Joshua Jackson | Diversity Statement

One of the driving reasons that I am pursuing a career in academia is to be a small but growing light in a big world. I want to make sure that my students feel safe to express themselves, work through tough material, and find alternate histories of technology and technicity that help them flourish. My research agenda echoes this: the research topics that I present at conferences, publish work on, and collaborate with others on is all focused in some large way on not just examining precarity or marginalization, but developing actionable plans that can assist those bodies in finding relief.
 My job as a teacher is to expose students to alternative histories, scholarship, and political action that they may not receive in other classes. For this reason, I am meticulous in picking as many women, people of color, and queer scholars as I possibly can that still support the course objectives for any class that I teach. In Game Studies, the vast majority of the scholarly work that we read are from queer people, women, or people of color, as are the games we play. For the games that are made by bigger developers, or are not as front-facing with their creators’ diversity, we discuss how design choices, characterization choices, and community-engagement characterize non-normative ways of interaction.
 My job as a teacher is also to make sure that my students have access to the resources they need to succeed in college such as the counseling center, student health center, university law offices, and ombudsperson, and help them in getting the assistance that they need. The most common thing students have confided in me about is mental health concerns, especially how it is affecting their work. I always recommend that they get plugged into the counseling center, if for nothing else than a mental tune-up; it’s a resource that is criminally underutilized simply because there is such a huge stigma attached to mental health (Yanos, 2018; Pai and Bharadwaj, 2017; Sartourius, 2007; Thornicroft et al, 2016; Smith and Applegate, 2018). I always ask students who confide in me if they would like me to walk with them to the counseling center, or the law office, or the health center, and often, they take me up on the offer. I want to make sure that my students know that I always have their best interests in mind. In my syllabi, I include a section on emergency services and university resources, and when I go over that in class, I make sure that they are aware that I am available should they need me.
 My job as a researcher is no different. I push research agendas that advocate for queer bodies, bodies of color, and non-normative bodies, and are intent on providing actionable results that can empower those bodies. One piece of my research in specific underscores my commitment to actionable research agendas. By analyzing citational practices in game studies scholarship, I was able to determine that, of over 1,000 articles I examined in *Game Studies*, *Games and Culture*, and *Loading*, approximately 80% of them cited less than 5 women, queers, or people of color. *Loading*, as a journal, displays more diverse citational practices, with over 65% of their articles citing 5 or more women, queers, or people of color while *Game Studies* presented the most heterogenous citational practices with 19% of their articles citing 5 or more women, queers, or people of color. Baldi (1998), Baron, Bettina, and Kotthoff (2002), Basow, Phelan, Capotosto (2006), Elsesser and Leveer (2011), Ferber (1988), Gaston (2015), Hacker (1979, 1981), Hakanson (n.d.), Knobloch-Westerwick and Glynn (2013), Lievrouw (1989), Lovell (2012), Lutz (1990) Massey (2009), Mazur and Spierings (2016), Mcelhinny, Hols, Hotzkener, Unger and Hicks (2003), Merton (1968), and others have conducted qualitative and quantitative studies about technology- and STEM-focused scholarship’s citational patterns, and all of them determined that a) perceived gender affects publication opportunities, b) perceived gender, race, and sexuality affects citations, and c) perceived gender affects credibility and reception. Game studies is no different; it is highly racialized, highly gendered, and suffers from erasure of foundational work from queers, people of color, and women. In the field of game studies, specifically, and media studies, broadly, these disciplines are still young enough to course correct away from racist, sexist citational practices. As part of a growing contingent of young scholars that see this inequity and are working toward fixing this, I am proud to continue highlighting these practices and creating actionable plans and resources (see: *Towards the Erasure of Erasure,* Jackson, 2019) to help fix these problems.
 My goal as a faculty member will be to continue learning with my students and creating as equitable a classroom environment as I can. Additionally, one of my goals is to create a research group akin to the Media Transformations Group at the University of Southampton, but more focused on issues of academic diversity, diversity in technology, and possible scholarly and activist interventions. I think that sometimes we as scholars and teachers forget that we hold a unique power to be transformative in the lives of our students, and in the lives of our community members and research subjects. My entire body of scholarly work is built on those two principles, and I hope to continue building and refining my methods of doing so here.