEEEExtreme 13.0 Oct. 2019
74th/4049 in world, 7th/188 in US at IEEEExtreme 12.0 Oct. 2018
Best Entrepreneurial Hack at HackUCI V hackathon Feb. 2019
John Hollowell Composition Program Award for Best Advocacy Project, UCI School of Humanities May 2018
2017 VEX Robotics High School World Champion Apr. 2017
Recognition for VEX Robotics Championship, Rep. Ro Khanna, CA-17 Aug. 2017

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant Aug. 2020 - Present
ICAROS Lab, University of Southern California
Advisor: Stefanos Nikolaidis

Undergraduate Researcher Oct. 2019 - Jun. 2020
Intelligent Dynamics Lab, UC Irvine
Advisor: Professor Roy Fox

Undergraduate Researcher Oct. 2018 - Jun. 2020
Mobley Lab, UC Irvine
PI: Professor David Mobley, Graduate Mentor: Jessica Maat

Independent Undergraduate Researcher Oct. 2017 - Jun. 2018
Mentor: Professor Caesar Sereseres

Software Engineering Intern, Google Ads Jun. 2020 - Aug. 2020
Google, Inc. (Mountain View, California, USA)

Software Engineering Intern , Google Ads Google, Inc. (Mountain View, California, USA)	Jun. 2019 - Sept. 2019
Engineering Practicum Intern , Google Assistant Google, Inc. (Mountain View, California, USA)	Jun. 2018 - Sept. 2018

PRESENTATIONS

Improving Molecular Simulations through Force Field Development and Computational Techniques 2019 UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium	
Implications of Mall Security Robots on Privacy of Shoppers 2018 UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium	

ATTENDED CONFERENCES

ICLR 2020 (virtual; received travel award)	April 2020
UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium	May 2018, May 2019

SELECTED PROJECTS

Actor-Critic by Committee (ACBC) Oct. 2019 - Jun. 2020

Associated with: Undergraduate Researcher at Intelligent Dynamics Lab

Hierarchical reinforcement learning algorithms typically use a high-level controller to compose sub-policies sequentially or combinationally. Inspired by work on ensembles, we developed an algorithm, ACBC, in which outputs from multiple sub-policies, or experts, are composed with a linear combination. As the experts can control their weights, ACBC performs both sequential and combinational composition without a high-level controller.

Improving Molecular Simulations through Force Field Development and Computational Techniques Oct. 2018 - Jun. 2020

Associated with: Undergraduate Researcher at Mobley Lab

smirnoff99Frosst is a molecular dynamics force field, a set of parameters which defines how atoms interact in a system. Like many force fields, smirnoff99Frosst lacks parameters for improper torsions, which determine the planarity of molecules. This project involved building a pipeline which analyzes the eMolecules database of 6 million molecules to create new parameters, thus increasing the accuracy of smirnoff99Frosst.

Utilize All Parameters May 2019 - Jun. 2019

Associated with: Undergraduate Researcher at Mobley Lab

To benchmark a molecular dynamics force field, one needs a set of molecules which exercises all of the force field's parameters. Here, a greedy solution to the weighted set cover problem was used to select such a set for the smirnoff99Frosst force field from the eMolecules database of 6 million molecules. This work is included in a pending publication.

Multithreaded Affinity Clustering Jun. 2019 - Sept. 2019

Associated with: Software Engineering Intern at Google

Affinity clustering is a clustering algorithm which approximates the high quality of hierarchical agglomerative clustering while running in linear time. In this project, a multithreaded version of affinity clustering was implemented, optimized, and evaluated. Ultimately, this algorithm has applications in Ads and Search quality. This work is included in two pending publications.

Safeline Feb. 2019

Associated with: Best Entrepreneurial Hack at HackUCI V hackathon

Falls are one of the leading causes of injury for the elderly. In this hackathon project, a Raspberry Pi, a camera, and OpenCV were used to detect falls and send alerts to an iPhone.

3P Agent Crawl Tool Jun. 2018 - Sept. 2018

Associated with: Engineering Practicum Intern at Google

Third-party (3P) agents are plugins which provide additional functionality to Google Assistant. This project involved building a tool which evaluates an agent by analyzing its responses to thousands of relevant queries.

Implications of Mall Security Robots on the Privacy of Shoppers

Oct. 2017 - Jun. 2018

Associated with: Independent Undergraduate Researcher with Dr. Sereseres

This independent project explored several privacy concerns which arise as a result of the introduction of security robots into malls.

SELECTED COURSES

Neural Networks and Deep Learning	Spring 2020
Optimal Control and Reinforcement Learning	Winter 2020
Formal Languages and Automata	Spring 2019

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Senator USC Graduate Student Government	Aug. 2020 - Present
Webmaster USC Viterbi Graduate Student Association	Aug. 2020 - Present
Internal Vice President, Competitor ACM, UC Irvine Chapter	Sept. 2017 - Feb. 2020
Speaker, Volunteer Google Girl-Powered VEX Robotics Workshop	Jul. 2017, Aug. 2018, Jun. 2019