Video Game Studies: Core Concepts Assignment

Section 1: History and Chronology

Question 1: The Crash and the Revival

The 1983 Video game crash was caused by the poor quality of games and the too many consoles released in a short period of time time with low quality which flooded the market. Like E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial on the Atari 2600 which failed both commercially and critically.

The company that revived the home console industry was Nintendo, with the release of Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). It restored trust by enforcing strict quality and presenting the console as a family-friendly entertainment system. During that, the mascot Mario was introduced and became an iconiv symbol of video games.

Question 2: Era Differentiation

The Golden Age of Arcades (1970-1983) was defined by simple, skill-based games played in public spaces such as arcades. Pac-Man (1980) encouraged public competition through high scores and short play sessions.

The Modern 3D & Online Era (2000-2010), focused on immersive, long-term experiences and primarily played in private spaces, like homes and trought the internet. As Wolrd of Warcraft (2004) which introduced online social interaction.

Fundamental social difference:

- Golden Age → Public, local, face-to-face play
- Modern Era → Private, online, network-based play

Question 3: The 16-bit Wars

During the **16-bit Era (1990–1999) :**

- **Nintendo** with the **Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES)**
- **SEGA** with the **Sega Genesis (Mega Drive)**

At the same time on PC :

- **Doom (1993)** – foundational to the First-Person Shooter (FPS) genre
- **Warcraft: Orcs & Humans (1994)** – instrumental in defining the Real-Time Strategy (RTS) genre

Section 2: Genre Classification & Evolution

Question 4: Genre Definition and Examples

- **Metroidvania :** A genre focused on exploration in a large world, where progression is unlocked through new abilities (Super Metroid)
- **JRPG :** A role-playing genre emphasizing narrative, character development (Finaly Fantasy VII)

- **RTS :** A strategy genre where players manage resources and units in real time rather than in turns (StartCraft)

Question 5: Understanding Hybridization

Traditional **Roguelike** games (e.g., *Nethack*) feature permanent death, forcing the player to restart with no progress saved. Progression relies purely on skill.

Roguelite games (e.g., *Hades*) allow persistent progression, meaning players keep upgrades or story progress after death, making the genre more accessible.

Question 6: The Souls-like Subgenre

The game that defined the **Souls-like** genre is **Demon's Souls (2009)**.

Key elements:

- High-difficulty, skill-based combat
- Interconnected world design with environmental storytelling

Section 3: Influence and Key Titles

Question 7: Technology as a Driver

3D graphics enabled large, explorable environments, making **Open-World** games possible.
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (1998) solidified this shift.

Question 8: Community and Modding

The **MOBA** genre emerged from the *Defense of the Ancients (DotA)* mod for **Warcraft III**, later becoming standalone games like *League of Legends* and *Dota 2*.

Question 9: The Pillars of Gaming

- **Dark Souls** influenced game design through difficulty and skill-based mastery.

- **The Last of Us** impacted the industry through strong narrative and emotional storytelling.

These games represent two contrasting design philosophies: mechanics vs. narrative.