

Colloquium September 26, 2025
Julianne Grasso (Florida State University)

Title: "The Immersive Music Fallacy: Thoughts on a Ludomusicological Obsession"

Abstract:

Why has the phenomenon of immersion in video games dominated much of the discourse on video game music for nearly 20 years? With no single agreed-upon definition for immersion, which could mean anything from enhanced focus to a feeling of virtual incorporation, studies of the immersive effects of music rest on a shaky conceptual foundation. In this talk, I explore the complex web of meanings around immersion, tracing some of its history as a basis for understanding video game music. Analyzing some examples of allegedly immersive—as well as allegedly *non*-immersive—music and gameplay, I offer some possible answers to the question: what do we really mean when we talk about immersion?

Bio: Julianne Grasso is an Assistant Professor of Music Theory at Florida State University. She specializes in teaching and researching music in multimedia, especially video games, and currently serves on the executive committee for the North American Conference on Video Game Music. She received her PhD in Music History and Theory from the University of Chicago in 2020.