



Press release

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Ropecon goes academic: The Intersection in Games seminar investigates the present and future of games

What does food have to do with role-playing games? How can escape rooms be used in education? How are games and play the building blocks of our society? What do gamers think about digital elements in board games? These are only a few of the questions asked at Intersection in Games, a seminar organized by the gaming convention Ropecon together with the Game Research Lab of the University of Tampere.

Seeking a permanent place at Ropecon

The international academic seminar is held on Friday, July 7th, and is open to all visitors. The program is mostly in English. Our goal is to make the seminar a permanent fixture of Ropecon and offer our visitors an opportunity to get acquainted with the latest discourse in game studies. We seek to make game studies known outside of academia. Its research often delves into topics that are also debated by the hobbyists.

The seminar is chaired this year by Professor **J. Tuomas Harviainen**, who has researched role-playing games for over 15 years. He is also one of the editors of *Simulation & Gaming*, the oldest active journal of game studies. Professor Harviainen raises the questions of why and how have the Nordic Countries, especially Finland, lost their former leading role in the field. The majority of researchers are nowadays based in North America. Can the situation be saved? What is needed to do that?

What is game studies?

Game studies is a field where games are studied as games, not merely a part of some other phenomenon, or just as stories, films, social situations, or simulations. Games are seen as valuable in themselves instead of as tools for studying something else, or significant only when they can be used for learning or improving some other activity.



Game studies seeks to understand the history of all kinds of play, the culture around them, different ways of playing, the act of play itself, and game design. Research may investigate the reasons people have for playing certain types of games, what kind of social interaction occurs in different play situations, how games affect the surrounding society, or what goes on within different game communities. In Finland, the hot spots of game studies include Aalto University and the Universities of Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Tampere, and Turku. Research projects are sometimes done in collaboration with major game companies.

Game studies is a comparatively young field. It is usually seen as beginning in the early 2000's through the networking of researchers interested in digital games and the founding of the online journal Game Studies (2001) and the game studies association [DiGRA](#) (2003). However, the study of games and play has its roots far back in history.

Ropecon 2018

Ropecon is the largest volunteer-organized gaming event in Europe, held this year on July 27th-29th in Messukeskus Expo and Convention Centre in Helsinki. The three-day event is planned and executed from start to finish by gamers, for gamers. The organization behind it is Ropecon ry, an association founded to advance and develop Finnish role-playing, card, board, and miniature gaming hobby. The seminar's title Intersection in Games is one interpretation of Ropecon's theme for this year, Life and Community.

More information and the seminar schedule:

<https://2018.ropecon.fi/eng/program/academic-program/>

Press images:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ropeconmedia/albums/72157662048730757>

Ropecon 2018 press page:

<https://2018.ropecon.fi/eng/press/>

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