

THOMAS CONNER, Ph.D.

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Communication (Science Studies)

University of California-San Diego, 2021

- *Dissertation*: “Learning to Live With Ghosts: Holopresence and the Historical Emergence of Real Virtuality Technologies”
- *Committee*: Dr. David Serlin (chair), Dr. Lisa Cartwright, Dr. Kelly Gates, Dr. Cathy Gere, Prof. Tara Knight

M.A. in Communication

University of Illinois-Chicago, 2013

- *Thesis*: “Rei Toei Lives!: Hatsune Miku and the Design of the Virtual Pop Star”
- *Committee*: Dr. Steve Jones (chair), Dr. Jason Leigh, Dr. Adrienne Massanari

B.A. in Mass Communication

University of Oklahoma, 1993

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Visiting Assistant Professor of Media Studies

The University of Tulsa, 2023-2024

- Teaching lower- and upper-division courses in the Media Studies department (Media Inquiry, Media History, Media & Pop Culture, two Advanced Seminars)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed articles

- Conner, Thomas & Jason Archer. *In peer review*. “Haptic Holograms: The Liminal Communication of Emerging Visio-haptic Apparatuses.”
- Conner, Thomas. *In progress*. “The Construction of Holopresence in TV’s *Alter Ego*.”
- Conner, Thomas. *In progress*. “Walt Whitman, Media Theorist.”
- Conner, Thomas. 2023. “Rock and Roll Will Never Die: Holograms and the Spectrality of Performance.” *Spectator*, 43 (1): 52-57.
- Conner, Thomas. 2020. “Pepper’s Ghost and the Augmented Reality of Modernity.” *Journal of Science & Popular Culture*, 3 (1): 57-79.
- Conner, Thomas. 2015. “‘Our Unseen Friend’: Early Radio and the Tuning In of Woody Guthrie’s Performing Persona.” *Woody Guthrie Annual*, 1 (1).

- Conner, Thomas & Steve Jones. 2014. “Art to Commerce: The Trajectory of Popular Music Criticism.” *IASPM@Journal (International Association for the Study of Popular Music)*, 4 (2).
- Conner, Thomas. 2002. “Dear Reader: A Pop Critic Responds to the Day’s Mail.” *ARTicles*, 7: 138-149.

Peer-reviewed book chapters

- Conner, Thomas. A chapter in progress for Zizi Papacharissi (Ed.), *Connective AI: Technology, Play, and Democracy* (forthcoming 2026).
- Conner, Thomas and Sigrid Schmalzer. 2018. “Technology.” In Alyssa Botelho, Daniel S. Chard & Sigrid Schmalzer (Eds.), *Science for the People: Documents from America’s Movement of Radical Scientists, 1969-1989*. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press: 155-176.
- Conner, Thomas. 2015. “Hatsune Miku, 2.0Pac and Beyond: Rewinding and Fast-forwarding the Virtual Pop Star.” In Whiteley, S. & Rambarran, S. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Virtuality*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press: 129-147.
- Conner, Thomas. 2007. “Getting Along: Woody Guthrie and Oklahoma’s Red Dirt Musicians.” In Davis Joyce (Ed.), *Alternative Oklahoma: Contrarian Views of the Sooner State*. Norman, Okla.: Univ. of Okla. Press: 87-112.

Book reviews

- Conner, Thomas. 2022. Review of *Photography from the Turin Shroud to the Turing Machine* by Yanai Toister, *Technology & Culture*, July.
- Conner, Thomas. 2019. Review of *Robot Rights* by David J. Gunkel, *New Media & Society*, January.
- Conner, Thomas. 2016. Review of *Feed-Forward: On the Future of Twenty-First-Century Media* by Mark B.N. Hansen. *JHistory, H-Net Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, December.
- Conner, Thomas. 2014. Review of *Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism* by Devon Powers. H-1960s; *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, April.
- Conner, Thomas. 2014. Review of *How Does It Feel? Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and the Philosophy of Rock and Roll* by Grant Maxwell. H-1960s; *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, November.

Other research

- Conner, Thomas. 2001. “From Instinct to Intuition: Tracking Woody’s HD.” Paper and notes commissioned by the Woody Guthrie Archives, now part of the collection.

Anthologized journalism

- Conner, Thomas. 2015. “Dispatches From the Weedpatch Camp.” In Mason, Michael & Holly Wall (Eds.), *A Voice Was Sounding: Selected Works from This Land, Vol. 5*. Tulsa, Okla.: This Land Press.
- Conner, Thomas. 2014. “The Ghost of Karen Dalton.” In Mason, Michael & Holly Wall (Eds.), *A Voice Was Sounding: Selected Works from This Land, Vols. 3 & 4*. Tulsa, Okla.: This Land Press.

- Conner, Thomas. 2012. “Heaven and Heart: The Tense Past of Michael Been.” In Mason, Michael & Mark Brown (Eds.), *A Voice Was Sounding: Selected Works from This Land Vols. 1 & 2*. Tulsa, Okla.: This Land Press.

Non-academic books

- Conner, Thomas, John Wooley & Mark Brown. 1999. *Forever Lounge: A Laid-Back Guide to the Languid Sounds of Lounge Music*. Iola, Wis.: Antique Trader Publications.

Plays

- Conner, Thomas and John Wooley. 2009. “Time Changes Everything.” A play chronicling two fictional conversations between folksinger Woody Guthrie and country bandleader Bob Wills. Premiered June 25 as a featured production at the annual SummerStage festival in the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, followed by a dozen regional productions through April 2013.

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS & HONORS

Suraj Israni Center for Cinematic Arts (SICCA)

UC San Diego, 2023

- Research fellowship: funding for research and travel expenses

Institute of Arts and Humanities

UC San Diego, 2019

- Graduate fellowship: funding for research and travel expenses

Science Studies

UC San Diego, Spring and fall 2018

- Graduate fellowships: funding for research and writing time

Communication

UC San Diego, Fall 2017

- Graduate fellowship: funding for research and writing time

Science for the People

University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 2014

- Assisted in collection of historical materials and aided in organization of a one-time reunion/conference of this organization.

National Arts Journalism Program

Columbia University, 2000-2001

- Conducted research at the Woody Guthrie Archives in New York City throughout this fellowship at Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism.

Pulliam Journalism Fellowship

The Arizona Republic (Phoenix, Ariz.), 1993

- Covered newsroom features beats during this summer internship and fellowship.

Arts criticism awards

- First Place in Arts Criticism at the 2002 Katie Awards (Dallas Press Club), plus consistent top-three showings in the annual awards from both Associated Press/Oklahoma News Executives and the Society of Professional Journalists.

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

- Conner, Thomas and Jason Archer. 2023. Co-chairs of a panel, “Manifesting and Mediating Cyborg Ecologies.” 4S (Society for Social Studies of Science), Nov. 8-11, Honolulu.
- Conner, Thomas and Jason Archer. 2022. “Touching Holograms: Reaching out for the Feel of Visual Media.” ICA pre-conference, “Reimagining Communication,” May 25, online.
- Conner, Thomas. 2021. “Rock and Roll Will Never Die: Holograms and the Spectrality of Performance.” First Forum 2021, USC Cinema & Media Studies, Oct. 29, online.
- Conner, Thomas. 2020. “Pepper’s Ghost and the Augmented Reality of Modernity.” ZOOMPOSIUM: Performance, Science & Technology, a virtual conference organized by the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science, Nov. 27, online.
- Jones, Steve, Andrea Guzman, Thomas Conner & Ekaterina Pashevich. 2020. “Human-Machine Communication: Ethical Perspectives,” a panel at AoIR 2020, Oct. 5, online.
- Conner, Thomas. 2020. “The Gesture of Holography.” Invited to join the panel “Holographic Art and the Animated Image: Histories and Conservation” at the College Art Association annual conference, Feb. 12, Chicago.
- Conner, Thomas, Songyi Lee, et al. 2018. “Presence in Practice: A Discussion About Presence via Telepresence Tech.” One of a dozen discussants on this panel of worldwide scholars assembled virtually for the attendees at the PRESENCE 2018 annual conference, May 21, Prague.
- Conner, Thomas. 2017. “Holopresence: A Theory for Augmented Modernity.” Presented at the International Communication Association annual conference, May 27, San Diego.
- Conner, Thomas. 2017. “Holopresence: A Theory for Augmented Modernity.” Presented at the biennial UCSD Science Studies Graduate Conference, May 19, UCSD, San Diego.
- Conner, Thomas. 2017. “Holograms: Historical Ghosts in the Machines.” Presented at the History of Science Graduate Student Seminar, Feb. 25, UCLA, Los Angeles.
- Conner, Thomas. 2016. “‘Our Unseen Friend’: Early Radio and the Tuning In of Woody Guthrie’s Performing Persona.” Presented at the Woody Guthrie Symposium,

April 30, The Univ. of Tulsa, Tulsa, Okla.

- Conner, Thomas. 2015. "All Eyez on Me: Virtual Performers and New Media Memories." Presented at 2015 Cultural Studies Assoc. 13th annual Cultural Studies Conference, May 21-24, Riverside, Calif.
- Conner, Thomas. 2014. "Hatsune Miku and the Design of the Virtual Pop Star." Presented at the 4S (Society for Social Studies of Science) / ESOCITE Joint Meeting, Aug. 20-23, Buenos Aires.
- Conner, Thomas. 2014. "Virtual Pop Stars and the Digitization of Performance." Presented at Theorizing the Web 2014, April 25-26, New York City.
- Conner, Thomas. 2013. "Hatsune Miku and the Design of the Virtual Pop Spectacle." Presented at 2013 Cultural Studies Assoc. 11th annual Cultural Studies Conference, May 23-26, Chicago.
- Conner, Thomas. 2012. "An Unaccompanied Movement?: Listening for Protest Songs at Occupy Wall Street." Presented at the National Communication Association conference, Nov. 15-18, 2012, in Orlando, Fla.
- Conner, Thomas. 2012. "Rei Toei Lives!: Hatsune Miku and the Design of the Virtual Pop Star." Presented at VisCom 26 (visual communication conference), June 20-24, 2012, in Midway, Utah.
- Conner, Thomas. 2012. "Oklahoma's Red Dirt Music and Its Debt to Woody." Presented at the Woody at One Hundred: The Woody Guthrie Centennial Celebration, 1912-2012, March 10, 2012, The Univ. of Tulsa, Tulsa, Okla.

EDITORIAL SERVICE

- Judge for the Great Plains Journalism Awards, 2023.
- Ad hoc peer reviewer for the *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, 2019-present.
- Ad hoc peer reviewer for *New Media & Society*, 2014-present.
- Annual reviewer of conference paper submissions for the Western States Communication Association, 2016-present.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition (LCHC)

UC San Diego, 2013-2018

- Speaker and participant in this social-sciences lab, founded by Mike Cole
- Presented myself as a digital hologram for a simulation experiment in June 2015

Creative and Collaboration Information Technology (CCIT)

University of Illinois-Chicago, 2012-2014

- Collected, summarized, and presented historical information about the impacts of technologies on the American workplace

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer

UC San Diego, 2021 to 2023

- Hired immediately upon completion of my Ph.D. to teach entry-level courses and advanced seminars in the Communication department.

Associate Instructor

UC San Diego, 2018 to 2021

- Designed upper-level courses (Arts Criticism in America) and adapted listed offerings (Performance & Cultural Studies) for the Communication department. My protest-song course, Music as Social Action, has been offered as both a junior seminar and, because of its popularity, a larger lecture.

Instructor

Muir College Writing Program @ UC San Diego, 2016 to 2017, 2019 to 2021, 2023

- Taught both segments of this course in basic argumentation, Critical Writing I & II, and designed themes for the latter (“Ghosts in the Machine,” “Media & Materiality”).

Teaching Assistant

UC San Diego, 2014 to 2016

- Led autonomous discussion sections amid larger lecture courses (Introduction to Communication, Situated Practices, The Internet Industry) in Communication.

Adjunct Instructor

University of Illinois-Chicago, 2008 to 2009

- Redesigned the Interviewing Skills course in the Communication department.

Faculty adviser

The Collegian @ University of Tulsa, 2004 to 2005

- Advised student journalists in the production of this campus newspaper.

Adjunct Instructor

University of Tulsa, 2000 to 2005

- Taught journalism courses (Features Writing, Editing for Print Media) alongside my journalism career.

Adjunct Instructor

Tulsa Community College, 1995 to 2000

- Taught English courses (Freshman Composition I, English Literature) alongside my journalism career.

PROFESSIONAL MEDIA EXPERIENCE

Guest columnist

Currently @ Tulsa World

- Occasional public intellectualism and cultural criticism.

Pop Music Critic

2010 to 2013 @ Chicago Sun-Times

- Featured columnist, writing music criticism, features, and news, as well as producing multimedia interviews and narratives, across the Sun-Times platform (print editions, website, my own featured blog), plus commentary on cultural trends and issues.

1995 to 2002 @ Tulsa World

- Award-winning features coverage and arts criticism in this mid-sized market, writing everything from weekly previews and countless CD reviews to breaking news and long-form features.

Assistant Features Editor

2005 to 2007 @ Chicago Sun-Times

- Planning, assigning, editing and proofing of several daily and weekly entertainment sections. Managing small staffs of writers (in-house and freelance), copy editors and designers, as well as budgeting. I also served concurrently as **Music Editor**, overseeing the staff pop-music critic, two staff writers, and a stable of freelance writers, assigning and budgeting features and reviews.

2002 to 2005 @ Tulsa World

- Planning, assigning, editing and proofing of entertainment and lifestyles sections. Co-managing a staff of 21 writers, copy editors and designers.

Online Features Editor

2007 to 2010 @ Chicago Sun-Times

- Managed all features content at *suntimes.com*, including tailoring print stories for optimal web readership, generating engaging original content. Improved external performance (boosted unique visits, SEO, social media outreach) and internal (writer training, editor liaison).

Event producer

Spot Music Awards, Tulsa, Okla., 1999 to 2005

- Created, planned, and produced this annual awards ceremony recognizing local musicians and marketing the Tulsa World's weekly A&E tab, the Spot. Boosted our visibility in a key demographic, advertising opportunities, and Friday readership.

Freelance writer

- Long- and short-form features have been published in The Washington Post, DownBeat magazine, Obit magazine, Tulsa Voice, and This Land magazine. Other work has included a history of the Cain's Ballroom (Tulsa, Okla.) written for the

venue, as well as bios and press materials for bands (e.g., the Boondogs, Flick).

Radio host

KWGS, 89.5-FM (NPR affiliate, University of Tulsa), 1999 to 2005

- Writing and delivering brief music commentaries called “Warped Vinyl.”

Early experience includes a year as a **Copy Editor** (Tulsa World, 1994 to 1995), a **Reporter** covering three communities (Community World, 1993 to 1994), and a **Staff Reporter** covering all municipal beats (The Del City Sun, 1989 to 1990).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Guest on the *Star Warsologies* podcast, talking about “Holograms and *Star Wars*,” episode posted Oct. 1, 2022.
- Comic-Con panel, “From Scifi Imaginary to Tech Reality: The News Science of Holograms,” moderating with Prof. Tara Knight (U Colorado) and Raffi Kryszek (Proto Hologram), July 22, 2022, San Diego.
- Guest on *Hurdy Gurdy Songs*, Radio Free Brooklyn, talking songs about 9/11, Sept. 14, 2021.
- Keynote address, presented at the awarding of the inaugural Changing World Prize, Oct. 11, 2015, at the Woody Guthrie Center, Tulsa, Okla.
- Public talk, “Woody@100: One Life, Many Legacies,” presented Oct. 19, 2012, at St. Xavier Univ., Chicago.
- *Numerous media appearances in Chicago and Tulsa in my role as a culture journalist*

REFERENCES

Dr. Ben Peters, Hazel Rogers Associate Professor of Media Studies, Univ. of Tulsa

- **ben-peters@utulsa.edu**, (918) 631-2332
- 800 S. Tucker Drive, Tulsa, OK 74104
- *Dr. Peters is the department chair during my tenure as a visiting professor.*

Dr. David Serlin, Associate Professor of Communication, UC San Diego

- **dserlin@ucsd.edu**, (858) 534-6327
- MCC 105, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093
- *Dr. Serlin was my dissertation adviser and committee chair.*

Dr. Steve Jones, UIC Distinguished Professor of Communication, University of Illinois–Chicago

- **sjones@uic.edu**, (312) 996-3187
- 1007 W. Harrison Street, 1148A BSB, Chicago, IL 60607
- *Dr. Jones was my master’s thesis adviser and committee chair. We have co-authored a paper together.*

Prof. Tara Knight, Associate Professor of Critical Media Practices, University of Colorado–Boulder

- **tara.knight@colorado.edu**, (303) 492-5007 (main)
- CASE Building, UCB 200, 1725 Euclid Ave., Boulder, CO 80309-0200
- *Prof. Knight was a member of my dissertation committee. She is also familiar with my master's thesis work, advising me informally on hologram production.*

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