

Sarah Gao

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Work Experiences

Midstory Science Fellow & Podcast Creator

MAY 2021 - CURRENT

Creator, writer, researcher, interviewer, and narrator for Greener Pastures, a podcast highlighting people in the Midwest working on inspiring solutions to the greatest environmental challenges of our time.

Write grant applications and mentor interns.

Helped to organize and designed social media assets for Erie Hack, an annual hackathon to find solutions for Lake Erie's water problems.

Senior Product Designer

OCT 2017 - CURRENT

Worked at various companies, from small start-ups, to agencies, to large established brands, often collaborating with a wide diversity of people from other disciplines.

Created product strategies, scoped and managed projects, conducted user and market research, crafted high quality digital designs, produced hand-drawn illustrations, and envisioned future industry directions.

Honed project management skills, strengthened creative problem solving, and learned to become a more effective manager and mentor.

Presented complex ideas to various, diverse stakeholder audiences, including high-profile executive clients.

Mentored junior designers and led efforts within to improve equity, community outreach, philanthropy, and environmental impact at each company.

Freelanced for several years as an independent contractor, delivering end-to-end design services, overseeing projects from start to finish, and managing a wide range of clients.

Projects include a grassroots political fundraising platform, an electric car digital portal, future phone operating systems, a health and fitness application, web-based game management, and future TV ecosystems.

USF Graduate Bioinformatics and Undergraduate Genetics Lab Teaching Assistant

FALL 2021, SPRING 2021

Guided graduate students through foundational skills, working in R, Bash, git, and Markdown.

Led undergraduate Genetics I labs, creating pre-lab lectures to introduce new topics and attended to student learning on an individual basis.

Education

University of San Francisco

AUG 2020 - AUG 2022

Masters of Science in Biology

Thesis centers on the effects of moisture stress and cover crop integration on soil microbial communities and nutrient retention in organic farm soils.

Relevant skills include PCR/qPCR, soil analysis, gel electrophoresis, DNA/RNA extraction, microbial culture, experimental design, literature review, scientific and grant writing, policy analysis, project management, bioinformatics, and GIS.

Overall GPA 4.00/4.00

City College of San Francisco

AUG 2019 - MAY 2020

Took courses to prepare for MS application including Ecology, Plant Biology, Genetics, Microbiology, Chemistry, and Biology.

Overall GPA 4.00/4.00

Carnegie Mellon University

AUG 2010 - MAY 2014

Bachelor of Humanities and Arts (BHA) in Industrial Design and Psychology

Overall GPA 3.79/4.00

Other Experiences

Ecological Society of America Graduate Student Policy Award Recipient

2022

Trained on policy and communication, meeting with many federal representatives' offices to advocate for federal funding for science.

California Academy of Sciences Volunteer Docent

APR 2015 - CURRENT

Communicate with guests about the natural sciences, research, and environmental stewardship.

Break down complex science concepts to effectively engage with audiences of all ages and backgrounds.