

Akil Fletcher, PhD

Postdoctoral, Princeton University

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EDUCATION

- 2023 Ph.D. Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, University of California, Irvine
Fields: Digital/Virtual Anthropology, Black Communities, Game Studies, Internet Studies, social media, online platforms, Online Gaming
- 2016 B.A. Anthropology, The City College of New York, CUNY, Minor in Sociology
- 2014 A.A. Liberal Arts, Kingsborough Community College, CUNY
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DISSERTATION

- Title: "Gaming Blackness: An Exploration of Black Gaming Communities and Practices."
- Committee: Tom Boellstorff (Chair), Damien Sojoyner, Kishonna Gray.
- Research funded by: National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program, National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, UCI Presidential Fellowship
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PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles (peer-reviewed)

- 2020 Fletcher, Akil. "Esports and the Color Line: Labor, Skill and the Exclusion of Black Players." Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.
<https://doi.org/10.24251/hicss.2020.325>.
- 2020 Fletcher, Akil. "Teaching Race through the Lens of Gaming." Teaching and Learning Anthropology Journal.
<http://teachinglearninganthro.com/2020/01/>.

Book Chapters (peer-reviewed)

2022 Fletcher, Akil. "Black Gamers' Refuge: Finding Community within the Magic Circle of Whiteness." Routledge Companion to Media Anthropology.

Public Scholarship

2020 Why Gamers Should Read Black Authors." UCI Publications Esports. <https://esports.uci.edu/why-gamers-shouldread-black-authors/>.

2019 Fletcher, Akil. "White Fans, Liberal Ideologies, and the Erasure of Black Stories in Gaming." Platypus. <http://blog.castac.org/2019/05/white-fans-liberal-ideologiesandthe-erasure-of-black-stories-in-gaming/> .

GRANTS, AWARDS, HONORS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

2022 – 2023 President's Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCI (\$48,139.96)

2021 – 2022 **National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (Grant ID: 2049474) (\$13,914.00)**

2021 Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship (Honorable Mention)

2020 Nominated for Best Paper HICSS-53, Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences

2019 – 2023 **National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (Grant ID: 2019286927) (\$102,000.00)**

2019 – 2022 Nevin's Graduate Endowment Fellowship, UCI (\$10,000)

2018 – 2022 Social Science Merit Fellowship, UCI (\$20,700)

2018 – 2022 Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, UCI (\$17,000)

2018 – 2019 Diversity Fellowship, UCI (\$10,000)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2021 – 2022 Primary Investigator "Gaming Blackness" Dissertation Research, UCI

2018 Competitive Edge Summer Researcher, UCI

2015 – 2018

Research Assistant, University of John Jay College of Criminal
(Special thanks in, Trinch, Shonna, and Edward Snajdr "What the
signs say: Language, Gentrification, and Place-Making in
Brooklyn" 2020)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2019 Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of California, Irvine, Teaching Assistant, SOC230A: Race and Ethnicity, Winter 2019 Taught 4 weekly sections for 110 students.
- 2019 Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of California, Irvine, Teaching Assistant, SOC230A: Race and Ethnicity, Spring 2019 Taught 3 weekly sections for 125 students.
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CONFERENCE PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

- 2022 "Black Joy. Black Pain: Exploring Narratives of Survival in Gaming" Panel Discussant with Kishonna Gray, Reginald Gardner, Javon Goard, and Joan Miller. Meaningful Play 2022 Conference.
- 2022 "Black Gaming: Exploring Community within the Magic Circle of Whiteness" Doctoral Consortium Foundations of Digital Games 2022 (FDG 2022)
- 2022 "Studying and Speaking to Industries: A Game Studies Roundtable" Panel Discussant with Amanda Cote, Kishonna Gray, Christopher A. Paul, Kelly Bergstrom, Alison Harvey, Christine H. Tran. Console-ing Passions 2022.
- 2022 "Black Gamer's Refuge: Finding Community within the Magic Circle of Whiteness". Games+Learning+Society Conference (GLS 2022)
- 2021 "Gaming in the Dark." Panel Discussant with Stephanie Jones, Aaron Doughty, Reginald Gardner, and Stephanie Ortiz. Society for Cinema and Media Studies 2021 (SCMS 2021).
- 2020 "Esports and the Color Line" Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences 2020 (HIICS 2020).
- 2019 "The Quotidian Practices of Streaming." American Anthropology Association 2019 (AAA 2019).

- 2018 "Summer Research Symposium." University of California, Irvine.
- 2016 "John Jay Student Research Symposium" John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
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INVITED TALKS

- 2023 Fletcher, Akil. "Black in the Magic Circle of Whiteness", PLASMA speaker, University at Buffalo.
- 2023 Fletcher, Akil. "Black Fantasy: Reformatting Black Identity in Final Fantasy XIV", Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
- 2023 Fletcher, Akil. "Creating Blackness: Identity in Final Fantasy XIV", Invited Speaker, Purdue University.
- 2022 Fletcher, Akil. "Exploring Race through VR and Embodiment", Guest Lecturer, Colgate College.
- 2022 Fletcher, Akil. "Black Fantasies: Defining A Digital Double Consciousness in Final Fantasy XIV", Invited Speaker, University at Buffalo.
- 2022 Fletcher, Akil. "Analyzing Race in Video Games", Guest Lecturer, University at Buffalo.
- 2022 Fletcher, Akil. "Reformatting Blackness: Black Identity in Final Fantasy XIV" Colloquium Speaker, UCI.
- 2022 Fletcher, Akil. "An Anthropological Look at Gaming Communities" Guest Lecturer for ICS 60 Games and Society, UCI.
- 2022 Fletcher, Akil. "Digital Anthropology: Virtual Gaming and Black Experience." Guest Lecturer, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, Pomona College.
- 2022 Fletcher, Akil. "Fieldwork Preparation Bootcamp." Invited Speaker, Anthro in Transit (AIT) Workshop, UCI.
- 2021 Fletcher, Akil. "Racial Representation in Esports and Gaming." UCI Esports Center, UCI.
- 2021 Fletcher, Akil. "Digital Anthropology and Race in Gaming." Guest Lecturer for Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, Pomona College.
- 2021 Fletcher, Akil. "Revisiting Esports and the Color Line." Guest Lecturer for The Cultural Politics of Visual Representation (ANTH250A), Department of Anthropology, UCI.

2021	Fletcher, Akil. "Success in Grant Writing." Guest Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, UCI.
2020	Fletcher, Akil. "Black Faces in Gaming Spaces." Invited Speaker at UCI Esports Arena.
2020	Fletcher, Akil. "Race and Gaming." Guest Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Science Fiction and Anthropology, Ithaca College.
2019	Fletcher, Akil. "Digital Anthropology and Video Games." Guest Lecturer, Introduction to Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, UCI.

DIVERSITY & SERVICE IN INDUSTRY

2023	Program Coordinator & Director of "Camp CRECE – Youth Esports and Gaming Camp" sponsored by Niantic, Inc, and the University of Kentucky.
2022	Program Coordinator & Director of "Camp Kiki – Youth Esports and Gaming Camp" sponsored by Niantic, Inc, and the University of Kentucky.

DIVERSITY & SERVICE IN ACADEMIA

2021	Executive Committee Member of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for the Esports Conference, UCI
2020	Guest Speaker at Kingsborough Community College, College Discovery, Freshman Orientation
2019	Guest Speaker at Kingsborough Community College, College Discovery, Career Development Day
2019 – 2020	NSF & Ford Grant Editor, UCI
2019	Peer Mentor, Competitive Edge Program, Graduate Division, UCI
2018	Guest Speaker at Kingsborough Community College, College Discovery, Graduation

References

Tom Boellstorff (tboellst@uci.edu)

Department of Anthropology University of California, Irvine

Damien Sojoyner (damien.sojoyner@uci.edu)

Department of Anthropology University of California, Irvine

Kishonna Gray (unicorn@uky.edu)

Writing, Rhetoric, Digital Studies: African/African American Studies

The University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Roxanne Varzi (rvarzi@uci.edu)

Department of Anthropology University of California, Irvine