

# Game Studies Scrimmage

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## PANEL PROPOSAL

I want to propose a new kind of potential model for a DiGRA session which I am tentatively calling, "Game Studies Scrimmage." This panel will gather a group of bold and intrepid game studies folks to give short 10-minute talks about a single game chosen at random approximately 2-3 weeks before the session at the annual meeting. The game must be something none of the presenters has played, and which is completely playable over 24 hours or so in the lead up to the meeting in Guadalajara.

Presenters will play the game as well as prepare and deliver a short talk without any prior preparation. This will not only test our analytical agility, open-mindedness and courage but also, and most importantly, it will be a bit of collective and collaborative fun doing what we love doing most - playing games and talking about them.

For added fun, a discord will be opened once the game is selected and game studies folks from anywhere in the world will be invited to play along, stream, cheer, and whatnot. The DiGRA meeting session will mark the fruition of the exercise and after the short talks we will break into an open discussion about the game.

Since the game we will play together and present at DiGRA is as yet unknown I have composed this panel from enthusiastic volunteers following a call for participants circulated over social media. We have 5 confirmed player/presenters so far and they are as follows:

Bart Simon, Professor of Sociology at Concordia University, co-founder and current director of the Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture and Technology, co-founder of the Technoculture, Art and Games Research Centre. Simon has a background in cultural sociology and science and technology studies. His analytical play style is forward and classically dialectic with post-materialist tendencies. An accomplished dribbler, he is at home in the midfield as much at taking pot shots at the goal.

Ashley ML Guajardo (nee Brown) is an associate professor (lecturing) at the Division of Games at the University of Utah. Her research focuses on player studies with a sociological leaning. Her book, *Sexuality and Role Playing Games*, remains one of the only examinations of the use of role playing games to express sexual desire. Guajardo joins the scrimmage team as a powerful left field striker with a keen cross-disciplinary eye. Her play style remains a fan favorite as she is an accomplished streamer ([twitch.tv/professor\\_ashley](https://twitch.tv/professor_ashley)).

Proceedings of DiGRA 2024

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Antonia Hargreaves is a psychologist with a Masters in Social Psychology. She is an Assistant professor in Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello (UNAB) in Chile. Her work focuses on the assemblages between videogames, virtuality and affect, and since then my main topic of study is the Body in games (virtual, organic, narrative). Hargreaves also brings a public and open play style to the team. Her adaptability and agility engaging with almost any game will ensure the continuity of our analytical play.

Juan F. Belmonte-Ávila is an Associate Professor at the Department of English Studies at the University of Murcia. He has published on Comparative Cultural Studies, American Studies, and Film Studies, with a primary focus on Game Studies. He is currently co-editing the volume *Unbound Queer Times in Literature, Cinema, and Video Games*, which is under contract with Routledge. Belmonte-Avila appears as a strong midfield player equally capable on offense and defense. His broad cultural studies background brings important gravitas to the team in case we get too technical.

José P. Zagal is Professor with the University of Utah's Division of Games. He has edited and authored numerous books and articles on game ethics, games education, game design, and more. He most recently co-edited *Fifty Years of Dungeons & Dragons* and co-authored *Seeing Red: Nintendo's Virtual Boy* both published by MIT Press in 2024. He was honored as a Distinguished Scholar by the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA) and named a Fellow of the Higher-Education Videogame Alliance (HEVGA) for his contributions to games research. He also serves as the Editor-In-Chief of DiGRA's flagship journal *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association (ToDiGRA)*. Zagal is outstanding on defense and can often be seen controlling play from one end of the field to the other. Arguably our wisest player, he brings stalwart dedication and a touch of panache to the overall play of the team.

Based on this open call we have managed to assemble an outstanding team of game studies experts for our scrimmage. We can guarantee that much fun will be had by all the presenters and as the audience will be invited to join along in the play and discussion it is likely that this panel/event/scene is likely to be one of the most memorable in DiGRA history.

So there.