Gianna Williams, Ph.D Candidate

Research Focus: HCI , Social Computing, Sociotechnical Systems
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My work involves mixed methods research, as well as Critical Technocultural Discourse analysis. I have been interested in studying Online Communities' as well as investigating the ways AI interacts with the internet.

Education

2022 – Expected Summer 2027 — **Ph.D. Computer Science, Northeastern University** Advised by Alexandra To 3.87/4.00 **Thesis**: *Afropessimistic Algorithms: Personalization, Confinement, and Resistance of Black Online Social Networks*

Committee Members : Micheal Ann DeVito, Michelle Rogers, Herman Saksono

2022 – 2024 — **M.S. Computer Science, Northeastern University** 3.87/4.00

2018 – 2022 — **B.S. Computer Science Minor in Sociology, American University** 3.63/4.00

Publications

Conference proceedings

1. **Williams, G.**, N. Chen, M. A. Devito, and A. To, "Why Can't Black Women Just Be?: Black Femme Content Creators Navigating Algorithmic Monoliths," *CHI 2025, **Recieved Honorable Mention***, 2026. URL: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3706598.3713842.
2. **Willams, G**, S. Rusagara, and A. To, "What do you mean by "Hood" Prom?: Joyful Narratives Shown Through The Eyes of Black Teens on TikTok," *Trans. Soc. Comput.*, vol. 9, no. 1, Mar. 2026. URL: https://doi.org/10.1145/3797821.
3. **Williams, G.**, "Afropessimistic Algorithms: Personalization, Confinement, and Resistance of Black Online Social Networks," *Doctoral Consortium CSCW*, 2026.
4. **Williams, G.**, M. D. L. Santos, S. Savage, and A. To, "Mapping The Crowdsourcing Workforce In Latin America And The Caribbean," *MexIHC'24*, 2026.
5. N. Chen, **Williams, G.**, A. To, and M. A. Devito, "I Can Take What I Want And Adapt As Needed: BIPOC Identity-Making And Resistance Through Internet Aesthetics On TikTok," *CHI'2026*, 2026. URL: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3772318.3790948.
6. B. M. Turay, **Willams, G**, D. Dinio, N. Chen, T. Wong, and A. To, ""What if England Actually Sucked at Colonizing?": Challenges, Opportunities, and Approaches to Engaging Race in Game Design," *ACM CC'2026*, 2026. URL: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3803784.3807541.
7. A. Smith, **Williams, G.**, G. Thompson, and A. To, "That's What We Pay For: Culture And Modding In The Black Simmers Community," *CHI Play 2025, **Recieved Honorable Mention***, 2026. URL: https://doi.org/10.1145/3748609.
8. A. To, **Willams, G**, N. Chen, J. Zabala, T. Wong, and B. M. Turay, "SERG: A Framework for Meaningful Racial Representations in Game Design," *To appear at CBIPOC Conference 2027*, 2027.

9 B. M. Turay, J. Zabala, T. Wong, **Willams, G**, and A. To, " Let Her Cook: A Review of Women of Color Protagonists in Games," *To appear at CBIPOC Conference 2027*,

Teaching Assistant

2025 - Current — **Northeastern University**, (Teaching Assistant) * *Denotes Guest Lectured*

- **CS 4973/7390 Abolition Technology** * Spring 2026 Undergraduate/Graduate Course
- **CS 3500 Object-Oriented Design** Fall 2025 Undergraduate Course
- **DS 4200 Data Visualization** Summer 2025 Undergraduate Course
- **CS 7180 AI in Education: Past, Present, Future** * Spring 2025 Graduate Course **Guest Lectured**

2018 - 2022 — **American University** (Teaching Assistant)

- CSC 121 Creative Programming Undergraduate Level
- CSC 621 Design Organization Programming Languages Undergraduate Level

Service

Service to the Profession - Reviewing

2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 — **CHI Paper Reviewer**, (External Reviewer)

2026 — **CSCW Paper Reviewer**, (External Reviewer)

IDC Paper Reviewer, (External Reviewer)

SAGE Journals Social Media and Society, (External Reviewer)

Service to the Institution

2023 — **Khoury College Hiring Committee at Northeastern University**, (Volunteer)

2023, 2024 — **Khoury College PhD Application Committee at Northeastern University**, (Volunteer)

2023 — **Khoury College Student Social Committee Chair at Northeastern University**, (Volunteer)

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Mentorship

Jenny Leana Fotso Ngompe, Columbia University Graduate Student mentored Fall 202

Kaumudi Rawal, Northeastern University Graduate Student mentored Summer 2026-Fa

Triston Wong, Northeastern University Undergraduate Student mentored Fall 2025-Pre

Service (continued)

- **Soni Rusagara, Northeastern University Graduate Student** mentored Fall 2024-Summer
- **Dylan Dinio, Northeastern University Undergraduate Student** mentored Fall 2024-Sum
  Now working at Google
- **Natalie Chen, Northeastern University Undergraduate Student** mentored Spring 2024,
  Now a PhD Student at University of Michigan
- **Maya De Los Santos, Northeastern University Undergraduate Student**
  mentored January 2023 – December 2023;
  Now a PhD Student at Brown University
- **Liz Maylin, Wellesley College Undergraduate Student** mentored January 2023 – June 202

Leadership

2023 - Present
- **Black Graduate Student Association at Northeastern University**, (Co-founder, Member)
  The BGSA enriches the scholarly and professional development of Black graduate students at Northeastern by facilitating opportunities for service, activism, and academic fellowship through events that attract more than 100 participants.

2022 - Present
- **National Society of Black Engineers Graduate Student**, (Liaison)
  Facilitates communication, networking, and mentorship opportunities for undergraduate students to look into research and Graduate School, bridging their academic and professional journey within NSBE.

Employment History

June 2022 – August 2023
- **Tutor,** IdTech
  Created and taught coding lessons on diverse computer science topics (i.e web development, robotics, and other STEM fields)

June 2021 – August 2021
- **Summer Research Intern,** Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
  Researched under Andrew Lipman's supervision, using Natural Language Processing using N-Gram models to classify complex information.

May 2020 – September 2020
- **Software Engineering Intern,**Northrop Grumman
  Developed and documented on Northrop Grumman's Defensive System Team, which provided opportunities to increase my C++ coding skills in addition to learning the AGILE framework

Skills

Research
- Digital Ethnography, Grounded Theory, Reflexive Analysis

Skills (continued)

Coding	Java, Pytorch, Python, Java, Git, TensorFlow, LabView, Swift, React, Node.JS
Databases	MySQL, PostgreSQL, HSQL, SQLite, JSON, MongoDB
Web Dev	HTML, CSS, JavaScript,