

# THOMAS CONNER, Ph.D.

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## Curriculum vitae & professional resumé

### 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

#### **Affiliate Professor of Media Studies**

The University of Tulsa, 2024-2025

- Furthering a qualitative research project at a local museum, assisting in a redesign of practical journalism courses, and leading workshops with student journalists.

#### **Adjunct Professor of English**

The University of Central Oklahoma, 2024

- Teaching foundational courses in academic writing and research.

### PUBLICATIONS

#### **Peer-reviewed articles**

- Archer, Jason & Thomas Conner. 2024. “Haptic Holograms: The Liminal Communication of Emerging Visio-haptic Apparatuses.” *International Journal of Communication*, 18: 1-19.

- Conner, Thomas. *In progress*. “Constructing Holopresence in TV’s *Alter Ego*.”
- 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): 18-40.
- 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): 7-23.
- 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 & 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 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**, Pulliam Charitable Trust, 1993

- Covered features beats during this summer internship and fellowship at *The Arizona Republic* (Phoenix).

### **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.” UCSD Science Studies Graduate Conference, May 19, UCSD, San Diego.
- Conner, Thomas. 2017. “Holograms: Historical Ghosts in the Machines.” 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.” Woody Guthrie Symposium, April 30, The Univ. of Tulsa, Tulsa, Okla.
- Conner, Thomas. 2015. “All Eyez on Me: Virtual Performers and New Media Memories.” 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." 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." Theorizing the Web 2014, April 25-26, New York City.
- Conner, Thomas. 2013. "Hatsune Miku and the Design of the Virtual Pop Spectacle." 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." 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." VisCom 26 (visual communication), June 20-24, 2012, in Midway, Utah.

## **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**

### **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)

### **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, was 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.

## **SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **Campus**

- Representing TU in conferences by the Oklahoma Media Center, a conglomerate of state journalists sharing professional intel and best practices, 2024-present.
- Student-choice speaker committee (Mary Gray), Science Studies, UCSD, 2017.
- Organizer and speaker, Graduate Enrichment, Communication, UCSD, 2015 & 2016.

- Undergraduate admissions committee member, Communication, UCSD, 2015.

### **Editorial**

- Ad hoc peer reviewer for the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2024-present.
- Ad hoc peer reviewer for the *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, 2019-2023.
- Ad hoc peer reviewer for *New Media & Society*, 2014-present.
- Judge for the Great Plains Journalism Awards, 2023.
- Annual reviewer of conference paper submissions for the Western States Communication Association, 2016-2021.

## **PROFESSIONAL MEDIA EXPERIENCE**

### **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.

### **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).

### **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.

### **Assistant Features Editor**

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.

### **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.

### **Pop Music Critic**

1995 to 2002 @ *Tulsa World*

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

### **Freelance writer**

- Long- and short-form features have been published in *The Washington Post*, *DownBeat* magazine, *Obit* magazine, *Tulsa Voice*, *Oklahoma Today*, the *Oklahoma Gazette*, and *This Land* magazine. Other work has included a history of the Cain's Ballroom for the venue's site, as well as bios and press materials for bands (e.g., the Boondogs, Flick).

### **Radio host**

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

- Writing and delivering brief music commentaries called "Warped Vinyl."

Early experience: **Copy Editor** (*Tulsa World*, 1994 to 1995), **Reporter** (*Community World*, 1993 to 1994), **Staff Reporter** (*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.
- 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*

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