

# Curriculum Vitae

Michael Wahba

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## **Education**

**University of Southern California - Master of Fine Arts, Interactive Media (2024)**

- Thesis Paper: [\*Egregore: De-Mystifying the Adventure Game\*](#)

**University of Calgary - Bachelor of Science, Computer Science (2021)**

- Concentration in Computer Game Development
- Embedded Certificate in Creative Writing

**University of Calgary - Bachelor of Science, Biological Science (2017)**

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## **Scholarships, Awards and Honours**

**Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences DICE Scholar (2024)**

**USC & Sony Interactive Entertainment Gerald Lawson Scholar (2024)**

**Game Devs of Color Expo Scholar (2024)**

**Richard Sohn Memorial Endowed Scholarship (2023)**

**Cannon-LaChappelle Award in Entrepreneurial Thinking (2020)**

**Alberta Innovates Summer Studentship (2019)**

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## **Professional Experience**

**Electronic Arts Maxis - Software Engineer (June 2024 - Present)**

**Circuit Stream - Game Design Bootcamp Instructor (Feb 2025 - Present)**

**Electronic Arts Maxis - Software Engineer Intern (Summer 2022, Summer 2023)**

**IstoInc. - Lead Writer (Dec. 2019 - Jan. 2021)**

- Wrote the story and character dialogue for [\*Atrio: The Dark Wild\*](#)
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## **Selected Personal Projects**

### **Egregore**

- MFA Thesis Project
- First-person adventure game exploring the use of graph-based grammars as a game mechanic.
- Featured in the [2024 Game Devs of Color Expo](#) and [2024 USC Games Expo](#)

### **Radio Exurbia**

- Adventure driving game featuring a novel world-switching mechanic.

### **Limina**

- Short experiment playing with multiple forms of media in the context of a classic PC adventure game.
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## **Academic/Research Experience**

**The Immersive Archive - Mobile Environmental Media Lab (2022 - 2024)**

- Led the technical development of [\*The Immersive Archive\*](#), an initiative to recreate and preserve the history of XR experiences. *The Immersive Archive* has been showcased at SIGGRAPH (2023) and AWE (2024).

**Exploring the Use of Neural Graphics for Immersive Storytelling - Mobile Environmental Media Lab (2024)**

- Research project funded by USC's Spark Grant to explore the uses of Neural Radiance fields and Gaussian Splats for immersive storytelling. Outcome was an interactive project, [\*The Virtual Garden\*](#), and a set of [tools and workflow](#) for

creating immersive narratives with Gaussian Splats. Our work will be presented at DevFestYYC (2024).

#### **Unreal Engine Graph Database Integration - LINDSAY Lab (2021)**

- Research project conducted in the LINDSAY Lab at the University of Calgary developing an [Unreal Engine plugin](#) which connects a game instance to a Neo4j graph database for runtime queries. Results of this project were presented in a session at the 2021 Game Industry Conference.

#### **Lifebrush -UCalgary, LINDSAY Lab (2020)**

- Research project conducted in the LINDSAY Lab at the University of Calgary extending [Lifebrush](#), a VR tool for simulating multi-agent systems, and creating an interactive museum about COVID-19. Outcome was an undergraduate [research paper](#).

#### **International Genetically Engineered Machines (iGEM) - University of Calgary (2019)**

- Was a member of the [2019 University of Calgary iGEM team](#) where we researched a novel chlorophyll purifying process by modifying naturally occurring proteins. Our team had [great success](#) at the competition coming in second place overall in the undergraduate track. I was selected by the team to be one of the presenters in the competition's jamboree.

#### **Research Assistant - Animal Physiology Lab (2016 - 2017)**

- Conducted a year-long research project in Dr. Hamid Habibi's Physiology Lab investigating the effects of Sulfolane on the embryonic development of Zebrafish. I presented my work at the Biological Science Undergraduate Research Symposium where I won the award for "Best Presentation" in the Zoology track. Our work also resulted in a [publication](#).

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### **Teaching Experience**

#### **Circuit Stream - Game Design Bootcamp Instructor (Feb 2025 - Present)**

- Teaching game design principles and how to apply those principles via prototyping in Unreal Engine. Includes technical skills working in-engine, design methodologies, and creating documentation and pitch materials.

### **Procedural Expression - USC (2023)**

- Taught lectures on creative coding in Python as a student aide for the class *Procedural Expression* under the supervision of Prof. Mark Bolas at USC.

### **Augmented Reality Masterclass - USC (2022)**

- Taught lectures on XR tools such as Effect House, Lens Studio and Lightship as a student aide for the class *Augmented Reality Masterclass* under the supervision of Prof. Scott Fisher at USC.

### **Seasonal Instructor - Prep101 (2018 - 2019)**

- Taught students course material and strategies to excel on the Psychology/Sociology portion of the Medical College Admission Test.

### **Summer Science Camp Counselor - Webber Academy (2019)**

- Taught elementary aged students concepts in Biology while leading fun, interactive activities.

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## **Presentations, Events and Speaking Engagements**

### ***Gaussian Splatting for Immersive Storytelling*, DevFestYYC (2024), Calgary, Alberta, Canada.**

- Workshop presentation to be delivered at Google DevFestYYC in Nov. 2024.

### ***Keynote Presentation*, Webber Academy Career Symposium (2024), Calgary, Alberta, Canada.**

- Invited to deliver the keynote presentation at *Webber Academy's* 2024 Career Symposium.

### ***The Immersive Archive*, AWE (2024), Long Beach, California, USA.**

- Exhibit on the Expo floor showcasing *The Immersive Archive* project done in the Mobile Environmental Media Lab at USC.

### ***The Immersive Archive*, SIGGRAPH (2023), Los Angeles, California, USA.**

- Exhibit in the Interactive Pavilion showcasing *The Immersive Archive* project done in the Mobile Environmental Media Lab at USC.

### ***Hey! You Got Graph Data in My Behavior Tree!*, Game Industry Conference (2021), Remote.**

- Presentation at the 2021 Game Industry Conference held in Poznan, Poland. Delivered remotely.

***International Genetically Engineered Machines (iGEM) Jamboree (2019), Boston, Massachusetts, USA.***

- Selected as one of the presenters for the University of Calgary International Genetically Engineered Machines (iGEM) research team.
  - Presented our research on creating a molecular based process for purifying canola oil at the competition.
  - Our team won several awards including “Best Nutritional Project”, “Best Software” and “First Runner-Up” in the Undergraduate track.
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**Publications**

**Poetry**

- Wahba, M. (2020). Prairie Fire. *YYC POP: Poetic Portraits of People*.

**Published Research Articles**

- Z. Abes, N. Fairchild, S. Lin, M. Wahba, K. Xiao and S. S. Fisher, "The Immersive Archive: Archival Strategies for the Sensorama & Sutherland HMD," 2025 IEEE International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and eXtended and Virtual Reality (AIxVR), Lisbon, Portugal, 2025, pp. 307-312, doi: 10.1109/AIxVR63409.2025.00059.
- Shah, S. Wahba, M. Yu, L. Achari, G. Habibi, H. (2019). Health Impact Assessment of Sulfolane on Embryonic Development of Zebrafish (*Danio rerio*).
- Bressan, A. Wahba, M. Dixon, E. Ball, (2018). Completion Pancreatectomy in the Acute Management of Pancreatic Fistula after Pancreaticoduodenectomy: A Systematic Review and Qualitative Synthesis of the Literature.