

Call for Participants:

The Optimization Trap: Designing Against Neoliberal Play

DiGRA 2025

We invite game scholars, designers, developers, and enthusiasts of critical game studies to participate in *The Optimization Trap: Designing Against Neoliberal Play* at DiGRA 2025. This workshop will delve into how digital games such as EVE Online and Factorio reflect and reproduce the complex dynamics of neoliberal and neofeudal systems. Through case studies of EVE Online and Factorio, the session combines lectures and playful group discussions to explore how game mechanics perpetuate dominant socio-economic systems. During the workshop, we will come together and think of new ways for playful resistance. Participants will engage in collaborative worldbuilding activities designed to deconstruct prevailing models and prototype alternative paradigms for game design

Submission Guidelines:

- Interested participants are invited to submit a brief statement (up to 150 words) outlining your interest in the workshop and any preliminary ideas you might bring to the collaborative worldbuilding discussions.
- Please email your submission to vroca@ucla.edu and mluo2@oxy.edu
- The submission deadline is **May 15, 2025**. (If you require adjustments to this timeline, please contact us at the provided email address.)

Registration:

Registration for the workshop is limited and will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis. Detailed instructions for final registration will be shared with accepted participants.

For any questions or further information, please contact vroca@ucla.edu and mluo2@oxy.edu