

Andrea Braithwaite, PhD

Senior Lecturer, Communication and Digital Media Studies, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at University of Ontario Institute of Technology

Oshawa, ON, CA

Cultivating awareness of the role of pop culture representations in gender and sexual inequality

Description

Today's virtual and gaming environments are predominantly geared towards males, leaving female gamers out of their realm. As a pop culture aficionado and gaming expert, Andrea Braithwaite, PhD, has a personal stake in understanding the situation and determining the steps needed to level the playing field.

A Senior Lecturer in Communication Studies and Digital Media, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Dr. Braithwaite explores how Canadian media and popular culture texts about gender, sexuality, and sociability spark North American public debates about gender and sexual equality. She joined UOIT in 2011 and received a 2014 UOIT Teaching Excellence Award for her engaging philosophies and innovative teaching methods. In 2015, she held a summer research fellowship The Strong Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, where she looked at the early years of Nancy Drew video games. A continuation of her doctoral work on young female detective figures, she examined feminism and pop culture in gaming. Internationally, she is collaborating on research to study the virtual community and culture of World of Warcraft players.

Dr. Braithwaite's research also explores the history of Canadian crime films, and aims to create a comprehensive, accessible database for scholars, film students and industry. In collaboration with a multidisciplinary research team, she also intends to broaden the national scope and discussion of crime films to include their distinctive qualities, the ways in which they are part of cultural conversations about crime, and their impact on crime in Canada.

Turning her passion into her life's work, Dr. Braithwaite earned her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communication Studies from Carleton University in Ottawa, her Master of Arts in Popular Culture from Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, and her Doctorate of Philosophy in Communication Studies from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. She continued as an instructor in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill from 2006 to 2010.

Fascinated by the influence of media and pop culture on societal values, Dr. Braithwaite's teaching reflects on the shifting patterns in industry. Prioritizing social justice and equality, she encourages students to contribute their original insights to critical conversations about social change. Her work has been featured in journals such as Feminist Media Studies, and she has been a contributing columnist with flowtv.org.

Industry Expertise

Computer Gaming, Education/Learning, Media - Broadcast, Media - Online, Media Production, Motion Pictures and Film, Research, Social Media, Women

Topics

Feminist Media Studies, Game Studies, Gender Studies, Popular Culture Studies, Television Studies, Feminist Production and Backlash Discourses , Gender and Sociability in Gaming Communities , Representations of Sexualized Violence , Cultural Studies and Television Studies , Virtual Public Spheres , Digital Media and Feminist Activism

Affiliations

Canadian Communication Association

Past Talks

Nancy Drew and the Case of the Girl Gamers

Canadian Communication Association at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences

MMO Gaming and Virtual Worlds Ethnography

Qualitative Analysis Conference

Bon Cop, Bad Cop: Canadianizing the Buddy Cop Film

Criminal Justice Speaker Series

Spreading the Message – The Art of Communicating

International Baccalaureate World Student Conference on Human Rights

Industrial-Strength Celebrity: Glee, A Case Study

Media Stardom & Celebrity Cultures

Education

McGill University

PhD Communication Studies

Brock University

MA Popular Culture

Carleton University

BA (Honours) Communication Studies

Accomplishments

The Strong Museum of Play Research Fellowship

She was awarded the summer fellowship in Rochester, New York to explore the early years of Nancy Drew video games. Building on her doctoral work on young female detective figures, her research focused on feminism and women in gaming.

UOIT Teaching Excellence Award

Dr. Braithwaite received this honour for her cross-textual and interdisciplinary approach to examining how societal values are influenced by media, popular culture and political texts; and encouraging insightful conversations among her students.

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