RTA 320: Interactive Storytelling, fall 2017
RCC 359B, Thu. 6pm–9pm

Instructor: Nick Fox-Gieg
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Description:
This hands-on course focuses on how to create meaningful and compelling narratives by experimenting with a range of nonlinear, interactive, and immersive media. Throughout, students will explore how media makers are appropriating and using new technologies to tell layered and complex stories, to shape a desired message, and to engage an audience's attention.

Students will be asked to produce thoughtful and well-written interactive stories, to work collaboratively, to interrogate questions of authenticity, truth, and authority in new media, and to consider the role that technology plays in communicating and distributing stories. This class will encourage students to experiment with form and content by facilitating discussion of design concepts and providing a safe space for the critique of new work.

Goals:
Students will gain an understanding of interactive storytelling principles and how they are conveyed through new media. Students will engage with narratives in different formats, and develop the skills to explore stories in a nonlinear way, without sacrificing emotional impact. This class is focused on concept development, and requires the communication of creative intent through presentations and prototyping. Students will be expected to articulate their creative goals and intentions and reflect those in the work they produce.

Assignments:
For each assignment, the media and form will be the choice of the student, based on their interpretation of how to best execute the design challenge (with the understanding that the chosen media is part of the narrative itself). Acceptable media for production might include photography, video, animation, projection, sculpture, performance, writing, and sound; the use of multiple/mixed media is encouraged. For assignments with a graded proposal component, students will be asked to present a proposal and then to incorporate feedback into the execution of the project, which will be presented for critique by the class. All assignments should be documented; some assignments will be collaborative.

Evaluation Methods: All project briefs will be presented to the class. Students are required to create proposals comprised of an artist statement and supporting documentation such as mockups, sketches, and a materials list. Work will be evaluated on the basis of originality, inventiveness, and presentation. Where proposals are required, process work will be graded.

GRADING:

1. Class participation   **25%**
(throughout the semester)

2. Project 1: Internet Persona   **25%**
*Create a narrative in which the player interacts with at least one character,
leading to a dramatic resolution. Use one or more of sound, images, and text;
include at least one branching point where the player can influence the outcome.*

Assigned   Sep 14
Proposal due   Sep 21
In-class lab period   Sep 28
Final project due   Oct 19

3. Project 2: Crowdsourcing   **25%**
*Create a narrative based on a set of pre-existing rules or data. You might collect
this data by doing research on a topic of interest, by reaching out to contributors,
by recording rule-based interactions with participants, or by making use of an
existing database.*

Assigned   Oct 5
Proposal due   Oct 26
In-class lab period   Nov 2
Final project due   Nov 9

4. Project 3: Fairy Tale Remix   **25%**
*Create a narrative that adapts and reimagines a well-known story as an
explorable game environment—for example, a video installation, a
location-based AR app, or a self-contained world in a VR app. Within your
environment, make use of at least two separate locations.*

Assigned   Nov 16
Proposal due   Nov 23
In-class lab period   Nov 30
Final project due   Dec 7

All students will have the opportunity to submit a Faculty Course Survey.
The Ryerson Grading Rubric is available on the website here:
http://www.ryerson.ca/facultysupport/grading/gradinginfo/

Submission of work:
Work is due at the time of presentations. Projects must be done by each due
date. Late assignments will be subject to penalty, unless you have an excused
absence and have made arrangements with me beforehand. Lateness

in assignment submission due to illness or dire family circumstances
will be taken into consideration. Unexcused absence from a critique will result in
a late penalty. You must follow Ryerson's Student Medical Information Guidelines
by having your doctor fill out Ryerson's Student Medical Certificate. Any planned
alterations to the course, including assignments, grade weights, due dates,
assignment or submission formats, will be discussed in class prior to
implementation.

Critiques and discussion:
There will be critical discussions and peer review critiques throughout the
semester; students are expected to participate in discussions of the material.
Non-participation in will result in a lowering of your grade.

Student Codes of Conduct All students are required to adhere to all relevant
University policies, such as the Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct (see
http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol61.pdf) and the Student
Code of Academic Conduct (see
http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol60.pdf)

The Ryerson University Undergraduate Course Calendar This is your
resource for all information relating to academics, including curriculum, course
descriptions, significant dates (including last date to drop a course without
academic penalty), academic standings, The Student Code of Academic &
Non-Academic Conduct, etc. The Ryerson University Undergraduate Course
Calendar is available online at
http://www.ryerson.ca/currentstudents/calendars/index.html

RTA Website
At *www.ryersonrta.ca* you will find information about the curriculum, course
outlines, scholarships, student groups, staff & faculty, studios & facilities, etc.

D2L
Brightspace is an online course tool which may include an online discussion
board, course documents such as the syllabus and lecture notes,
announcements, an area where your grades are posted, etc. If your professor
has set up a Brightspace site for this course, you'll find it at *http://my.ryerson.ca*.

RTA Online
RTA Online is an Organization on Brightspace that contains templates for
storyboards, production paperwork, etc., as well as online tutorials for software
and equipment used in classes and labs. Find it under "Organizations" on your
my.ryerson.ca homepage.

Your Ryerson Email Account:

The RTA School of Media will often send you important information by email (e.g. scholarship information, reminders of important dates, notification of meetings and/or events, internship opportunities and job postings, etc.). Correspondence from RTA and from your professors will be sent ONLY to your Ryerson email account. It is your obligation to ensure that you activate your account and check it regularly, or have it forwarded to an account you check regularly. Please use only your Ryerson account for sending emails to staff & faculty. See below for accessing your Ryerson email account.

Activating Your Ryerson Online Identity
To access many of Ryerson's online resources, you must first activate your Ryerson online identity by completing a series of web forms available via *http://www.ryerson.ca/accounts/*. During the activation process, you will obtain a username and create your initial password. Once activated, your Ryerson online identity provides you with access to:

> Google Apps
> The Central Computer Labs including the Library and KHW71
> The my.ryerson portal and learning system
> RAMSS (via *https://my.ryerson.ca*)
> Other servers and applications needed

Notice to Students who require academic accommodation:
Students eligible for academic accommodation support have singular or multiple disabilities such as learning disabilities, sensory impairments, acquired brain injuries, ADHD, and mental health, medical, and mobility issues. Register for academic accommodation support as soon as possible, preferably prior to the start of the semester to ensure your accommodation plan is active when classes start. Students can contact the Learning Support Centre via: *http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/*

Written Assignments: All written assignments are expected to be properly formatted and cited using **MLA style** (unless otherwise indicated by your Instructor). Guides and references for using MLA style can be found through the Ryerson University Library as well as the Writing Centre. See *http://writingcentre.blog.ryerson.ca/files/2012/05/MLA.pdf*

Fact-Based Media Assignments
For assignments or projects in which real people and/or real events are to be featured (e.g. news stories, features, documentaries, interviews, etc.), students are expected to adhere to the highest standard of truth in reporting: all information included should be checked for accuracy and any guests/interviews/sound clips/etc. used must be real. Fabricating interviews or information, or using actors/friends to pose as someone they are not, etc. for the

sake of an assignment are serious transgressions of media ethics and will not be tolerated.

English as a Second Language:
Ryerson University offers support to students who may require improvement in their overall English language communication skills. Please visit **English Language Support** at *www.ryerson.ca/studentservices/els/*

Accommodation of Student Religious Observance:
At the start of the term, students who have religious observance obligations which will lead to absences from campus or academic activities during the semester should download the "Student Declaration of Religious Observance" form from *http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/relobservforminstr.pdf*. Present a copy of the form to the professor **within the first two weeks of classes**. The professor and student will then consult to reach an agreement on a reasonable means to address the situation.

Student Learning Support
Learning Success (*http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/*) helps students make the transition to university learning, develop sound learning strategies through tutoring options and course-based study groups, and achieve their academic potential by providing services in both traditional and virtual learning environments. Learning Success offers free workshops for students such as: Note-taking, Managing Tasks and Time, Ways of Learning, Critical Reading, Test Preparation and Test Anxiety, etc.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is defined by the University as "claiming the words, ideas, artistry, drawings, images or data of another person as if they were your own." (Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2). According to the Code, plagiarism includes:

> i. copying another person's work (including information found on the Internet and unpublished materials) without appropriate referencing;
> ii. presenting someone else's work, opinions or theories as if they are your own;
> iii. presenting another's substantial compositional changes to an assignment as your own;
> iv. working collaboratively without permission of the Contract Lecturer on an assignment, and then submitting it as if it was created solely by you; or
> v. submitting the same work, for credit, in two or more courses without the prior written permission of the Contract Lecturer(s). (Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2.)

Usually one associates plagiarism with written works but it can include any work such as photographs/artwork, Internet materials, video, audio, and digital media. **The University penalties for plagiarism can be severe, ranging from getting**

zero on the assignment up to, in cases of prior academic dishonesty, suspension or expulsion. Please note that you may be required to submit some or all of your written assignments to *www.turnitin.com*. Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second week of class, consult with the Contract Lecturer to make alternate arrangements.

Useful links to help you understand and avoid plagiarism:
Ryerson's Academic Integrity web site: *http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/*
Student Code of Academic Conduct policy:
http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf

Cheating:
Cheating is defined by Ryerson University as:
> i. using materials or aids not expressly allowed by the Contract Lecturer in an examination or test;
> ii. copying another person's answer(s) to an examination or test question; copying another person's answers to individually assigned projects;
> iii. consulting with another person or unauthorized materials outside of an examination room during the examination period (e.g. discussing an exam or consulting materials during an emergency evacuation or when permitted to use a washroom);
> iv. improperly submitting an answer to a test or examination question completed, in whole or part, outside the examination room unless specifically permitted by the examination format;
> v. resubmitting altered test or examination work after it has already been evaluated;
> vi. presenting falsified or fabricated material, including research results; or
> vii. improperly obtaining, through deceit, theft, bribery, collusion or otherwise, access to examination paper(s) or set of questions, or other confidential information.(Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2)

The University penalties for cheating can be severe, ranging from getting zero on the assignment or test up to, in cases of prior academic dishonesty, suspension or expulsion.

Use of Laptops, Cell Phones, and Other Mobile Electronic Devices in the Classroom
Students are advised that because various learning and teaching activities may be enhanced or diminished by use of mobile devices, it is up to each professor to determine when and how such devices can or should be used by students during any given class.Students may not take pictures, video recordings, or sound recordings in class without express permission from the professor.

RTA Policy on Offensive Materials
RTA School of Media desires to foster an environment that promotes and embraces the principles of freedom of expression, academic inquiry, and creativity. Within this context we all have a responsibility to respect the rights and freedoms of others, including the right to study and work in an environment which is free of offensive materials.
The term offensive may be used to refer to material that:
- is overtly sexual, and/or
- contains profanity, and/or
- perpetuates stereotypes (e.g. racial, gender, sexual, religious, etc.), and/or
- depicts violence, and/or
- denigrates members of marginalized groups based on various factors such as sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, gender, disability, etc.

Should you not be sure if your content is offensive, please follow up with your Contract Lecturer before proceeding with your project. Please review the full policy which can be found in the RTA Student Handbook on our website: www.ryersonrta.ca