

## Dr. Evan E. Seitz

---

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Postdoctoral Researcher  
New York, NY 10032 USA

Phone: +1-404-964-9821  
E-mail: [evan.e.seitz@gmail.com](mailto:evan.e.seitz@gmail.com)  
WWW: [www.evanseitz.com](http://www.evanseitz.com)

### RESEARCH INTERESTS

**Complex biophysical systems:** quantitative biology; unsupervised machine learning; deep learning; neural networks; kernel methods; dimensionality reduction; manifold embedding; spectral geometry; energy landscapes; algorithm design, development and optimization

### CURRENT ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

#### Computational Postdoctoral Fellow, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

In March 2022, I joined the Simons Center for Quantitative Biology at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory as a Computational Postdoctoral Fellow. The research is formed in collaboration between the Kinney and Koo labs, with the goal to bridge the divide between "black-box" deep neural network models in genomics and mechanistically interpretable biophysical models of gene regulation.

### EDUCATION

#### Columbia University, New York, NY

##### Doctor of Philosophy with distinction, May 2017 – January 2022

- Doctoral Thesis: *Analysis of Conformational Continuum and Free-energy Landscapes from Manifold Embedding of Single-particle Cryo-EM Ensembles of Biomolecules*
- Mentor: Joachim Frank, Ph.D.
- Affiliations:
  - Department of Biological Sciences
  - Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics
- Summary: My thesis work is based on a geometric machine-learning approach using manifold embedding to obtain the energy landscape and corresponding continuum of 3D structures of a molecular machine. This information comes buried among typically hundreds of thousands of unorganized single-particle cryo-EM images formed under extremely noisy conditions and microscopy aberrations. An ability to obtain the desired information from cryo-EM data has been shown possible on two experimental systems—the 80S ribosome and ryanodine receptor—through a previously-established framework termed ManifoldEM. I first incorporated ManifoldEM into an advanced graphic user interface (+10,000 lines of code) for public release [7], and augmented it with a new method, POLARIS [3], for determining minimum-energy pathways. I next applied ManifoldEM on two new systems: vacuolar ATPase and the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein [4], and for both systems, discovered several novel aspects of the machine's function.

Throughout the development and use of ManifoldEM—including my extensive coding, troubleshooting, and supervision of an alpha-user testing group—our team discovered several critical limitations and uncertainties in the ManifoldEM framework. However, in the absence of ground-truth data, testing and validation of ManifoldEM was infeasible, with its implementation largely understood as a black box. As recourse, I created a protocol for generating simulated cryo-EM data from an atomic model subjected to multiple conformational changes and experimental conditions [6], with several Hsp90 synthetic ensembles generated for analysis by ManifoldEM. Guided by heuristic results of these ground-truth studies, new insights were made into the origin of longstanding ManifoldEM problems, further motivating and informing my development of a new, comprehensive method for correcting them, termed ESPER [5]. The ESPER method operates within the ManifoldEM framework and, as I have shown using both synthetic and experimentally-obtained data, ultimately results in substantial improvements to the

previous work [2]. A thorough description of these accomplishments is available in my thesis [1].

**Master of Philosophy**, May 2017 – October 2020

**Master of Arts**, May 2017 – May 2019

- Cumulative GPA: 3.74
- Core Courses: *Advanced Genetic Analysis; Cell Biology; Eukaryotic Gene Expression; Genomics of Gene Regulation; Protein Thermodynamics; Structural Biology*
- Elective Courses: *Computational Linear Algebra; Cryo-Electron Microscopy; Statistical Mechanics; Topology*

Pre-thesis Rotations:

- **Califano Lab**, Fall 2017: Under guidance of Dr. Andrea Califano, I investigated cell regulatory networks using systems biology principles, aimed at understanding tumorigenesis and cellular heterogeneity. Specifically, I applied pre-established algorithms (ARACNE, FIRE) based on information theory, and analyzed their outputs to determine a collection of maximally-informative DNA sequence motifs corresponding to the FOXM1 master-regulator pathway
- **Gautier Lab**, Summer 2017: Under guidance of Dr. Jean Gautier, I employed a diverse set of experimental approaches on *Xenopus* cell-free extracts to investigate the role of genome instability in cancer. This task required the development of crucial wet-lab skills—such as plasma purification, spectrophotometry, electrophoresis, and chromatin immunoprecipitation—which I trained for and applied in order to isolate and analyze specific protein-gene interactions responsible for cellular response to DNA damage.

Awards

- **John S. Newberry Prize (2022)**. Awarded to the graduate student in the Department who, in the opinion of the faculty, is the "most promising student of the year in the field of vertebrate zoology". The awardee was chosen by faculty and staff nominations and consideration by the departmental faculty committee for graduate affairs.

**Georgia Institute of Technology**, Atlanta, GA

**Bachelor of Science** in Physics with *Highest Honor*, May 2015 – May 2017

Cumulative GPA: 3.90

- Core Courses: *Classical Mechanics; Differential Equations; Electro and Magnetostatics; Electrodynamics; Linear Algebra for Calculus; Modern Physics; Quantum Mechanics I; Quantum Mechanics II; Statistical Mechanics; Thermodynamics*
- Elective Courses: *Biophysics; Computational Physics; Neurophysics; Nuclei, Particles and Fields; Physics of Living Systems; Probability and Statistics*

Undergraduate Research

- Supervisor: Professor **James Gumbart**, Ph.D.
- Topic: Computational simulations involving biophysics of proteins and other biomolecules
- Summary: My undergraduate research was done in Computational Biophysics under the advisement of Dr. James Gumbart, with intent to simulate the physical mechanisms underlying processes and organization in living systems on the molecular scale. Of specific interest was the Light Harvesting Complex-II, the pigment-protein complex responsible for the initiation of photosynthetic processes within the chromatophores of purple bacteria. Programming was done through the structural analysis programs NAMD and VMD, with a computer model of the LH-II produced capable of accurately simulating the molecular dynamics of the system.

Activities and Awards

- *Sigma Pi Sigma* Physics Honor Society
- Faculty Honors

**Georgia State University**, Atlanta, GA

Initiated my pursuit towards a second degree (in Physics), May 2014 – May 2015. Transferred from Georgia State University (without degree) to the Georgia Institute of Technology

Cumulative GPA: 4.00

- Core Courses: *Calculus of One Variable I*; *Calculus of One Variable II*; *Multivariate Calculus*; *Principles of Chemistry I*; *Principles of Chemistry II*; *Principles of Physics I*; *Principles of Physics II*
- Elective Courses: *Computer Programming in Python*

Activities and Awards

- President's List

**Georgia College**, Milledgeville, GA

**Bachelor of Arts** in Mass Communication, May 2005 – May 2009

Activities and Awards

- *Lambda Pi Eta* Honor Society
- National Chair of International Business Club

PUBLICATIONS

**Doctoral Thesis**

- [1] E. Seitz. Analysis of Conformational Continuum and Free-energy Landscapes from Manifold Embedding of Single-particle Cryo-EM Ensembles of Biomolecules. Columbia Libraries Academic Commons, 2022.  
<https://doi.org/10.7916/4n0v-wa24>

**Journal Publications**

- [2] E. Seitz, F. Acosta-Reyes, S. Maji, P. Schwander and J. Frank, “Recovery of conformational continuum from single-particle cryo-EM images: Optimization of ManifoldEM informed by ground truth.”  
IEEE Trans Comput Imaging, vol. 8, pp. 462-78, 2022.  
<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/9773954>
- [3] E. Seitz and J. Frank, “POLARIS: Path of least action analysis on energy landscapes,”  
J Chem Inf Model, vol. 60, no. 5, pp. 2581–90, 2020.  
<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.jcim.9b01108>
- [4] T. Sztain et al., “A glycan gate controls opening of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein,”  
Nat Chem, vol. 13, pp. 963–8, 2021.  
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41557-021-00758-3>

**Preprints**

Unpublished content in the following two papers is being condensed into an additional article intended for peer review

- [5] E. Seitz, F. Acosta-Reyes, S. Maji, P. Schwander, and J. Frank, “Geometric machine learning informed by ground truth: Recovery of conformational continuum from single-particle cryo-EM data of biomolecules,”  
 bioRxiv, 2021, doi: 10.1101/2021.06.18.449029.  
<https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.06.18.449029v2>
- [6] E. Seitz, F. Acosta-Reyes, P. Schwander, and J. Frank, “Simulation of cryo-EM ensembles from atomic models of molecules exhibiting continuous conformations,”  
 bioRxiv, 2019, doi: 10.1101/864116.  
<https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/864116v1>

#### Software Distributions

- [7] E. Seitz et al., “ManifoldEM Python repository,” Zenodo, 2021.  
 doi: 10.5281/zenodo.5578874, [https://github.com/evanseitz/ManifoldEM\\_Python](https://github.com/evanseitz/ManifoldEM_Python)  
 – Video Demonstration:  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/pe106oizw4p7uyb/GUI\\_Overview\\_VATPase.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/pe106oizw4p7uyb/GUI_Overview_VATPase.mp4?dl=0)

#### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

#### Columbia University, New York, NY

*Teaching Assistant*

**August 2018 – December 2019**

- Assistant Instructor for BCHM GU4323: Biophysical Chemistry  
 (Professors: Dr. John Hunt and Dr. Art Palmer)
  - Fall 2019
  - Responsible for weekly 1-hour recitation lecture, proctoring and grading. This course covered a rigorous introduction to the theory underlying widely used biophysical methods to understand the behavior of molecules and develop related analytical tools, including applications to biomedical research problems.
- Grader for BIOL UN2005 Intro Biology: Biochemistry, Genetics & Molecular Biology
  - Fall 2018
  - Proctored and graded exams.

#### Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA

*Creative Director, Animator*

**May 2016 – February 2017**

- Assisted the Department of Physics with the design and animation of educational content for Georgia Tech MOOC (massive online open courses) under advisement of Dr. Michael Schatz. Topics ranged from *Introductory Mechanics* to *Electromagnetism*. Duties included both scientific and artistic, beginning with the translation of physical concepts and theories into a visual language, and ending in the full production of animated video content for semester-long courses. After initial production, served as project lead on a team of animators for creating an extensive library of related videos for the university.
- Lesson 1 – Introduction to Electric Fields: <https://vimeo.com/237845454>

#### Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

*Physics Learning Assistant*

**Spring 2015**

- Recruited into the Learning Assistant program to aid in the education of students taking *Principles of Physics* under advisement of Dr. Joshua Von Korff. Duties included instruction of two one-hour Physics labs each week, attendance of weekly pedagogy lessons taught by Physics professors, and execution of a weekly theoretical practice lecture with graduate students.

**Stanford University**, Stanford, CA

*Creative Director, Animator*

**2013, 2015**

- Oversaw artistic vision for a series of animations detailing scientific research done by Dr. Jennifer Aaker and colleagues at Stanford on topics including empathy, humor, and purpose. Responsibilities included storyboarding, creation of animated assets, and unification of artistic vision as it related to the use of visual elements, artistic style, and motion to elicit the relevant emotional responses required to inspire positive change.
- The Happiness Narrative (2015): <https://vimeo.com/210360824>
- Persuasion and the Power of Story (2013): <https://vimeo.com/74576399>

PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICE

**Referee Service**

- *American Chemical Society: Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* (2020)

**Scientific Illustrations**

- Illustrated journal cover for *JCIM: Special Issue on Frontiers in Cryo-EM Modeling*, Volume 60, Issue 5, May 2020: <https://pubs.acs.org/toc/jcisd8/60/5>

PROFESSIONAL  
EXPERIENCE

*The following are some of my experiences in the arts, previous to my career change. More information on each of these, and others in between, is provided on my LinkedIn profile*

**22squared**, Atlanta, GA

*Editor, Motion Graphics Designer*

**May 2013 – May 2014**

- Designed digital content for major corporate advertising clientele, including Toyota, Baskin-Robbins, PGA Superstore, Buffalo Wild Wings, Costa Rica Tourism Board, and American Standard. (Full-time position).

**Indigo Studios**, Atlanta, GA

*Motion Graphics Designer*

**May 2011 – August 2012**

- Created 2D and 3D computer animations for a variety of clients, including American Cancer Society, Coca-Cola, Georgia Pacific, Southern Company, Infiniti, Cirque du Soleil, Caterpillar, ABF, Ariba, Discovery Channel, and Cartoon Network. (Freelance position)
- Awarded 32nd Annual Telly Award (Bronze) for American Cancer Society animation “Marketing Excellence”

**Fuzebox, Inc.**, Atlanta, GA

*Editor, Motion Graphics Designer*

**January 2010 – June 2012**

- Editor and motion graphics artist on “Submit”, a documentary on cyberbullying. Duties included storyboarding, editing, compositing, 2D and 3D animation, and color correction. (Freelance position).

**Georgia Public Broadcasting**, Atlanta, GA

*Editor, Motion Graphics Designer*

**January 2009 – May 2010**

- Supervised post-production activities for daily statewide television broadcasts of “Law-makers”, providing in-depth coverage of state legislature and related issues. Responsibilities included creation of original show open, animation of graphics, and editing of news segments. (Freelance position).

## Related Honors and Awards, 2012 – 2015

- 2015 – “The Happiness Narrative” featured at *Future of StoryTelling Summit* in NYC
- 2013 – “The Power of Story” featured at *Future of StoryTelling Summit*, NYC
- 2013 – Vimeo Staff Pick, “ABCinema: Take 2” (>100,000 views)
- 2013 – Vimeo Staff Pick, “Alphagames” (>350,000 views)
- 2012 – “ABCinema” featured at SXSW, PauseFest, Athfest, and Tribeca
- 2012 – Vimeo Staff Pick, “ABCinema” (>500,000 views)

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING

### Invited Participant

- 2022 CIFAR Deep Learning + Reinforcement Learning Summer School (July 25–29)

## SOFTWARE SKILLS

### Computer Programming:

- UNIX shell scripting
- Expertise in Python, including libraries: Anaconda, NumPy, Scipy, Pandas, Matplotlib, Mayavi, PyQt, TraitsUI, TensorFlow; among others
- Experience in Matlab, R

### Scientific Software:

- UCSF Chimera
- PyMOL
- Visual Molecular Dynamics
- RELION
- Phenix
- Prism
- Mathematica

### Visualization Software:

- Adobe Creative Suite, especially: Photoshop, After Effects
- GIMP
- Cinema4D
- Final Cut Pro

### Productivity Software:

- T<sub>E</sub>X (L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, B<sub>I</sub>B<sub>T</sub>E<sub>X</sub>),
- Microsoft Office, Excel, and PowerPoint
- GitHub

### Operating Systems:

- Apple OS X
- Linux
- Microsoft Windows family

## REFERENCES AVAILABLE TO CONTACT

**Dr. Joachim Frank** (e-mail: jf2192@cumc.columbia.edu; phone: +1-646-770-4527)

– *Dr. Frank was my Ph.D. supervisor*

◇ Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics, Columbia University Medical Center, New York, NY 10032 USA

★ Department of Biological Sciences, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027 USA

**Dr. Peter Schwander** (e-mail: pschwan@uwm.edu)

– *Dr. Schwander was a member of my Ph.D. dissertation defense committee*

◇ Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53211 USA

**Dr. Rommie Amaro** (e-mail: ramaro@ucsd.edu)

– *Dr. Amaro was a member of my Ph.D. dissertation defense committee*

◇ Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of California-San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093 USA

**Dr. Peter Koo** (e-mail: koo@cshl.edu)

– *I am currently working in Dr. Koo's lab as a Computational Postdoctoral Fellow*

◇ Simons Center for Quantitative Biology, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724 USA

**Dr. Justin Kinney** (e-mail: jkinney@cshl.edu)

– *I am currently working in Dr. Kinney's lab as a Computational Postdoctoral Fellow*

◇ Simons Center for Quantitative Biology, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724 USA

*Additional references available upon request.*