

INVITATION TO COLLABORATORS

Bradley Tabletop Games Symposium: Zones of Connection

May 21-22, 2021

The Bradley Tabletop Games Symposium is a two-day participatory online event that brings together tabletop game practitioners, scholars, practitioners/scholars, scholars/practitioners, and anyone else interested in the design and study of tabletop games. The symposium is a product of collaboration between the [Interactive Media Department](#) of Bradley University and the [Games and Simulation Arts & Sciences Program](#) of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Rather than following a traditional academic conference model, this is a place of dialogue and play rather than just a place to present findings. We want to facilitate connections and conversations in interactive formats. Metaphorically speaking, this symposium is the essay of conferences, rather than the article. This is a place where participants will draw on shared expertise to collaboratively generate new approaches to thinking about board games.

Recent years have seen a boom in the popularity and cultural impact of board games, an expanding conception of what board games can look like, and a broadening understanding of what board games can do. At the same time, we've seen a notable growth in scholarship on board games, with books like *Board Games as Media* (Booth 2021), *Meeples Together* (Allen & Appelcline 2019), *Storytelling in the Modern Boardgame* (Arnaudo 2018), and *Zones of Control* (Harrigan & Kirschenbaum 2016) and the success of journals like *Analog Game Studies*. Yet because of the inherent interdisciplinarity of the field and its rapid growth, many individual scholars and practitioners remain disconnected from developing networks of adjacent knowledge.

In wargames, a zone of control refers to the area of restricted movement and activity that occurs when two units become adjacent. As a theme for the first of these tabletop symposia "Zones of Connection" expresses our belief that bringing together a diversity of emerging voices and perspectives on tabletop games has much to offer through the connections that can be forged, interpersonally, emotionally, and intellectually.

Rather than submitting an abstract, we invite you to share your idea for a session you'd like to participate in using the form at <https://forms.gle/dH6Fz5ryHQo4SZgbA>. The deadline for submissions is April 26.

The symposium will consist of four session formats:

- **Workshops:** Interactive educational or exploratory sessions that require audience participation.
- **Roundtables.** Group explorations of a topic Dependent on audience participation, but specific audience members may opt-out.
- **Panels:** A group of experts (or emerging experts!) sharing insights through moderated conversation. Audience input may vary based on the panel

- **Seminars:** Similar to a traditional academic conference talk, but more instruction-oriented. Audience participation is structured and more limited.

We are interested in bringing together people to talk about any developing ideas, trends, and concepts in the design, study, and play of board games, and are open to any topics of interest.

To give a few ideas:

- Games as media
- Games and simulation
- Games and anticolonialism
- Games as resistance
- Games in/as education
- Industry studies
- Cultures of play
- Board game cafes
- Hybrid games
- Ludo-textual analysis
- Virtual tabletop play
- Storytelling in tabletop games
- Legacy and campaign games
- Games and speculative futures / alternate histories
- Discourse analysis of play sessions
- Streaming and actual play podcasts
- Phenomenology of play
- Ludic fandom
- History of tabletop games
- Gaming and the military industrial complex
- Games and translation
- Games and play therapy
- Board game renaissance
- Games in the age of the pandemic

If you have any questions, please contact Nicholas Mizer, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, mizern@rpi.edu.