DIGITAL STUDIES INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY, US CULTURE, & VIDEO GAMES

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Tu/Th 10 : 00 - 11 : 30 AM

*Background: Octodad

Please email Sarah Torsch (dsi-studentservices@umich.edu) with any questions.

Far from the image of the stereotypical "gamer" popularized by late 1980s/1990s gaming publications and advertisements, modern video and board game audiences are more diverse than ever. The people making the games we play, however, still largely reflect that narrow "core gamer" audience of the late 20th century. Labor issues in the game design industry abound, as lawsuits such as California Department of Fair Employment and Housing v. Activision Blizzard painfully illustrate. This course will offer a deep dive on the fascinating intersections of race and gender with interactive media. We will begin with an exploration of the queer experience of failure and its use as an interactive metaphor for passing. Next, we will explore the role of representation and embodiment in interactive media: from depictions of the "other" in games like Fallout and Fable to the connections between orientalism and the foundations of game studies to the at-hand nature of colonialist narratives in games, we will explore the intersection of race and interactive media. We will end the semester with a discussion on game industry labor issues, gaming culture's problem with harassment (ala Gamergate & its connections to the alt-right movement), and a brief look at game accessibility.