

Communication Studies & Media Arts  
MEDIAART 3K03  
Game Studies  
*Fall 2023*



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## HUMANITIES

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### Instructor Information

Andrew Bailey

**Email:** [bailea20@mcmaster.ca](mailto:bailea20@mcmaster.ca)

**Office Hours:**

I am available for scheduled one-on-one Teams meetings 2–4 pm EST on Friday afternoons. You can sign up for a meeting by using Microsoft Bookings or by emailing me at least a day in advance.

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### Course Information

**Lectures:** Tuesdays, 8:30-11:20 am EST, Burke Science Building (BSB) B103

**Course Dates:** 09/05/2023 - 12/06/2023

**Units:** 3.00

**Course Delivery Mode:** In Person

**Course Description:** A study of the form, content, and playing of digital games. Topics include: form, genre, and technology; time and space; representation and narrative; and participatory play. Assignments include digital production. Three hours (combined lecture and lab); one term Prerequisite(s): Registration in Level III or above of a Multimedia or Media Arts program, a program in Communication Studies, or the Software Engineering (Game Design) program Antirequisite(s): MMEDIA 3K03

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### Instructor-Specific Course Information

This course explores many of the significant theories, perspectives, and debates that have arisen within the field of game studies since its inception during the early 2000s.

Every week, students will learn new methods for critically analyzing videogames and their surrounding culture using a wide variety of theoretical frameworks (ecocritical, queer, postcolonial, crip, anti-capitalist, etc.). In addition to reviewing key game studies texts, every week, students will engage in/with critical playthroughs of a selection of conceptually relevant games. By the end of the course, students will come away with a diverse toolkit of techniques and language for understanding the unique formal, aesthetic, narrative, and thematic properties of videogames in a variety of platforms and genres.

## Important Links

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- [Mosaic](#)
- [Avenue to Learn](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
- [McMaster University Library](#)
- [eReserves](#)

## Course Learning Outcomes

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- Develop and apply critical reading skills through consistent weekly engagement with assigned game studies texts.
- Develop and apply game analysis and criticism skills through consistent weekly engagement with lecture material (slides, critical Let's Plays of select videogames, video essays, etc.) and class discussion.
- Write an effective proposal for a game studies research project that clearly demonstrates knowledge of significant concepts and/or theories within the field.
- Collect and assess a small group of game studies publications to be included in an annotated bibliography as part of the preparatory work for a larger game studies research project.

- Produce a game studies research project that synthesizes knowledge from one or more week's worth of course material and effectively demonstrates academic essay writing or media production/research-creation skills.

## Course Learning Goals

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- By the end of this course, students have an understanding of what the field of game studies is and how to enter into and advance within it if they wish to pursue it in graduate school and beyond.
- By the end of the course, students will have learned the language and methods necessary to effectively analyze videogames within the contexts of game studies, game criticism, and/or academic game design.
- By the end of the course, students will have developed many skills necessary to the effective proposal and execution of a game studies research project on a topic of their choosing.

## Required Materials and Texts

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**Textbook Listing:** <https://textbooks.mcmaster.ca>

All required readings will be made freely available on Avenue to Learn (A2L). See the weekly schedule below for the list of readings. You are not required to purchase any of the games we will be playing/discussing in the lectures, and a list of optional/recommended free games relevant to our assigned readings will also be posted on A2L.

## Optional Course Materials

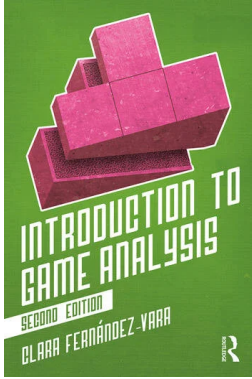
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**Textbook Listing:** <https://textbooks.mcmaster.ca>

**Introduction to Game Analysis**

**ISBN:** 9780815351849

**Authors:** Clara Fernández-Vara



**Publisher:** Routledge

**Publication Date:** 2019

**Edition:** 2nd Edition

Reading this book is completely optional, but I will be drawing heavily from this book when introducing new game analysis techniques in our weekly lectures. For anyone interested, there are copies of this book available through the McMaster Library.

## Class Format

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### In Person

Every week, our classes will typically adhere to the following structure: I will begin with a short introduction and transition to the three assigned reading response presentations. Afterward, we will take a short break and move on to the lecture section, where I will introduce and explain key game studies concepts and analysis methods. At this point, we will take another short break as I set up for the final portion of the class, where I will present a series of short critical Let's Plays and/or videos of 2-3 games, and we will collectively work to apply the readings, concepts, and methods we have reviewed throughout the previous sections of the class. The class will conclude with brief reminders of the following week's class content and any upcoming assignment deadlines.

## Course Evaluation

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Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Participation	Weekly throughout the term.	20%
Reading Review	Weekly throughout the	20%

Presentation	term; see the schedule on A2L for your assigned week.	
Final Project Proposal	September 28	15%
Final Project Annotated Bibliography	November 2	20%
Final Project	November 30	25%

## Course Evaluation Details

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### 1. Participation: Assessed weekly throughout the term (20%)

**Learning Goals:** Through consistent engagement with course material and participation in class activities, you will be providing yourself with a substantial amount of additional opportunities to learn and develop your reading, writing, and discussion skills.

**What is This?** In this course, your participation will be assessed through a combination of your ongoing attendance, respectful engagement, discussion contributions (both online and in person), and your self-reported entries in a personal class participation journal.

**Key Elements:** Please follow the listed instructions below when considering your participation throughout the course:

**Introduction Post (2%):** Your first opportunity to earn some participation points in this course will be through your introduction post on an A2L discussion board before the start of the second class. More detailed instructions will be provided on A2L, but generally, this post should be 100-200 words and include your preferred name and pronouns as well a rough explanation of your history with/interest in videogames.

**Weekly Attendance and Engagement (0.5% per week = 6%):** Every week, you will be holistically assessed on a combination of your in-class attendance and your respectful critical engagement with the weekly course material (readings, lectures, discussions, etc.). During the first class of the course, as a class, we will work together to draw up a list of what constitutes good participation.

**Participation Journal (1% per week = 12%):** Every week, you will be required to write a short entry into an ongoing participation journal. These entries should each be between 150-250 words and work to clearly explain one way in which you participated over the course of the last week. This could be a short explanation of something you learned or found to be interesting from the readings or the lecture. Or, you could recount how you contributed to that week's class discussion or any work you did that week for one of the class assignments. These posts must be in prose but may be written informally/conversationally.

**Submission Info:** There is no need to submit anything for the weekly attendance and engagement portion of your participation grade. For the participation journal, you will be required to submit your weekly journal entry in the relevant A2L Dropbox every Wednesday (the day immediately following the class) before 10 pm.

**Assessment methods:** Your participation will be assessed according to the key parameters listed above. Please see the rubrics on A2L for now details.

## **2. Reading Review Presentation: Due weekly throughout the term (20%)**

**Learning Goals:** The goal of this assignment is to help you develop your critical reading, research, paraphrasing, slide design, and oral presentation skills—all of which are integral to careers within the fields of game studies and/or academic game design.

**What is This?** At the beginning of the course, you will sign up to present on one of the assigned course readings. You may choose to do this assignment individually or in groups of 2-3. These presentations will be done in class on the week of your corresponding reading. If you are not comfortable presenting in person in front of the class, you also have the option of prerecording and sending me a video presentation ahead of time instead. All presentations, regardless of format, should be 8-12 minutes.

**Key Parameters:** Please follow the listed instructions below when completing your assignment:

1. Briefly introduce the author/authors and how this text relates to their broader research practice (approximately 1-2 minutes).

2. Briefly summarize what you think the author's/authors' overall intention for their text is. Or, to put it another way, try to describe the author's/authors' main thesis argument (2-3 minutes).
3. Briefly identify and define one key concept, theory, and/or case study from the reading that you found especially interesting (2-3 minutes).
4. Briefly explain how you could potentially utilize your selected reading as a research source for an essay or media production project. For example, if you chose Aubrey Anable's "Touching Games" chapter from Week 9, you could explain how it might be specifically useful for writing an essay on a game that focuses on embodied modes of play or for someone who is designing a touchscreen game (2-3 minutes).
5. Present a short question to the class at the end of your presentation to prompt group discussion (<1 minute).

**Submission Info:** Please submit a copy of your PowerPoint slide files into the assignment's A2L Dropbox before 10:00 pm EST after class on the day of your scheduled presentation. For those students wishing to submit a video recording instead of doing a live in-person presentation, these files must be submitted before 10:00 pm EST on the Monday evening before your scheduled presentation so that I have enough time to organize them into my lecture plan. Late submissions will not be accepted, so please plan your time accordingly.

**Assessment Methods:** Presentations will be evaluated according to the key parameters listed above. Please see the rubric on A2L for more details. All members of group assignment submissions will receive the same grade, so please consider this when committing to group work. If you have any issues with a member of your group, please reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss possible solutions.

### **3. Project Proposal: Due September 28 (15%)**

**Learning Goals:** The goal of this assignment is for you to start critically planning what you would like to accomplish for your final term project at the end of the class. This assignment will help you develop your proposal writing and project organization/planning skills, both of which are useful within academia and beyond.

**What is This?** For this assignment, you will write and submit a 300-500 word proposal for a final research paper or media production project on a topic related to the assigned weekly course content. Options for the media production option include a recorded video essay, a podcast, or a digital game prototype. Students may submit their proposals individually or in groups of 2-5.

**Key Parameters:** Please follow the listed instructions below when completing your assignment:

1. Succinctly outline your project idea, and it relates to the assigned weekly course content
  1. If you submit a written or recorded video essay proposal, be sure to summarize your intended thesis argument and research methods.
  2. If you submit a podcast proposal, make sure that you explain the overall topic and any potential research questions you plan to use to structure your conversation.
  3. If you are opting to submit a game prototype proposal, ensure that you discuss how you think your game will work to illustrate the course material.
2. Include a short bibliography that has been formatted correctly according to one of the three standard academic style guides (MLA, APA, or Chicago). A list of game studies journals and books accessible through the McMaster Library will be posted on A2L to assist you in finding your research material. This bibliography should include the following:
  1. At least one assigned course reading.
  2. At least two external scholarly sources (peer-reviewed journal articles and/or books/book chapters; Wikipedia and ChatGPT are not scholarly sources) that are not assigned course readings.
  3. At least two games that are relevant to your proposed project.

**Submission Info:** Please submit a copy of your proposal into the assignment's A2L Dropbox before 10:00 pm EST on Thursday, September 28, 2023.

**Assessment Methods:** Proposals will be evaluated according to their clarity, feasibility, and creativity in addition to the key parameters listed above. Please see the rubric on A2L as well as the listed instructions for the Final Project assignment for more details. All



members of group assignment submissions will receive the same grade, so please consider this when committing to group work. If you have any issues with a member of your group, please reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss possible solutions.

#### **4. Annotated Bibliography: Due November 2nd (20%)**

**Learning Goals:** The goal of this assignment is to work on developing the idea you originally put forward in the previous proposal assignment by finding and assessing a larger pool of potential research material. Throughout this assignment, you will refine your research and bibliographic skills, both of which will help you in future writing courses or academic projects.

**What is This?** For this assignment, you will produce and submit an annotated bibliography of between 8-10 research sources that you think are useful and relevant for the purposes of completing your final term project. Although a substantial portion of these items will be academic texts, this bibliography should also contain a small number of non-textual entries such as games, works of art, video essays, etc. As with the previous proposal assignment, a list of game studies journals and books will be posted on A2L to assist you in finding your research material. You may submit this assignment individually or in groups of 2-5.

**Key Parameters:** Please follow the listed instructions below when completing your assignment:

1. Select 8-10 items that you plan on referencing within your final paper or media production project.
2. You may re-use the sources you first included in your proposal bibliography but are not obligated to.
3. At least 3 of your sources should be games, video essays, or podcast episodes that are directly relevant to the topic and/or format you have selected for your final term project. For example, if you are planning on submitting a video essay, make sure that you include a combination of three relevant games and/or video essays.
4. At least 5 of the items must be scholarly research sources (peer-reviewed journal articles and/or books/book chapters; Wikipedia and ChatGPT are not scholarly

sources).

5. Up to a maximum of 3 of your scholarly research sources may be selected from the course's assigned readings, but the rest need to be externally selected from relevant game studies journals and books you have found on your own. Tip: Try looking at the bibliographies of the assigned course texts for relevant other research sources.
6. Your annotated bibliography must be formatted correctly according to one of the three standard academic style guides (MLA, APA, or Chicago) and must include a 100-150 word explanation of how each entry relates to your proposed term project idea.

**Submission Info:** Please submit a copy of your proposal into the assignment's A2L Dropbox before 11:59 pm EST on Thursday, November 2, 2023.

**Assessment Methods:** You will be assessed according to the key parameters listed above as well as on the relevance and applicability of your selected research sources, the clarity of your annotations, and your demonstration of proper bibliographic formatting. Please see the rubric on A2L for more details.

## **5. Final Project: Due November 30 (25%)**

**Learning Goals:** The goal of this final assignment is for you to synthesize all of the game studies knowledge and skills you have been learning and refining throughout the course into a single project. This assignment will be an opportunity to focus on a topic that you find to be especially interesting and demonstrate your research, writing, presentation, and/or media production skills—all of which will be very useful throughout the rest of your time as an undergraduate student and beyond.

**What is This?** Building off the work already done for the previous Proposal and Annotated Bibliography assignments, at the end of the term, students will complete and submit a final research paper or media production project on a topic related to the assigned weekly course content. Options for the media production option include a recorded video essay, a podcast, or a digital game prototype. You may submit this assignment individually or in groups of 2-5.

**Key Parameters:** Please follow the relevant listed instructions below when completing your assignment:

**Research Paper Option:**

1. Write a 1500-2000 word research paper on a topic of your choosing that is somehow related to the assigned course content.
2. Please make sure that you include a creative and relevant title for your essay at the top of the first page and that all contributing authors' names are also clearly listed.
3. Ensure that your paper has a clearly discernible thesis argument somewhere in the first couple of paragraphs and that you are consistently referring back and working to support this thesis throughout the following body paragraphs and conclusion.

**Video Essay Option:**

1. Record a 10-12 minute video essay on a topic of your choosing that is somehow related to the assigned course content.
2. At the beginning of your video essay, please ensure that you include an opening slide/title card that includes a creative and relevant title and lists all group members' names if you are submitting a group submission.
3. Ensure that your essay has a clearly discernible thesis argument somewhere in its first few minutes and that you are consistently referring back and working to support this thesis throughout the following slides and/or video clips.
4. Use interesting and relevant images or video clips where applicable/appropriate to help illustrate your topic and/or arguments.

**Podcast Option**

1. Record a 10-20 minute podcast on a topic that is somehow related to the assigned course content.
2. Make sure to clearly introduce the title and topic of your podcast as well as the names of all of the participating speakers if you are submitting your podcast as a group.
3. Your podcast topic may take the form of a loose theme or a more specific research question, but either way, try to choose something that will allow for cogent, succinct

discussion and multiple opportunities to demonstrate your understanding of key game studies concepts and theories.

4. Make sure that you are vocally referencing your research sources and how you think they are relevant to your podcast discussion.
5. Along with the podcast's audio recording file, please submit a short document that includes the following:
  1. A mockup podcast logo with your podcast's title listed.
  2. The names of all the other students in your group if you are submitting a group submission.
  3. A short reflective statement on how you feel your podcast reflects what you have learned in the course (150-300 words).

### **Game Prototype Option**

1. Produce a short game demo or prototype using an engine of your own choosing (Twine, Bitsy, or Ren'Py are strongly recommended for beginners, though you are free to use more advanced tools if you are already comfortable with them).
2. Please do not feel pressured to produce a polished, finished game for this assignment. However, you should still ensure that it effectively communicates your ideas and critical understanding of the assigned course content in some manner. This can be through its mechanics, visuals, code, narrative, or any other aesthetic component.
3. Along with the game demo/prototype files, please submit a short document that includes the following:
  1. A mockup game logo or cover art image with your game's title listed.
  2. The names of all the other students in your group if you are submitting a group submission.
  3. A short reflective statement on how you feel your game reflects what you have learned in the course (150-300 words).

### **All Options**

1. No matter which option you choose, your final assignment should include an 8-10 item bibliography listing the research sources you have referenced within your

assignment. If you are submitting a game prototype, please be sure to include any research sources that may have directly influenced your design process, even if you didn't directly cite them within your game. As with the previous assignment, make sure that at least 5 of your research sources are scholarly (peer-reviewed journal articles and/or books/book chapters; Wikipedia and ChatGPT are not scholarly sources) and that your bibliography has been formatted correctly according to one of the three standard academic style guides (MLA, APA, or Chicago). You may reuse the sources you previously used for your Proposal and/or your Annotated Bibliography assignments but are not required to and may list new sources as relevant. Please do not annotate your sources for this assignment.

**Submission Info:** Please submit your file(s) into the final assignment's A2L Dropbox before 11:59 pm EST on November 30, 2023.

**Assessment Methods:** You will be assessed according to the relevant key parameters listed. Please see the corresponding rubric for your selected option on A2L for more details. All members of group assignment submissions will receive the same grade, so please consider this when committing to group work. If you have any issues with a member of your group, please reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss possible solutions.

## Grading Scale

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Grade	Equivalent Grade Point	Equivalent Percentages
A+	12	90-100
A	11	85-89
A-	10	80-84
B+	9	77-79
B	8	73-76
B-	7	70-72
C+	6	67-69
C	5	63-66
C-	4	60-62
D+	3	57-59
D	2	53-56

Grade	Equivalent Grade Point	Equivalent Percentages
D-	1	50-52
F	0	0-49

## Course Schedule

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**\*Note:** The weekly lists of games we will be playing/discussing in class may change slightly as we proceed through the course. If you have any suggestions for additional games relevant to each week's listed topics or assigned readings, please feel free to suggest them to me at the end of the preceding class or via email.

### Week 1 (Sept 5): Introducing the Course / What Is Game Studies?

#### Recommended reading (optional):

- Cullen, Amanda L. L., Rainforest Scully-Blaker, Ian R. Larson, Kat Brewster, Ryan Rose Aceae, and William Dunkel. "Game Studies, Futurity, and Necessity (or the Game Studies Regarded as Still to Come)." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 39, no. 3 (2022): 201–10.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2022.2080845>.

#### Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:

- *Footnotes*. (Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMieux, 2018). Windows.
- *Game Studies*. (Pippin Barr and Jonathan Lessard, 2016). Browser.

### Week 2 (Sept 12): Rules, Play, and Failure

#### Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):

- Khaled, Rilla. "Gamification and Culture." In *The Gameful World*, 301–. MIT Press, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9788.003.0021>.

- Ruberg, Bo. "Playing to Lose: Burnout and the Queer Art of Failing at Video Games." In *Video Games Have Always Been Queer*, 16:135–57. New York, USA: NYU Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.18574/9781479893904-006>.
- Sicart, Miguel. "A Tale of Two Games: Football and FIFA 12." In *Sports Videogames*, 40–57. Routledge, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203084496-9>.

### **Games we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *Baba is You*. (Hempuli Oy, 2019). Windows.
- *Space Warlord Organ Trading Simulator* (Strange Scaffold, 2021). Windows.

### **Week 3 (Sept 19): Narrative, Textuality, and Reading**

#### **Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Milligan, Chloe Anna, & Kara Bohunicky. "Reading, Writing, Lexigraphing: Active Passivity as Queer Play in Walking Simulators." *Press Start* 5, no 2 (2019): 51–71. <https://press-start.gla.ac.uk/index.php/press-start/article/view/136>
- Patterson, Christopher B. "Making Queer Asiatic Worlds: Performance and Racial Interaction in North American Visual Novels." *American Literature* 94, no. 1 (2022): 17–47. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-9696973>.
- Sim, A. M., Kway, L., Neo, T., Theng, Y. (2020). A preliminary categorization of techniques for creating poetic gameplay. *Game Studies*, 20(2). [http://gamestudies.org/2002/articles/mitchell\\_kway\\_neo\\_sim](http://gamestudies.org/2002/articles/mitchell_kway_neo_sim)

### **Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- Arc Symphony (Aether Interactive, 2017). Windows.
- Various short Bitsy games by Cecile Richards.
- *South Scrimshaw: Part One* (N.O. Marsh, 2023). Windows.

### **Week 4 (Sept 26): Mods, Glitches, and Digital Aesthetics**

**Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Boluk, Stephanie, and Patrick LeMieux. "Hundred Thousand Billion Fingers: Serial Histories of Super Mario Bros." In *Metagaming*, 173–. United States: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt1n2ttjx.7>.
- Cao, Jan. "The Collector, the Glitcher, and the Denkbilder: Toward a Critical Aesthetic Theory of Video Games." *Games and Culture* 18, no. 3 (2023): 322–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554120221097411>.
- Schleiner, Anne-Marie. "Game Modding: Cross-Over Mutation and Unwelcome Gifts." In *The Player's Power to Change the Game*, 35–60. The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048525645-003>.

**Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *Triforce: Topologies of Zelda*. (Stephanie Boluk and Patrick Lemieux, 2018). Windows.
- *Super Sonic Saves the World*. [Super Mario World ROM hack]. (Maddy Thorson, 2023). Windows

**\*Reminder: Project Proposal due before 10 pm EST on September 28.**

**Week 5 (Oct 3): Videogames and Art**

**Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Barr, Pippin. "Cinema: The Citizen Kane Of Video Games." In *The Stuff Games Are Made Of*, 94–112. United States: MIT Press, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/14495.001.0001>
- Anable, Aubrey. "Games to Fail With." In *Playing with Feelings*, 103–. United States: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt20mvgwg.7>.



- Baudemann, Kristina. "The Future is Technological: Virtual Archives in TimeTraveller™" In *The Future Imaginary in Indigenous North American Arts and Literatures*, 175–193. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003162629>.

**Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *Black Room*. (Casse McQuater, 2017). Browser.
- *Yume Nikki*. (Kikiyama, 2004). Windows.

**\*Mid-Term Recess: No Classes between Monday, October 9, and Sunday, October 15**

**Week 6 (Oct 17): Videogame History and Media Archeology**

**Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Deeming, Skot, and David Murphy. "Pirates, Platforms, and Players: Theorising Post-Consumer Fan Histories through the Sega Dreamcast." In *Fans and Videogames*, 1st ed., 1:75–90. Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315563480-5>.
- Nooney, Laine. "A Pedestal, A Table, A Love Letter: Archaeologies of Gender in Videogame History." *Game Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013).
- Swalwell, Melanie. "Moving on from the Original Experience: Philosophies of Preservation and Dis/play in Game History." In *Fans and Videogames*, 1st ed., 1:213–33. Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315563480-13>.

**Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *Mystery House*. (On-Line Systems, 1980). Apple II.
- *Sweet Home*. (Capcom, 1989). Famicom.
- *Hyper P.T.* (Ryan Tranwick, 2020). Windows.

## **Week 7 (Oct 24): Historical and Postcolonial Game Studies**

### **Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Murray, Soraya. "Landscapes of Empire in Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain." *Critical Inquiry* 45, no. 1 (2018): 168–98. <https://doi.org/10.1086/699586>.
- Mukherjee, Souvik. "Playing the Hybrid Subject: The Slave and the Subaltern in Videogames." In *Videogames and Postcolonialism*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54822-7\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54822-7_3).
- Wright, Esther. "Rockstar Games, Red Dead Redemption, and Narratives of 'Progress.'" *European Journal of American Studies* 16, no. 3 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.17300>.

### **Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *When Rivers Were Trails*. (Elizabeth LaPensée, Indian Land Tenure Foundation, Michigan State University GEL Lab, 2019). Windows.
- *Detention*. (Red Candle Games, 2017). Windows.

## **Week 8 (Oct 31): Environmental and Ecocritical Game Studies**

### **Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Wilson, Timothy, and Peter Zackariasson. "'Warm and Stuffy': The Ecological Impact of Electronic Games." In *The Video Game Industry*, 184–202. Routledge, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203106495-19>.
- Chang, Edmond Y. "'Do They See Me as a Virus?': Imagining Asian American Environmental Games." *American Studies (Lawrence)* 60, no. 3 (2021): 145–57. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ams.2021.0018>.
- Chang, Alenda Y. "Games as Environmental Texts." *Qui Parle* 19, no. 2 (2011): 57–84. <https://doi.org/10.5250/quiparle.19.2.0057>.

### **Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *Lichenia*. (Molleindustria, 2019). Browser.
- *Sephonie*. (Analgesic Productions, 2021). Windows.

**\*Reminder: Annotated Bibliography due before 10 pm EST on November 2.**

## **Week 9 (Nov 7): Ability, Embodiment and Interface**

**Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Schmalzer, Madison. "Janky Controls and Embodied Play: Disrupting the Cybernetic Gameplay Circuit." *Game Studies*, 20, no. 3 (2020).  
<http://gamestudies.org/2003/articles/schmalzer>
- Spöhrer, Markus. "Unpacking the Blackbox of 'Normal Gaming': A Sociomaterial Approach to Video Game Controllers and 'Disability.'" In *Playful Materialities*, 14:187–222. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2022.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839462003-007>.
- Anable, Aubrey. "Touching Games." In *Playing with Feelings*, 37—. United States: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt20mvgwg.5>.

**Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *The Vale: Shadow of the Crown* (Falling Squirrel, 2021). Windows.
- *Luxuria Superbia* (Tale of Tales, 2013). Android.

**\*Reminder: Friday, November 10, is the last day for withdrawing from courses without failure by default.**

## **Week 10 (Nov 14): Virtual Worlds, Avatars, and Identities**

**Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Iantorno, Michael, and Mia Consalvo. "Background Checks: Disentangling Class, Race, and Gender in CRPG Character Creators." *Games and Culture*, 2023, 155541202211503–. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554120221150342>.
- de Wildt, Lars, Thomas H Apperley, Justin Clemens, Robbie Fordyce, and Souvik Mukherjee. "(Re-)Orienting the Video Game Avatar." *Games and Culture* 15, no. 8 (2020): 962–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412019858890>.
- Jenson, Jennifer, Nicholas Taylor, Suzanne de Castell, and Barry Dilouya. "Playing With Our Selves: Multiplicity and Identity in Online Gaming." *Feminist Media Studies* 15, no. 5 (2015): 860–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2015.1006652>.

**Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *Cibele* (Star Maid Games, 2015). Windows.
- *Final Fantasy XIV* (Square Enix, 2010). Windows.

**Week 11 (Nov 21): Esports, Performance and Streaming**

**Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Fickle, Tara. "Made in China: Gold Farming as Alternative History of Esports." *ROMChip* 3, no. 1 (2021). <https://romchip.org/index.php/romchip-journal/article/view/132>
- Taylor, T.L. "Twitch and the Work of Play." *American Journal of Play* 11, no. 1 (2018): 65–84.
- Anderson, Sky LaRell, and Mark R. Johnson. "Gamer Identities of Video Game Live Streamers with Disabilities." *Information, Communication & Society* 25, no. 13 (2022): 1900–1915. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1907433>.

**Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *SC2VN - The eSports Visual Novel* (Team Eleven, 2015). Windows.
- *Overwatch 2*. (Blizzard Entertainment, 2022). Windows.

## **Week 12 (Nov 28): Capitalism, Production, and Labour**

### **Assigned readings (choose at least one to read before the start of class):**

- Keogh, Brendan. "From Aggressively Formalised to Intensely In/formalised: Accounting for a Wider Range of Videogame Development Practices." *Creative Industries Journal* 12, no. 1 (2019): 14–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17510694.2018.1532760>.
- Joseph, Daniel. "Battle Pass Capitalism." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 21, no. 1 (2021): 68–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540521993930>.
- Taylor, Nicholas, Kelly Bergstrom, Jennifer Jenson, and Suzanne de Castell. "Alienated Playbour: Relations of Production in EVE Online." *Games and Culture* 10, no. 4 (2015): 365–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412014565507>.

### **Game(s) we will be playing/discussing in class:**

- *EEK3 2020 Virtual Show Floor* (Haunted PS1, 2020). Windows.
- *Roblox*. (Roblox Corporation, 2006). Windows/Browser.

**\*Reminder: Final Project due before 10 pm EST on November 30.**

## **Week 13 (Dec 5): Reflections and Warp-Up**

\*There are no assigned readings for the final class, and this week will instead be dedicated to a variety of fun, low-stakes participation activities intended to reflect on all the hard work we have done throughout the course.

For anyone who hasn't handed in their final project by this point, the final class will be an opportunity to receive additional feedback and advice before the end of the seven-day grace period.

Leading up to this date, we will also decide as a group one or two games that we would like together for the final class.

## Late Assignments

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All assignments are due in their respective A2L Dropbox before the deadlines listed in this syllabus. There is a one-week grace period for all deadlines (except for the reading response presentation) wherein you can submit an assignment up to seven days late with no penalty. Unless you have specific accommodations ahead of time, assignments will not be accepted beyond the seven-day grace period. Please note that MSAF is for a maximum period of five days and can only be used for the assignment's due date, so even if you submit an MSAF, you will not get additional time beyond the one-week grace period.

## Absences, Missed Work, Illness

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If you are experiencing any kind of difficulty with your attendance or assignment deadlines, please contact me as early as possible so that we can discuss possible solutions. I am very happy to discuss potential extensions, alternate assignment submission formats, or remote participation options so that no matter the situation, you will always have the opportunity to productively demonstrate what you have been learning in the course.

## Turnitin.com

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Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have

been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **Generative AI: Some Use Permitted**

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Students may freely use generative AI in this course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside assessment guidelines or without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

A McMaster specific citation guide is in development through the Library and will be ready for fall 2023.

Until then, please consider citation options such as:

"[Generative AI tool]. (YYYY/MM/DD of prompt). "Text of prompt". Generated using [Name of Tool.] Website of tool"

e.g. "ChatGPT4. (2023/05/31). "Suggest a cookie recipe that combines oatmeal, chocolates chips, eggs and sugar." Generated using OpenAI's ChatGPT. <https://chat.openai.com>"

Other citation guidelines can be viewed at:

- [MLA Guidelines](#) on citing generative AI
- [APA Guidelines](#) on citing generative AI
- [Chicago FAQ](#) on generative AI
- [A quick guide provided from the University of Waterloo](#), with a McMaster version coming in Fall 2023.

## **APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS**

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### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-proceduresguidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-proceduresguidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## **Authenticity / Plagiarism**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).



## **Courses with an On-line Element**

***Some courses may*** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **Online Proctoring**

***Some courses may*** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online

platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

## **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

## **Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#).

## **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous, or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office ***normally within 10 working days*** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.