

Digital Pop Culture, Video Games, & Indian Cultural Heritage

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Video Games are a significant part of present-day digital pop culture and as such, they are influential far beyond persons actively playing games. For example, visual and narrative representations in games are often widely discussed, and at times influence other media genres such as film or literary genres. Additionally, representations in games are often popularized by persons (at times gaining micro-celebrity status) sharing gaming videos on digital platforms such as YouTube, Steam, or Twitch. This talk focuses on intersections of representation and identity in digitally created, curated and negotiated cultural heritage in India. Exploring video game development as a cultural and creative industry, it discusses examples of how (and why) South Asian cultural heritage (e.g., music, dance, architecture, dress styles) is used and implemented in game settings and how this is publicly received, discussed and related to questions of identity, in India, Asia and globally.

13 November 2026 -2 pm

**Venue: Sociology Seminar Room
AS1 #02-12**



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Xenia Zeiler is Professor of South Asian Studies at the Department of Cultures, Faculty of Arts, University of Helsinki. Her research and teaching are situated at the intersection of digital media, culture, and society, specifically as related to India and global Indian communities. Her focus within this wider field of digital culture is video games and gaming research, in India and beyond. Closely related to and supporting this are her other major research areas: In order to understand how digital spaces such as social media or video games, and more traditional media formats such as film or TV, shape and are shaped by various actors, she researches and teaches digital religion, popular culture, cultural heritage, and mediatization processes.