

Devin J. Balkcom

CONTACT INFORMATION	devin.balkcom@dartmouth.edu <i>Web:</i> rlab.cs.dartmouth.edu/devin	
RESEARCH INTERESTS	Efficient designs and algorithms for robot locomotion and manipulation. How can robotics problems be solved in simple, effective ways?	
EDUCATION	Carnegie Mellon University , Robotics Ph.D. 2004. Advisor Matthew Mason. Johns Hopkins University , B.A. 1998	
APPOINTMENTS	Department Chair , Dartmouth Computer Science Professor , Dartmouth College Associate Professor , Dartmouth College Faculty Co-director of Academic Computing , Dartmouth College Assistant Professor , Dartmouth College	2020 – present 2020 – present 2010-2020 2013 – 2016 2004 – 2010
AWARDS	Dartmouth Dean of Faculty Award for Outstanding Mentoring and Advising, 2020 Dartmouth McLane Family Fellowship, 2010. John M. Manley Huntington Award for Newly Tenured Faculty, 2010. NSF CAREER award, 2006. Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship, 2000	
FUNDING	A Scalable and Accessible System for Automated Coaching of Human Motion co-PI. Total funding \$849k, with PI David Kraemer. Collab. Research: RI: Medium: Robust Assembly of Compliant Modular Robots PI. Total funding \$750k, with Bekris (Rutgers), Kramer (Yale), Wang (Albany). NSF MRI: Acq. of marine multirobot systems for underwater monitoring and construction co-PI. Total funding \$400k, with Quattrini Li, Casana, Zhou, Zhu. RII Track-2 FEC: Computational Methods and Autonomous Robotics Systems for Modeling and Predicting Harmful Cyanobacterial Blooms Total funding \$2.9M, renewable to \$5.9M, P.I. Quattrini Li (senior personnel; single investigator per institution) NSF Cyberlearning: Teaching Human Motion at Population Scale PI. Total funding \$750k, with Kraemer, Zhou, Wang. NSF RI: Computational joinery PI. Total funding \$500k, with Whiting, Wang. MBR Space Settlement Challenge \$16,000. Adobe Research gift \$10,000. Neukom Comp-X grant: Computational design of deployable structures \$15,000. With Emily Whiting. NSF EAGER: Computing compact roadmaps for motion planning P.I. \$150k.	2022 – 2025 2020 – 2023 2019 – 2022 2019 – 2023 2018 – 2021 2018 – 2020 2018 2017 2016 2014 – 2016

	NSF RI: Practical techniques for robotic manipulation of string and wire	2012 – 2016
	P.I. \$482k.	
	Neukom Comp-X grant: Efficient representations for robot motion planning	2012
	\$20k. With Amit Chakrabarti.	
	NSF Infrastructure grant: Digital Imaging Laboratory at Dartmouth	2007 – 2010
	\$480k. With Hany Farid, Fabio Pellacini, Lorie Loeb.	
	NSF CAREER award	2006 – 2011
	\$400k.	
	Department of Justice (ISTS): Mobility assessment for emergency response robots	2006 – 2008
	\$250k. Co-PI with Laura Ray.	
	Department of Justice Byrne Grant: automated assistance for disaster response	2005 – 2007
	\$181k. Co-PI with Laura Ray.	
	Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship	2000 – 2004
	Full graduate student support; approximately \$220k.	
PH.D. STUDENTS	Julien Blanchet	September 2019 – present
	Luyang Zhao	September 2018 – present
	Sam Lensgraf (coadvised by A. Quattrini Li)	September 2018 – present
	Qijia Shao (coadvised by Xia Zhou)	November 2018 – June 2022
	Amy Sniffen	November 2018 – present
	Yinan Zhang	Ph.D. June 2019
	Yu-Han Lyu	Ph.D. June 2016
	Weifu Wang	Ph.D. June 2016
	Andrei Furtuna	Ph.D. June 2011
	Paritosh Kavathekar	Ph.D. June 2011
	Matthew Bell	Ph.D. February 2010
M.S. STUDENTS	Yijia Wu	current
	Evan Honnold	July 2019
	Fahad Hamid	July 2019
	Chang Jo Kim	September 2013
	Zhong Li	June 2013
	Wenyu Lu	August 2011
	Govind Krishnan	September 2009
	Wei Zhang (coadvised by Paul Thompson)	June 2007
	Anne Loomis	June 2006
COURSES TAUGHT	Tuck FWP: Fundamentals of Web Programming	2016 – 2020
	With Hany Farid, designed, developed, and taught a new course for Tuck students interested in the intersection of technology and business. This hands-on-course covers web development in Javascript, HTML, CSS, with a particular emphasis on business applications.	
	Tuck DSA: Data structures and analytics	2017
	With Hany Farid, designed, developed, and taught a new course for Tuck students interested in the intersection of technology and business. This hands-on-course follows the prior FWP course, and covers managing data in databases, representing data for computation in data structures, and data analysis using techniques from computer science and machine learning, with a particular emphasis on business applications.	

CS 1: Introduction to Programming and Computation 2005 – present

I designed and developed a new introductory undergraduate course, intended for both majors and non-majors. The course is programming intensive, and teaches fundamentals of Python programming, introductory object-oriented design, and topics from algorithms and data structures, including linked lists, trees, graphs, breadth-first search, and finite automata.

CS 10: Problem Solving with Object Oriented Programming 2023

Our second-level course in the introductory sequence; implementation of data structures and algorithms.

CS 81: Principles of Robot Design and Programming 2006 – present

This advanced undergraduate course that I developed covers robot design and programming. There are two primary foci: a sequence of labs, and a rigorous introduction to mathematical techniques for analysis. The labs involve four mobile robots that the students program to autonomously explore a maze, and a real industrial robot arm that the student program for manipulation and assembly tasks. The mathematical analysis side covers kinematics, dynamics, the basics of modern control, and analysis of the stability of robot grasping.

CS 76: Artificial Intelligence various years, 2005 – present

This senior undergraduate course introduces basic applications and techniques in the field of Artificial Intelligence. Topics include knowledge representation, A* and iterative deepening search, scheduling, logic and theorem proving, competitive and cooperative games, optimization, probabilistic inference, with applications to robotics, natural language processing, and computer game development.

CS 50: Software Design and Implementation 2011, 2013

This course is an intermediate course in software development and design. Students who have completed the first two introductory courses build a team project in this course, using C and Unix development tools. In the version of the course I developed and taught, students built a multi-player, networked, threaded implementation of a music-teaching game along the lines of the well-known commercial *Guitar Hero* game.

CS 89: Robotics seminar 2005 – 2018

This undergraduate/graduate course presents basic techniques for modeling, simulation, planning, and control of robotic systems. Topics covered include configuration space, kinematics of open and closed chains, representations of rotations in 2D and 3D, homogeneous coordinates, constrained dynamics, the dynamics of friction and contact. Lab work includes programming an industrial robot arm.

CS 98: Senior design project 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

This course represents a culminating experience for graduating senior undergraduates. As part of a team, students design, develop, test, and release a piece of software.

CS 69: Design projects course 2013

This course is a team-project course along the lines of CS 98, but targeted at first-, second-, and third-year students.

UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH
ADVISING

I have supervised more than 80 undergraduates on individual research projects, through the Dartmouth Women in Science Project, Presidential fellowship program, E.E. Just minority research program, and for senior theses.

PROFESSIONAL
COMMITTEES

IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters Associate Editor 2015 – 2018

NSF proposal review panels 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

Workshop on the Algorithmic Foundations of Robotics (WAFR) program committee 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016

IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems associate editor. 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation associate editor. 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

Robotics: Science and Systems program committee. 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012

Reviewer for *The International Journal of Robotics Research*, the *IEEE Transactions on Robotics and Automation*, and other international journals. Judge for FIRST lego robotics competition, and for ASME National Student Mechanical Design Competition. Program committee member for AAAI and *Intelligent Autonomous Systems*. Area and publicity chair for *Robotics: Science and Systems* (2009).

UNDERGRADUATES Numbers in parenthesis indicate number of terms supervised on research or development project.
ADVISED SINCE

2012

1. Maxine Perroni-Scharf (3) Senior honors thesis
2. Xingran Zhuang (2) Senior thesis
3. Shoshana Geller (1) Lab RA
4. Gregory Hunter (1) Lab RA
5. Andrea Jenkins (1) Lab RA
6. Xingran.Zhuang (1) Lab RA
7. Christina Lu (1) Presidential scholar
8. Karim Itani (1) Lab RA
9. Jennifer Jain (2) Lab RA
10. David Mena (1) Lab RA
11. Geoffry Wang (4) Lab RA
12. Lisa Oh (5) Senior thesis
13. Josiah Putman (4) Neukom Fellow
14. Madeleine Genereux (1) Lab RA
15. David Perez Gonzalez (1) E.E. Just Fellow
16. Janvi Kalra (2) Lab RA
17. Eitan Vilker (1) Lab RA
18. Braden Pellowski (1) Senior thesis
19. Cara Van Uden (1) Lab RA
20. Magdalene Pizzo (1) Lab RA
21. Robert Livaudis (1) Lab RA
22. Evan Honnold (4) Senior thesis
23. Galen Brown (3) Senior thesis
24. Anthony Addo (2) Senior thesis
25. Yusuf Olokoba (6) E.E. Just Fellow
26. Ping-Jung Liu (1) Lab RA
27. Zachary Johnson (2) Lab RA
28. Yichen Ke (2) Presidential scholar
29. Hang Qi (4) Presidential scholar
30. Pritika Vg (2) Senior thesis
31. Michael Li (5) Senior thesis, Neukom scholar
32. Kaya Thomas (2) Independent study for credit
33. Nan Hu (3) Presidential scholar
34. Ella Ryan (3) Presidential scholar
35. Justin Chan (3) Presidential scholar
36. Ajay Kannan (3) Senior thesis
37. Richard Addo (1) Course credit
38. Hanna Kim (2016, 1) Course credit
39. Yining Chen (4) Presidential scholar
40. Justin Murray (3) Senior thesis
41. Jonathan Guinter (3) Senior thesis
42. Delos Chang (2) Senior thesis
43. Will Jackson (2) Senior thesis
44. Jordan Kunzika (8) Sophomore Science, lab RA
45. George Boateng (6) Sophomore Science, lab RA
46. Charles Pastuzenski (2) Presidential scholar
47. Kelsey Harris (3) Senior thesis
48. E McNeil (3) Senior thesis
49. Divya Gunasekaran (3) Senior thesis
50. Parker Phinney (3) Senior thesis
51. Ambrose Granizo-Mackenzie (4) Hanover high, lab RA
52. Stephen Malina (2) lab RA
53. Dan Carter (2) lab RA
54. Callen Votzke (10), lab RA
55. Xander Eisensten (1), lab RA
56. Peter Stein (2), reading course
57. Kevin NiParko (2), reading course
58. David Rogg (2), reading course
59. Carla Galarza (1) Summer robotics camp instructor/ developer
60. Sucharita Jayanti (1) Summer robotics camp instructor/ developer
61. Max Diebel (1) Summer robotics camp instructor/ developer
62. Daniel Mott (2) Lab RA
63. Jennifer Lure (2) Lab RA

- [1] Meysam Effati, Krzysztof Skonieczny, and Devin J. Balkcom. "Energy-optimal trajectories for skid-steer rovers". In: *Int. J. Robotics Res.* 43.2 (2024), pp. 171–202.
- [2] Luyang Zhao, Yijia Wu, Wenzhong Yan, Weishu Zhan, Xiaonan Huang, Joran W. Booth, Ankur Mehta, Kostas E. Bekris, Rebecca Kramer-Bottiglio, and Devin J. Balkcom. "StarBlocks: Soft Actuated Self-Connecting Blocks for Building Deformable Lattice Structures". In: *IEEE Robotics Autom. Lett.* 8.8 (2023), pp. 4521–4528.
- [3] Luyang Zhao, Yijia Wu, Julien Blanchet, Maxine Perroni-Scharf, Xiaonan Huang, Joran W. Booth, Rebecca Kramer-Bottiglio, and Devin J. Balkcom. "Soft Lattice Modules That Behave Independently and Collectively". In: *IEEE Robotics Autom. Lett.* 7.3 (2022), pp. 5942–5949.
- [4] Yinan Zhang, Yotto Koga, and Devin J. Balkcom. "Interlocking Block Assembly With Robots". In: *IEEE Trans Autom. Sci. Eng.* 18.3 (2021), pp. 902–916.
- [5] Luyang Zhao, Yijia Wu, Julien Blanchet, Maxine Perroni-Scharf, Xiaonan Huang, Joran W. Booth, Rebecca Kramer-Bottiglio, and Devin J. Balkcom. "Soft Lattice Modules that Behave Independently and Collectively". In: *Robotics and Automation Letters* (2021). To appear.
- [6] Qijia Shao, Amy Sniffen, Julien Blanchet, Megan E. Hillis, Xinyu Shi, Themistoklis K. Haris, Jason Liu, Jason Lamberton, Melissa Malzkuhn, Lorna C. Quandt, James Mahoney, David J. M. Kraemer, Xia Zhou, and Devin J. Balkcom. "Teaching American Sign Language in Mixed Reality". In: *Proc. ACM Interact. Mob. Wearable Ubiquitous Technol.* 4.4 (2020), 152:1–152:27.
- [7] Ruibo Liu, Qijia Shao, Siqi Wang, Christina Ru, Devin Balkcom, and Xia Zhou. "Reconstructing Human Joint Motion with Computational Fabrics". In: *Proc. ACM Interact. Mob. Wearable Ubiquitous Technol.* 3.1 (2019), 19:1–19:26.
- [8] Yinan Zhang, Emily Whiting, and Devin Balkcom. "Assembling and disassembling planar structures with divisible and atomic components". In: *IEEE Transactions on Automation Science and Engineering* 15.3 (July 2018), pp. 945–954.
- [9] Weifu Wang and Devin Balkcom. "Knot grasping, folding, and re-grasping". In: *International Journal of Robotics Research* 37.2-3 (Feb. 2018), pp. 378–399.
- [10] Yu-Han Lyu and Devin Balkcom. "Optimal trajectories for planar rigid bodies with switching costs". In: *International Journal of Robotics Research* 35.5 (2016), pp. 454–475.
- [11] Yu-Han Lyu, Yining Chen, and Devin Balkcom. "k-survivability: diversity and survival of expendable robots". In: *Robotics and Automation Letters* 1.2 (2016). Also published as ICRA article by the same name., pp. 1164–1171.
- [12] Weifu Wang and Devin Balkcom. "Towards arranging and tightening knots and unknots with fixtures". In: *IEEE Transactions on Automation Science and Engineering* 12.4 (2015), pp. 1318–1331.
- [13] Weifu Wang, Devin Balkcom, and Amit Chakrabarti. "A fast online spanner for roadmap construction". In: *International Journal of Robotics Research* 34.11 (2015), pp. 1418–1432.
- [14] Matthew P. Bell, Weifu Wang, Jordan Kunzika, and Devin Balkcom. "Knot-tying with four-piece fixtures". In: *International Journal of Robotics Research* 33.11 (2014), pp. 1481–1489.
- [15] Paritosh A. Kavathekar, Bruce A. Craig, Alan M. Friedman, Chris Bailey-Kellogg, and Devin Balkcom. "Characterizing the space of interatomic distance distribution functions consistent with solution scattering data". In: *Journal of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology* 8.2 (2010), pp. 315–335.
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- [29] Samuel E. Lensgraf, Amy Sniffen, Zachary Zitzewitz, Evan Honnold, Jennifer Jain, Weifu Wang, Alberto Quattrini Li, and Devin J. Balkcom. "Droplet: Towards Autonomous Underwater Assembly of Modular Structures". In: *Robotics: Science and Systems XVII, Virtual Event, July 12-16, 2021*. 2021.
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- [32] Samuel Lensgraf, Karim Itani, Yanan Zhang, Zezhou Sun, Yijia Wu, Alberto Quattrini Li, Bo Zhu, Emily Whiting, Weifu Wang, and Devin J. Balkcom. "PuzzleFlex: kinematic motion of chains with loose joints". In: *2020 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation, ICRA 2020*. IEEE, 2020, pp. 6730–6737.
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- [37] Weifu Wang and Devin Balkcom. "Time-optimal motion of spatial Dubins systems". In: *Algorithmic Foundations of Robotics (WAFR)*. Dec. 2018.
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- [39] Yinan Zhang, Xiaolei Chen, Hang Qi, and Devin Balkcom. "Rearranging agents in a small space using global controls". In: *IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS)*. 2017.
- [40] Paritosh Kavathekar and Devin Balkcom. "A tactile shirt for teaching human motion tasks". In: *IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS)*. 2017.
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- [42] Weifu Wang and Devin Balkcom. "Re-configuring knots to simplify manipulation". In: *Algorithmic Foundations of Robotics (WAFR)*. 2016.
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- [44] Weifu Wang and Devin Balkcom. "Grasping and folding knots". In: *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)*. 2016.
- [45] Weifu Wang and Devin Balkcom. "Towards tying knots precisely". In: *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)*. 2016.
- [46] Yu-Han Lyu, Yining Chen, and Devin Balkcom. "k-survivability: diversity and survival of expendable robots". In: *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)*. Also published as RAL journal article by the same name. 2016.
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- [49] Yu-Han Lyu, Andrei A. Furtuna, Weifu Wang, and Devin Balkcom. "The bench mover's problem: minimum-time trajectories, with cost for switching between controls". In: *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)*. 2014, pp. 106–112.
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- [54] Andrei A. Furtuna, Weifu Wang, Yu-Han Lyu, and Devin Balkcom. "Structure and geometry of minimum-time trajectories for planar rigid bodies". In: *Allerton Conference on Communication, Control, and Computing*. 2013, pp. 1584–1591.
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TECH REPORTS AND
ONLINE TEXTS

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PH.D. THESES
SUPERVISED

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