Rainforest Scully-Blaker Ph.D.
Curriculum Vitae
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Education:

2017-2022	**UC Irvine – School of Information and Computer Science** PhD and MS in Informatics
2014-2016	**Concordia University – Communication Studies** MA in Media Studies
2010-2014	**Concordia University – Liberal Arts College** Honours Bachelor of Arts in Western Society and Culture, Minor in Creative Writing

Professional Appointments:

2025-	**University of Michigan – School of Information** Research Associate
2023-2025	**Tampere University – Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies** Postdoctoral Research Fellow
2022-2023	**Uppsala University – Department of Game Design** Visiting Lecturer in Game Design

Selected Honours, Scholarships, and Awards.:

Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences EDID Initiatives Fund (2025, 3000$ CAD, co-applicant with Canadian Game Studies Association)
SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship (2020-2022, 40,000$ CAD)
FQRSC Doctoral Research Scholarship (2017-2019, 60,000$ CAD)
FQRSC Doctoral Research Scholarship (2016) [declined]
ICA 2016 Conference Best Paper Prize
J.-A. Bombardier Canada Graduate Master's Scholarship (2015-2016, 20,000$ CAD)

Publications:

Books

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. *Gaming Exhaustion.* Duke University Press. [In Production]

Refereed Journal Articles:

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "Truckers, Trucker-Simulators, and the Containment of Capitalist Realism." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* Vol. 42. 2025.

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "The Politics of Wholesome Games: Conservative Comforts and Radical Softness." *Configurations* Vol 32, No 2, Spring 2024.

Cullen, Amanda, R. Scully-Blaker, I. Larson, K. Brewster, R. R. Aceae, and W. Dunkel. "Game studies, futurity, and necessity (or the game studies regarded as still to come)." *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, June 2022.

Ruberg, Bonnie and Rainforest Scully-Blaker. "Making Players Care: The Ambivalent Cultural Politics of Care and Video Games." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 24, Issue 4, June 2021.

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "Working on and at Play: Perception and Visibility in Games." *Digital Culture and Society*, Vol. 5, Issue 2/2019, 2020.

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "Stasis and Stillness: Moments of inaction in Games." *Press Start*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2020.

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "Buying Time: Capitalist Temporalities in *Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp*." *Loading…* Vol. 12, No. 20, 2019.

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "The Speedrunning Museum of Accidents." *Kinephanos*, Special Issue August 2018. [Also translated into Japanese]

Begy, Jason, M. Consalvo, R. Scully-Blaker, S. C. Ganzon. "Methodological Considerations in the Study of Tandem Play." *Loading…* Vol. 12, No 16, 2017.

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "A Practiced Practice: Speedrunning Through Space With De Certeau and Virilio." *Game Studies* Vol. 14, No. 1, 2014. [Translated into Russian, Italian, Japanese, and French]

Book Chapters:

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest and Harrer, Sabine. "The Politics of Games, Play, and Critical Game Studies" *Cultural Game Studies*. Eds. F. Mäyrä and R. Koskimaa. Forthcoming. [Accepted]

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "Re-framing the Backlog: Radical Slowness and Patient Gaming" *Ecogames. Playful Perspectives on the Climate Crisis.* Eds. J. Raessens, L. op de Beke, G. Farca, and S. Werning. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024.

Consalvo, Mia, Jason Begy, Sarah Christina Ganzon, and Rainforest Scully Blaker. "Tandem Play: Theorizing Sociality in Single Player Gameplay" *Video Games: A Medium That Demands Our Attention*. Ed. N. Bowman. New York: Routledge, 2018. 146-160.

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "A Practiced Practice: Speedrunning Through Space With De Certeau and Virilio" *Giochi Video: Performance, Spectacle, Streaming*. Eds. M. Bittanti and E. Gandolfi. Milan: Mimesis Editione, 2018. 157-175. (Italian translation of earlier journal article).

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "A Practiced Practice: Speedrunning Through Space With De Certeau and Virilio" *Mediophilosophy XII. A game or a reality? Experience in computer games research.* Ed. V.V. Savchuk. St. Petersburg: Fund for Development of Conflictology, 2016. 448-472. (Russian translation of earlier journal article).

Refereed Conference Proceedings:

(July 2020) On Seeing and Being Seen: Perception and Visibility in Video Games. Digital Games Research Association Conference. Tampere, Finland.

(July 2018) Stasis and Stillness: Moments of Inaction in Videogames. Digital Games Research Association Conference. Torino, Italy.

(January 2018) Finding Sociality in Single-Player Games: A Case Study of Tandem Play Amongst Friends and Couples. Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. Waikoloa Village, United States. (Not first author).

(January 2017) Playing Along and Playing For on Twitch: Livestreaming from Tandem Play to Performance. Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. Waikoloa Village, United States.

(June 2016) Tandem play: Theorizing sociality in single-player gameplay. International Communication Association. Fukuoka, Japan. [Not first author, won best paper game studies division].

Book Reviews:

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "How Pac-Man eats". *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 37, Issue 3, 2020.

Manuscripts Under Revision & Review:

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "Happiness is a Warm Mug? Coziness as Neoliberal, Capitalist Power Fantasy." *Cozy Media*. Eds. B. Bódi and A. Waszkiewicz. [Revisions Submitted]

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest and Tom Apperley. "Douchebag Games: Xbox Leisure Culture, White Greivance, and Reactionary Identity Formation." *World Leisure Journal*. Special Issue on Leisure and the Far Right. [Under Review]

Scully-Blaker, Rainforest. "Unpacking Unpacking." *Well Played* 15(11). Special Issue on Well-Played Games. [Under Review]

Conference Presentations:

(June 2026) Douchebag Games: White Grievance and Reactionary Identity Formation in the Xbox Era. DiGRA 2026. Maynooth, Ireland.

(June 2026) The Husbando Super-App: Troubling "Player Investment" with Love and Deepspace. DiGRA 2026. Maynooth, Ireland.

(June 2026) More man vs nature mechanics? Exploring romanticized notions of solitude in r/SurvivalGaming. DiGRA 2026. Maynooth, Ireland.

(June 2026) Like Watching (Mario) Paint Dry: Why Game Studies Needs Boredom Studies. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference 2026. Montreal, Canada.

(July 2025) Loser-y Attitude: Nu-metal and the reinforcement of white, male anger in gaming culture. Ludo 2025 Conference on Video Game Music and Sound. London, UK.

(June 2025) From AI to FAQs: Games, Late Capitalism, and Fear. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference 2025. Montreal, Canada.

(May 2025) Critical Game Studies and the Politics of Hope. Nordic DiGRA 2025. Turku, Finland.

(April 2025) Happiness is a Warm Mug? Coziness as Late Capitalist Power Fantasy. SCMS 2025. Chicago, USA.

(October 2024) Games, Capitalism, and Fear. Central and Eastern European Game Studies Conferences. Nafplio, Greece.

(June 2024) Trucks in Sims and Sims in Trucks: The Blur-ification of Work and Play. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference. Montreal, Canada.

(May 2024) Keep on Truckin': The Blur-ification of Work and Play. 20th Annual Tampere University Game Lab Spring Seminar. Tampere, Finland.

(April 2024) Getting the Dice Rolling: An Investigation into the Player Perception of Gateway Games. Board Game Studies Colloquium. Tampere, Finland.

(March 2024) On Zugzwang: Video Games and Systemic Exhaustion. 2024 Pop Culture Association National Conference. Chicago, United States.

(February 2024) For whom were the good ol' days actually good? The Conservative Comfort of Wholesome Games. Time in a Bottle Symposium. Montreal, Canada.

(October 2023) On Zugzwang: Games and Exhaustion. Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Existentialism for Games Workshop. Jyväskylä, Finland.

(June 2023) On Zugzwang: Games and Exhaustion. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference. Toronto, Ontario (Online due to COVID-19).

(April 2023) On Zugzwang: Games and Exhaustion. Nordic DiGRA. Digital Games Research Association. Uppsala, Sweden.

(November 2022) The Ambivalent Politics of Wholesome Games: Conservative Comforts and Radical Softness. National Communication Association. New Orleans, United States.

(September 2022) /r/patientgamers and the Transactional Nature of Play. Affecting Game Time: Theory and Practice. Edinburg, Scotland. (Online due to COVID-19)

(June 2022) /r/patientgamers and the Transactional Nature of Play. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference. Online.

(October 2021) Re-Framing the Backlog: Radical Slowness and Patient Gaming. Ecogames 2021 Conference. Utrecht, Netherlands.

(October 2021) Nostalgia and the Backlog: /r/patientgamers and the Transactional Nature of Leisure. Association of Internet Researchers. (Online due to COVID-19).

(May-June 2021) Radical Slowness and the Critical Potential of Play. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference. Edmonton, Alberta (Online due to COVID-19).

(November 2019) Playing and Failing in Time: Towards a Radical Slowness. Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts. Irvine, United States.

(November 2019) Power to the Player: Literacy, Legibility, and Play as Critique. Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts. Irvine, United States.

(June 2019) Now You're Playing with Power: Literacy and Legibility in Play. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference. Vancouver, Canada.

(April 2019) Stasis and Stillness: Moments of Inactions in Games. Visual and Cultural Studies Graduate Conference. Rochester, United States.

(September 2018) Save Points: Video Games and the Preservation of Play [Panel Discussion]. FLOW Conference 2018, Austin, United States.

(July 2018) Make Tents Not War: Queer Play as Play-That-Critiques. Digital Games Research Association Conference, Torino, Italy.

(May/June 2018) Buying Time: Capitalist Temporalities in *Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp*. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference. Regina, Canada.

(May/June 2017) The Speedrunning Museum of Accidents: Preserving Games Through (Glitchy) Gameplay. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference. Toronto, Canada.

(August 2016) On Becoming "Like eSports": Twitch as a Platform for the Speedrunning Community. First Joint International Conference of the Digital Games Research Association and Foundations of Digital Games, Dundee, Scotland.

(August 2016) Smash Mods, Smash Creativity: Nintendo, *Project M*, and Enclosure. First Joint International Conference of the Digital Games Research Association and Foundations of Digital Games, Dundee, Scotland.

(June 2016) Speedrunning as Museum of Accidents: Contesting Virtual Spaces with Speed and Tactics. History of Games Symposium, Montreal, Canada.

(March 2016). Play/Fast-Forward: Speedrunning as a Community of Practice. Communication Graduate Caucus Conference, Ottawa, Canada.

(June 2015). Gotta Go Fast: Speedrunning as Community and Practice. Canadian Game Studies Association Conference 2015, Ottawa, Canada.

(May 2015). Gotta Go Fast: A Study in Speedrunning. Digital Games Research Association Conference 2015, Lüneburg, Germany.

(March 2015). A Practiced Practice: Speedrunning Through Space With De Certeau and Virilio. Society for Media and Communication Studies Conference, Montreal, Canada.

(February 2015). Mobile Methods in Virtual Space. The Building Blocks of Life: A Minecraft Colloquium, Montreal, Canada.

Invited Guest Lectures and Public Talks:

(February 2025) "Games and Capitalism: Transactions, Investments, and Dead Games" for the Games as Art Centre's Speaker Series. Tampere, Finland.

(September 2024) "Critical and Humanistic Approaches to Games Research" For Prof. J. Blom in GS.300: *Theoretical Approaches to Game Studies* at Tampere University, Finland.

(March 2024) "Exhaustion and Rest in Games and Digital Culture." Invited Lecture for Waterloo University's Department of Communication Arts. Waterloo, Canada.

(February 2024) "Games and Crisis: Making Do and Very Late Capitalism" for the Games as Art Centre's Speaker Series. Tampere, Finland.

(November 2023) "Games and Exhaustion" for the Tampere University Game Lab OASIS Talk Series. Tampere, Finland.

(May 2020) ""Buying Time: Capitalist Temporalities in *Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp*" For Prof. A. Trammell in Information & Computer Science 62: *Game Technology and Interactive Media* at University of California, Irvine, United States.

(November 2019) "Buying Time: Capitalist Temporalities in *Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp*" For Prof. R. Crooks in Informatics 161: *Social Analysis of Computing* at University of California, Irvine, United States.

(May 2018) "Consumption and Naturalism in *Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp*" For Prof. A. Trammell in Information & Computer Science 62: *Game Technology and Interactive Media* at University of California, Irvine, United States.

(February 2017) "The Speedrunning Museum of Accidents" For Prof. Y. Glick in Sociology/Anthropology 349: *Youth: Anthropological and Sociological Perspectives* at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.

(November 2016) "Speedrunning as Community and Practice" For Prof. B. Simon in Sociology 498: *Advanced Topics in Sociology – Play and Games* at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.

Teaching Experience:

Instructor for the following courses at Tampere University:

Winter 2025: VIM.MT.310 – Game Project
Winter 2024: VIM.MT.310 – Game Project

Instructor for the following courses at Uppsala University:

Winter 2023: Test-Driven Game Design 2, Game Design 6 - Experimental Game Design, and Game Design 2 - Game Development.

Fall 2022: Game Design 3 - Systems Design, Game Design 1 – Introduction, Test-Driven Game Design 1.

Instructor for the following courses at UC Irvine:

Winter 2022: GDIM 25 – Game Design Fundamentals
Spring 2021: ICS 62 – Game Technology and Interactive Media

Teaching Assistant for the following courses and instructors at UC Irvine:

Winter 2021: INF 161 – Social Analysis of Computing – P. Dourish
Fall 2020: INF 161 – Social Analysis of Computing – R. Crooks
Spring 2020: ICS 62 – Game Technology and Interactive Media – A. Trammell
Winter 2020: INF 161 – Social Analysis of Computing – B. Ho
Fall 2019: INF 161 – Social Analysis of Computing – R. Crooks
Spring 2018: ICS 62 – Game Technology and Interactive Media – A. Trammell
Winter 2017: ICS 61 – Game Systems and Design – K. Salen
Fall 2017: ICS 139W – Critical Writing on Information Technology – D. Denenberg

Mentorship Experience

Tampere University:

2025	**Daphne Bachmann (MA Game Studies, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences)** Thesis title: "Exhausting Games : How open-world video games contribute to our stressed lives" Served as primary supervisor.
2025	**Yanal Marji (MA Game Studies, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences)** Thesis title: "Games are Leaking: Towards an Updated Formalist Methodology for Digital Gameplay" Served as primary supervisor.

Uppsala University:

2023	**Jubril Ahmadu (MA Game Design, Department of Game Design)** Thesis title: "Consumer perspectives towards monetization and its impact on AAA game designs." Served as primary supervisor.
2023	**Goutham Jayaraman (MA Game Design, Department of Game Design)** Thesis title: "Design principles to foster respect for nature in video games" Served as primary supervisor.
2023	**Zijian Luo (MA Game Design, Department of Game Design)** Thesis title: "The relationship between character progression systems and player experience from self-determination theory" Served as primary supervisor.

2023	**Nathaniel Sherman (MA Game Design, Department of Game Design)** Thesis title: "Representation of LGBTQ+ characters in major Japanese fighting game released between 2010 and 2021" Served as primary supervisor.
2023	**Yiwu Yang (MA Game Design, Department of Game Design)** Thesis title: "An analysis of achievement completion rate of open world role-playing games through a new taxonomic method" Served as primary supervisor.
2023	**Xiaoding Zhou (MA Game Design, Department of Game Design)** Thesis title: "An Exploration of Interactions and Design Implications of Low-interactivity Games" Served as primary supervisor.

Professional Training:

Certificate in Student-Centered Course Design with the UCI Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation (September 2020)

Additional Research Experience:

2025-	**University of Michigan - AIntimiacies Research Group** Part of a team of scholars studying Artificial Intelligence, intimacy, literacy, and the social politics of generative technologies. Co-writer on several WIP publications. Research team is led by Mellon Scholar, Dr. Kishonna Gray.
2025-	**Tampere University – SURVIVE Project** Collaborative ethnographic project studying the intersections of survival games, survivalism, and masculinities in the contemporary moment. Co-writer for grant applications and WIP publications. Research team is led by Dr. Matilda Ståhl.
2015-2017	**Concordia University - TAG Research Centre** Responsible for administrating a computer/game lab, organizing public-facing workshops on game making, and acting as a resource for undergraduate seminars on games.
2014–2015	**Concordia University - Research Assistant to Mia Consalvo** Conducted research with the Canada Research Chair for Game Studies and Design that led to multiple presentations and several peer-reviewed publications. Research methods included interview, participant observation, and observations of play sessions.

May-August 2013	**Independent Research – A Study in Speedrunning** A project of my own design made possible through the Concordia Undergraduate Student Research Award. The research was supervised by Canadian Research Chair of Game Studies, Professor Mia Consalvo.

Academic Service:

Communication Officer and Conference Co-Organizer of the Canadian Game Studies Association (2021-Present)

Co-Editor of *GAMES: Research and Practice* Special Issue on Meta (2025)

Co-Organizer of 20th Annual Tampere University Game Research Spring Seminar (2024)

Co-Editor of *Loading…* Vol. 13 No. 22 – "Animal Crossing Special Issue" (2020)

Member of Reviewer Board for the journal *Game Studies*.

Reviewer for *Games and Culture*, *New Media and Society*, *Media+Environment*, *Popular Communication*, *Media and Communication*, *Eludamos,* the Canadian Game Studies Association Conference, Nordic DiGRA, Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, and the iConference

Volunteer Work/Extracurricular Activities:

Summer 2025	**Indiecade 2025 Festival – Game Awards Jury Member (Systems)** Responsible for collaborating with other scholars, designers, and industry professionals to play and evaluate submitted games based on their systems design, and to compile a shortlist of nominees.
Summer 2024	**Indiecade 2024 Festival – Game Awards Jury Member (Systems)**
Summer 2023	**Indiecade 2023 Festival – Game Awards Jury Member (Systems)**
Summer 2022	**Indiecade 2022 Festival – Game Awards Jury Member (Story)** Responsible for collaborating with other scholars, designers, and industry professionals to play and evaluate the narratives of submitted games, and to compile a shortlist of nominees.
June 2012- June 2013	**Liberal Arts Society - President** Responsible for overseeing all aspects of Student Council with VPs

June 2011- August 2012	**Liberal Arts Society – VP Communications** Responsible for all public communications of Student Council.
September 2010- June 2011	**Liberal Arts Society – First Year Representative** Representative in Student Council

Professional Associations:

Research Fellow of the Institute for Research on Digital Literacies (IRDL) at York University

Research Fellow of the Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies and Gamelab at Tampere University

Member of the Digital Games Research Association

Member of the Canadian Game Studies Association

Member of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies

Member of the Association of Internet Researchers

Member of the National Communication Association

Alumnus and Core Founding Member of the Critical Approaches to Technology and the Social (CATS) Lab at UC Irvine

Alumnus of the Technoculture, Art, and Games (TAG) Lab and mLab at Concordia University

Languages:

English (native), French (fluent)