Happy New Year, everyone!

Since Agata has whisked herself away to the tropics until next week, (while we all freeze burn in the winter tundra hellscape), and Neil is in his grant writing cave (actively avoiding said hellscape), the task of writing an introduction has unfortunately fallen to me (sorry for those who were looking forward to Agata’s witty zingers and confusing stories).

A few things to note. Neil sent out a communication last week regarding current Health and Safety updates to the Games Institute. They are also described in the Health and Safety section of this newsletter. Please familiarize yourself with them, **but in short, the GI is open.** As always, if you have any questions about Health and Safety please don’t hesitate to reach out and ask me either through email or DM.

**Otherwise, please join in me in virtually welcoming this term’s new Operations Coordinator, Sophie! 🌺🎈**

Sophie hails from the tropics of Singapore and this is her first ever winter! We’ve tried to give her some “this-is-how-you-stay-warm” tips but so far, she seems to be fairing the weather just fine 😊 I’ve been asking her daily how many layers she’s wearing; it’s been slowly upgrading by +1 so I’m curious to see what her final layer count will be by the end of the season. Sophie is majoring in Environment and Business (ENBUS program) with a minor in English who has already taken the Harry Potter course designed by Neil. She’s a huge Minecraft and Mario Kart fan, the latter of which she played so much she would literally have dreams of the racetracks (honestly, dreaming about Rainbow Road seems more like nightmare fuel that sweet dreams to me but hey) and I would love to see her race some members one day to see who the ultimate Mario Kart player is.

As a side, and for no important reason whatsoever, a fact about Sophie is that she is taller than Aathani, but not taller than me (and for those of you who don’t know, I am a giant, and Aathani was pretty tall in the first place). Neil has already commented that: “this is not allowed. She needs to leave.” But tall women supremacy seems to be a growing trend around the GI staff and I am here for it.

-Pam
[ANNOUNCEMENTS](#):

1. New Covid-19 regulations in effect; consult Health and Safety section
2. The **W22 Town Hall** will take place on **Wednesday, January 26 from 10am to 12pm**. It is mandatory for all new GI members!

Shana MacDonald and Brianna Wiens’ new book *Networked Feminisms: Activist Assemblies and Digital Practices* is now out! 📚 Come by the GI to read through our copy of it! 📖
January 14th is Dress Up Your Pet Day! 🐶🐱 Give them the makeover they deserve, and show us how much they hated loved it 📸❤️
During the month of January, we would like to commemorate the following important dates:

Day:
- January 14th: Orthodox Christmas Day
- January 17th: Tu B'Shevat (Arbor Day)

List of GI Resources:
- GI Equipment/Room Booking Form
- Events at the GI Form
- GI Entry Schedule Form
- GI Wi-Fi
  - Network Name: GI-Research
  - Password: GIUwaterloo2021!
- Prayer mat in Agata's office for those who need it

You may need to tell the University if you believe you have COVID-19
You can check the flow charts in our health and safety guide to help you make decisions about what to do if you think you have been exposed. If you are, you may need to let the University know.

**Employees**

If you work on campus:

- you must promptly notify Occupational Health if you develop COVID-19 symptoms, are told you need to self-isolate, or test positive for COVID-19 on a rapid test or PCR. This might include self-isolation because you live with someone who has symptoms and is self-isolating.
- University of Waterloo Occupational Health (OH) can be reached at 519-888-4567 extension 40538 or 40551 or at occupationalhealth@uwaterloo.ca.
- if you are not sick but are required to isolate, and cannot work from home, please inform your supervisor and Occupational Health, to determine whether you should continue to be paid during isolation.

If you are working remotely:

- you do not need to inform Occupational Health if you develop symptoms, are told you need to self-isolate, or test positive for COVID-19.
- if you need to be off work due to COVID-19 related illness, please notify your supervisor and record any sick days in Workday.

**Students**

If you live in residences:

- you must contact reslifeteam@uwaterloo.ca for help if you are experiencing symptoms, are concerned about exposure, have been identified as a high-risk contact, or have received advice to self-isolate. We are here to help you.

If you think you will miss classes, due dates or exams due to COVID:

- contact your course instructor(s) before or within 48 hours of a test, exam, or due date.
- complete the illness self-declaration form in the Personal Information section of Quest. Learn more on how to self-declare an illness.

**Vaccine appointments are available at Health Services**

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect you against severe disease for those with healthy immune systems. Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine provide more protection from getting and transmitting the Omicron variant than two doses. All Ontarians aged over 18 are eligible for a third booster dose 84 days after their second dose.

If you need to book a booster dose you can do so with Health Services and there are many online resources to help you find available shots, such as Vaccine Ontario or Vaccine Hunters.

If you are an international student and have questions about vaccines, please reach out to ise@uwaterloo.ca.
[ANNOUNCEMENTS]:
1. New Covid-19 regulations in effect; consult Health and Safety section
2. The **W22 Town Hall** will take place on **Wednesday, January 26 from 10am to 12pm**. It is mandatory for all new GI members!
3. Proposal submissions for the [International Conference on Games and Narrative](#) is due on **February 1st, 2022** via email (icgan.submissions@uwaterloo.ca). See the document attached.

[EVENTS]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GI Events</th>
<th>W22 Town Hall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, January 26th @10:00am-12:00pm</strong></td>
<td>The GI staff will be giving members updates about the term, including the latest health and safety changes at the GI.</td>
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<tr>
<th>UW Events</th>
<th>Political Identity in Palestinian Youth Subcultures</th>
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| **Thursday, January 27th @3:00pm** | Ellianne El-Amyouni is a Lebanese Canadian PhD Candidate, writing about identity expression in Palestinian youth cultures.  
Ellianne will be discussing the topic of how Palestinian youths have created a hip hop subculture in response to the diaspora they have experienced and attempting to delineate the new borders of Palestinian identity. Elianne will be speaking, while Lara El Mekkawi will act as the respondent.  
**[Join directly here](#)**. Meeting number: 2305 634 1101. Password: preslecture |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recurring Events</th>
<th>Feminist Thinktank</th>
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<td>Happens every first Tuesday of the month! If you would like to join please join the slack channel #lobby-feministthinktank or reach out to Hannah Delamere (<a href="mailto:hdelamere@uwaterloo.ca">hdelamere@uwaterloo.ca</a>).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Other Virtual Events</th>
<th>Machine Learning: Listening to Misrecognition</th>
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| **Tuesday, January 18th @2:30am** | Dr. Thao Phan from Monash University is giving a Zoom talk about what machine error tells us about the precision of racism, and how the tools of a racist system can be used to transcribe new forms of resistance.  
**[Register here](#)** |

(NEW) Most Recent Changes:

First and foremost, the GI is open. However, staff, faculty, and students are highly encouraged to work from home until the end of January.
1. Screen yourself for Covid-19 symptoms before arriving to campus. If you have any cold and flu symptoms, regardless of how mild, please stay at home.

2. **Capacity restrictions will return to lab spaces** as well as common areas (the Collaboration Space and the Presentation Room),

3. There will be **NO capacity restrictions or scheduling for GI residents seeking to use their pods or shared faculty offices.**

4. At the GI, **continue to wear face coverings when in common areas of buildings or in any work area where physical distancing cannot be maintained.** If 2m can be maintained, face coverings do not need to be worn while working at a stationary workstation (i.e., pods).

5. For labs, if 2m cannot be maintained with occupancy limits, PPE must be worn.

6. **Meetings, if deemed necessary, can still occur on campus but capacity restrictions apply for the room being used.** If 2m distancing cannot be accommodated for all meeting participants, it must be hosted online. Masks are required for all meeting attendees when not seated.

7. The Collaboration space returns to its drop-in model unless specifically booked for other purposes; the other GI spaces still have to be booked via GI Operations Coordinator as has been the norm.

**General Space**

1. **The facility is open from 9am to 5pm Monday-Friday.** In order to stay on campus after hours, you must apply for special permissions.

2. You must screen yourself for symptoms before you arrive to campus.

3. Every time you come to campus, you must sign in with the Campus Check-in screening feature (once connected to eduroam, you will automatically receive an email).

4. For those bringing guests, please ensure the guests also complete Campus Check-in manually. If you do not receive the email, you can check-in here.

5. Masks **MUST** be worn at all times.

6. All GI members must sign the GI Operational Safety Plan to enter the facility. Only once the plan has been signed, fob access will be reactivated.

7. **GI members, who are not residents are free to use the collaboration room or presentation room as a study area on casual basis (if the rooms have not been booked).**

   a. These areas **MUST** be sanitized by the individuals using them with cleaning products provided after use. Individuals must also use the cleaning sheets provided in each space to note that they have cleaned the space.

8. **GI members can bring guests (UW or otherwise affiliated) to the GI, however, they must sign in at the GI Ops desk for contact tracing.**

1. Staff will sanitize high-touch points at mid-day and before the GI closes. Custodial services will do deep cleans after hours and during weekends.

**Pods**

2. Masks can be removed if 2m diameter of social distancing is in place.

3. GI residents must eat at their pods.

4. All dishes and non-perishable food items must be stored at your pod.

**GI Labs**

1. **Each GI Lab has its own Safety Plan; each plan must be read and signed separately if access is requested.**

   a. Lab Safety Plans are tied to the GI operating Safety Plan – you will need to sign both to be approved for access to any of the labs.
2. In the case of studies with participants, the GI Lab Safety Plans act as a *skeleton* with instructions for what parts of the plan individual researchers must fill out. Please see participant section for more details.

3. Sanitization of surfaces in the Labs is the responsibility of individuals who use them. Cleaning supplies and sign-off sheets are provided.

4. If 2m cannot be maintained with occupancy limits, PPE must be worn.

5. You can check the availability of the GI Labs, Collaboration Space and the Presentation Room via shared Outlook calendars. See list below.
   a. Games Institute EC1-1237 – Presentation Room
   b. Games Institute EC1-1249 – Living Room Lab
   c. Games Institute EC1-1303 – Haptic Experience Lab
   d. Games Institute EC1-1307 – VR Story Lab
   e. Games Institute EC1-1318 – Immersion Room Lab
   f. Games Institute EC1-1323 – Collaboration Space

To add these calendars to your Outlook app:

1. Open your calendar in the Outlook Desktop App.
2. Right-click beside "My Calendar".
3. Hover over "Add Calendar" and select "From Room List" to view availability.

**Human Participant Testing**

1. All in-person human participant research with *vulnerable populations* is paused at least until January 27, 2022. Rare exceptions can be made – principal investigators are encouraged to reach out to the Office of Research with queries through researchqueries@uwaterloo.ca.
2. We strongly encourage principal investigators to review their protocols for all other in-person human participant research and consider pausing until at least until January 27, 2022.

**COVID-19 Resources:**
- [A 5-minute game to protect you against COVID-19 misinformation](#)
- [Q and A with the experts: COVID variants](#)

*If you have any accessibility concerns or accommodations, please reach out to GI Staff immediately.*