

**The abstract should include** (colour-coded in the sample below):

1. a brief but precise statement of the topic - the who/what
2. a description of the research methodology, theory, and design; contextual placement of your research within existing scholarship - the where/how
3. implications and value of your research - the why
4. the major findings and/or the conclusions reached - bringing it all together
5. A preliminary bibliography of the scholarship informing your paper

**Helpful notes:**

1. The abstract should contain the most important keywords referring to method, themes, and content; we already know your paper is “game studies” so feel free to skip that one in favour of less-intuitive but significant keywords.
2. We can Google what game you are writing about, but not your ideas, the methodologies and/or theories you plan to use. Focus on what a reviewer can't Google about your paper.
3. Aim to make the paper's goal manageable and achievable in a short presentation format.
4. As well, it is vital to provide a sample Works Cited/Bibliography of whose scholarship influences your paper as this provides a lot of useful context for reviewers.

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Blending anti-oppression and activist research about race, borders, and migration with ludological thought and social justice education philosophy on teaching evil, this paper will explore how it might be possible to use speculative fiction videogames and play to critique racist environmental policy in the non-digital world. Games studies scholar Mia Consalvo explains this understanding of the “dividing line” between reality and the virtual as a permeable membrane in the world of gaming, declaring that there is no magic circle— a reference to the structuralist concept of the game existing within its own bubble (408). Consalvo articulates that game players constantly disrupt that “border” by bringing in outside knowledge and experiences into gameplay; while she primarily focuses on the act of cheating to investigate and dismantle the magic circle assertion, she also explains that “we cannot understand gameplay by limiting ourselves to only seeing actions and not investigating reasons, contexts, justifications, limitations, and the like. That is where the game occurs and where we must find its meaning” (415). This post-structuralist lens, when applied to Fallout: New Vegas, means exploring the socio-political context of game play.

Fallout: New Vegas is clearly a fictional setting, and as with much speculative fiction, this game becomes a space to explore social issues and interrogate our current society and politics. When receiving the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, groundbreaking author Ursula Le Guin explained that speculative fiction can bring hope and philosophical thought in the face of change and fear, saying “We will need writers who can remember freedom. Poets, visionaries-- realists of a larger reality” (Le Guin). In other words, imagination becomes a place wherein we examine reality. Sheridan and Longboat validate Le Guin's assertion in their essay “The Haudenosaunee Imagination and Ecology of the Sacred,” writing that the settler-colonial understanding of imagination is critical to living in good relations with one another, and with more-than-human relations, describing it as a sort-of spiritual instruction (368). They write, “without that instruction, we are less human because we are less natural” (368).

While the irony of a videogame playing a role in being more human and more natural is a cognitive dissonance that is not lost, the potential of imagination in interrogating our current ways of being cannot be ignored. As such, to more holistically explore the themes within *Fallout: New Vegas*, I will layer theory with the stories of the migrant crisis at the border of the United States and Mexico with creative fiction written by Mexicanx authors Jose Luis Zárate and Alberto Chimal using the Indigenous Métissage methodology, as detailed by Papaschase Cree scholar Dwayne Donald. The goal of this use of this Indigenous-centric praxis is to humanize the horrifying realities of privilege, as well as to center decolonial ways of being and knowing. Donald explains that “story can shift the narrative” (Adams), meaning that both fiction and non-fiction stories are a tool that can be used to change the conversation on a specific topic. It can be a gateway to a new facet, and provide a previously-unseen vantage point. To this end, I will detail a lens with which to see the migrant crisis through Mexicanx fiction, news clippings, and *Fallout: New Vegas*.

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### Works Cited

Adams, Catherine, director. “Dwayne Donald - Indigenous Metissage”. University of Alberta, [bit.ly/2D44cK1](https://bit.ly/2D44cK1).

Consalvo, Mia. “There is No Magic Circle.” *Games and Culture*, 4(4), 2009. pp. 408-417. DOI: [10.1177/1555412009343575](https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412009343575)

Le Guin, Ursula K. “Ursula Le Guin Acceptance Speech.” National Book Foundation. 65th National Book Awards, 19 Nov. 2014, New York City, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et9Nf-rsALK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et9Nf-rsALK).

Sheridan, Joe, and Roronhiakewen "He Clears The Sky" Dan Longboat. “The Haudenosaunee Imagination and the Ecology of the Sacred.” *Space and Culture*, vol. 9, no. 4, Nov. 2006, pp. 365–381., doi:[10.1177/1206331206292503](https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331206292503)