Course Outline

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Course	VISM-2003-002 Introduction to Games Studies
Delivery Method	Synchronous Teams meetings (attendance optional) that will be uploaded and available asynchronously immediately afterward on Canvas. Asynchronous prerecorded lecture sections will be uploaded to Canvas. Asynchronous discussion via Canvas forums and TechSmith Knowmia Conversations. Assignment submission via Canvas.
Term	2022 Winter
Credit Value	0.5
Meeting Times	**Tuesday, 6:30pm–8:00pm, Room ONL, Teams (TMS)** ⤷ **(https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3a30bf769464c9417493b45a9b374834dc%40thread.tacv2/1643138812063?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2206e469d1-2d2a-468f-ae9b-7df0968eb6d7%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2240f5ba46-edfe-4bae-b894-7e87d07da88e%22%7d)**
Start / End Dates	February 1–April 19, 2022
Instructors	**Andrew Bailey (https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/about/sis_user_id:2303451)** (abailey@ocadu.ca)
Office Hours	I am available for one-on-one Teams meetings throughout the workday (9–5 pm EST) on Mondays and Thursdays. Please email me at least a day in advance to schedule an appointment.

Description

Games studies views games as complex objects, mapping the game "object", the player "subject" and the critical dialogue that delimits game space. This course explores games as cultural artifacts, arising from diverse cultural histories, landscapes and geographies, impacting and impacted by sub-cultures. Students will learn to analyse the mechanics, aesthetics and practices of games via varied analytical approaches addressing their textual, performative, socio-cultural, design and political contexts. As well, the course introduces students to tools and techniques to analyze the cultural impact of the videogame. Students with credit in VISM-2B15 may not take this course for credit.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Study, discuss and play a wide range of videogames through the lens of several significant genres and subgenres of game studies scholarship including the status of videogames as art, the structure of game form, the human drive for play, and the videogame industry. Specific examples of videogame art and design practices along with the discussion of a wide variety of recent game studies texts will enable students to understand the different, often overlapping, contexts of videogames within contemporary culture.
2. Engage in an intensive writing schedule that develops the analytical approach necessary to understand the interdisciplinary nature of game studies.

Required Readings

You do not need to purchase a textbook for this course. All required readings will be freely available to download as PDFs or browser-based ebooks through the OCAD Library website. I will provide direct links to all readings on the Canvas course page. You will need your OCADU login information to access these readings.

Supplies

Every week you will be assigned two games to either directly play or watch Let's Play videos/Twitch streams of depending on your preferences and access to gaming platforms. These games will always be freely available to legally play and in most cases available to access on multiple platforms and/or game consoles. Additionally, for this course's assignments, you should be, whenever possible, aiming to directly play the videogame(s) that you are choosing to discuss and analyze. Any computer, console, mobile, or web-based game is an equally valid topic for these assignments. However, I also realize that some games can be quite expensive which could pose a potential learning barrier for some students. To this point, I want to make it explicit that it is also completely acceptable to focus on Twitch streams, YouTube Let's Plays, videogame art documentation, or other forms of non-playable videogame culture as potential assignment topics as well.

Student Preparation / Workload Expectations

You can anticipate that studying and completing class will require at a minimum 2–3 hours of time outside of class per week for every hour of in class time per week.

Teaching & Learning Methods

Every week you will be expected to read all of the assigned readings, watch all uploaded video lecture content, play or watch the assigned games, participate synchronously or asynchronously in class discussions, and complete any assignments that are due. As this class is listed as remote, all resources will be made available asynchronously through the Canvas course page. If you have any technical issues accessing any of the course content, please contact me as soon as possible.

Prerecorded Reading Review Videos: Every Monday afternoon (one day before the scheduled Teams lecture), I will be posting prerecorded lecture sections that will work to review each of that week's assigned readings. These videos will be found in their respective week's Canvas module sections and will be posted as an embedded TechSmith Knowmia video with Conversations enabled so you can respond as part of your participation grade. Additionally, I will occasionally be referencing external videos (video essays, trailers, gameplay footage, etc.) within these prerecorded lecture sections after which I will then ask you to pause the lecture to go and watch these videos (these will either be embedded or hyperlinked on the same page). Typically, every week will have three assigned readings and each of these prerecorded review videos will be approximately 20-30 minutes depending on the length and complexity of the particular reading that I will be covering.

Recorded Teams Games Discussion: Every week, on Tuesday evening between 6:30-8:00 PM EST, I will be holding a synchronous lecture through Teams and all who are available are welcome to participate. In these meetings, I will briefly lecture on each of the "Games of the Week" (see the weekly schedule at the end of this syllabus for more information) and ask attending students to share any reflections or responses they might have had while playing that week's assigned games. I will also be asking discussion questions throughout these lectures that you may respond to verbally or textually in the Teams chat window to help boost your participation grade. I want to also clarify that lecture attendance is not mandatory and you will not be penalized in any way if choose not or are unable to attend. Immediately following these synchronous lectures, I will be uploading and making the recordings available to watch on a Discussion page within that week's respective Canvas module section. Similar to the prerecorded reading review videos described above, I will be posting the Teams recordings as an embedded TechSmith Knowmia video (with Conversations enabled) so that if you were not able to attend you can still asynchronously respond as part of your participation grade.

Class Schedule

OCAD U has a twelve-class semester followed by a two-week assessment period for exams and critiques. Students must be available for the duration of this period.

Assigned Readings: There are three assigned readings for every week after Week 1 (Week 1 only has one assigned reading). Please try to read as much as you can but remember that I will also be doing a short review of each reading as part of my weekly lecture content.

Game(s) of the Week: Every week there will be two assigned games. URLs linking to game download pages and embedded/linked Let's Play videos will be provided on a page within each week's Canvas module. Ideally, you will make time to play or watch both of the weekly games for approximately 20-30 minutes and share your experiences with them in the weekly asynchronous Canvas discussions/Techsmith Knowmia conversations OR in the synchronous Teams meetings (remember that any of these activities are potential ways for you to boost your participation grade).

Optional Readings/Videos: As the name says, these are all completely optional and are usually podcasts or recorded conference presentations, video essays, or lectures. These are meant to be less

formal, typically audio-visual options if you are especially interested in the weekly topic(s) and want additional content or if you are having trouble with the assigned readings and want a potentially more easily digestible option. I will try to add more optional readings and media over the course of the semester in each week's respective Canvas module. Please feel free to share any similar content you find in the Canvas "Share Zone" discussion forum.

February 1: What is Game Studies?

Assigned Reading:

Deterding, S. (2017). The Pyrrhic Victory of Game Studies: Assessing the Past, Present, and Future of Interdisciplinary Game Research. Games and Culture, 12(6), 521–543. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412016665067

Optional Readings/Videos:

Errant Signal. (30 Jan 2015). Errant Signal - The Debate That Never Took Place. YouTube. https://youtu.be/xBN3R0m31bA

NYU Game Centre. (5 Mar 2019). NYU Game Center Lecture Series Presents Game Studies at 20. YouTube.
https://youtu.be/8OhKOhZMOvM

Spartie Lab: E2 Game Studies: Past, Present and Future (feat. Mia Consalvo and Dmitri Williams). YouTube. https://youtu.be/QgRlUppI3_s

Campus Gotland GAME. (13 Aug 2017). GGC 2017: Interrogating Empathy: Models of (Queer) Feeling in Games (by Dr. Bonnie Ruberg). YouTube. https://youtu.be/iySarMH_6-4

February 8: Defining Videogames as Games

Assigned Readings:

Ruberg, B. (2017). Playing To Lose: The Queer Art of Failing at Video Games. In Malkowski, J., & Russworm, T. M. (Eds.). Gaming representation: Race, gender, and sexuality in video games (pp. 197-211). Indiana University Press.

Suter, B. (2019). Rules of play as a framework for the "Magic circle". In B. Suter, M. Kocher & R. Bauer (Eds.), Games and Rules: Game Mechanics for the Magic Circle, (pp. 19-34). transcript Verlag.

Consalvo, M. (2007). Gaining Advantage: How Videogame Players Define and Negotiate Cheating. In Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames (pp. 83-106), MIT Press.

Game(s) of the Week:

Yu, D. (2008). Spelunky Classic, (Open source PC version/Mac port). Mossmouth, LLC. (*Note: If you

already own or are wanting to purchase and play any of the later versions of Spelunky, or its sequel Spelunky 2, these are perfectly acceptable options as well.)

Psyonix. (2015). Rocket League, (PC, Mac, Switch, PS4/PS5, Xbox One/Series S/X). Psyonix. (*Note: It is also acceptable to play Rocket League: Sideswipe which is thenew Android/iOS version of the game.)

Optional Readings/Videos:

Game Studies Study Buddies. (29 June 2019). 13 – Huizinga – Homo Ludens [Podcast episode]. Ranged Touch. http://rangedtouch.com/2019/06/29/13-huizinga-homo-ludens/

Sean Carroll. Episode 52: Frank Lantz on the Logic and Emotion of Games. YouTube. https://youtu.be/YjBkvpCXEvk

NYU Game Centre. (12 Feb 2019). NYU Game Center Lecture Series Presents Jesper Juul. YouTube. https://youtu.be/JQBKk4szqD4

NYU Game Centre. (15 Nov 2017). NYU Game Center Lecture Series Presents Alex Galloway (Audio Only). YouTube. https://youtu.be/TRAk3wj_jFQ

Game Maker's Tool Kit. (9 Jan 2017). The Last Guardian and the Language of Games. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Qot5_rMB8Jc

February 15: Defining Videogames as Texts

Assigned Readings:

Keogh, B. (2019). Instantaneously punctuated picture-music: Re-evaluating videogame expression through Pilgrim in the Microworld. Convergence, 25(5–6), 970–984. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856518795095

Bozdog, M., & Galloway, D. (2020). Worlds at Our Fingertips: Reading (in) What Remains of Edith Finch. Games and Culture, 15(7), 789–808. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412019844631

Saito, K. (2021). From novels to video games: Romantic love and narrative form in Japanese visual novels and romance adventure games. Arts, 10(3), 42. http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/arts10030042

Game(s) of the Week:

Failbetter Games. (2009). Fallen London (Android, Web browser, iOS). Failbetter Games.

Fox, T. Deltarune Chapter 1 (PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, macOS, Microsoft Windows). Toby Fox.

Optional Readings/Videos:

Reed, E. (2020, April 10). Hashihime of the Old Book Town [Author website and blog]. emreed.net. https://emreed.net/hashihime.html

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (9 May 2018). Harvesting Interactive Fiction. YouTube. https://youtu.be/EXW1ts6tZh4

DevGAMM. (7 June 2015). Chris Remo (Campo Santo) - Firewatch: Rethinking Story-Driven Games. YouTube. https://youtu.be/PcSmUzZ1r5U

Chang, A. Y. (2011). Games as Environmental Texts. Qui Parle, 19(2), 57–84. https://doi.org/10.5250/quiparle.19.2.0057

Game Studies Study Buddies. (1 October 2016). 16 – Aarseth – Cybertext [Podcast episode]. Ranged Touch. http://rangedtouch.com/2019/10/01/16-aarseth-cybertext/

February 22: Defining Videogames as Digital Media

<u>*Reminder(s):</u>
The recommended due date for the first quiz and reading response is today before 11:59 pm EST.

<u>Assigned Readings:</u>
Boluk, S., & Lemieux, P. (2017). Hundred Thousand Billion Fingers: Serial Histories of Super Mario Bros. In Metagaming: Playing, Competing, Spectating, Cheating, Trading, Making, and Breaking Videogames (pp. 173–206). University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt1n2ttjx.7

Galloway, A. (2006). Four Gamic Actions. In Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture (pp. 1-38). University of Minnesota Press.

Krapp, P. (2012). Gaming the Glitch: Room for Error. In Nunes, M. (Ed.). (2012). Error: Glitch, noise, and jam in new media cultures (pp. 113-132). Bloomsbury Academic & Professional.

<u>Game(s) of the Week:</u>
Boluk, S., & Lemieux, P. (2017). Triforce: Topologies of Zelda (Windows, macOS, and Linux). Stephanie Boluk and Patrick Lemieux.

Arcangel, C. (2005) Super Mario Bros Movie (Runs on any freely available NES emulator for Windows, macOS, and Linux). Cory Arcangel.

<u>Optional Readings/Videos:</u>
Brendan Keogh. (17 December 2020). A Link to the Past: Remaking The Legend of Zelda in 2020 - Stephanie Boluk & Patrick LeMieux. YouTube. https://youtu.be/hbxIxLuZMhs

Patrick Lemieux. (2014). This is Not Super Mario Bros. (2014) by Patrick LeMieux. Vimeo. https://vimeo.com/110857483

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (13 Jul 2021). Cementing Your Duct Tape: Turning Hacks into Tools. YouTube.
https://youtu.be/-9WPjynCWL4

eurothug4000. (8 Sept 2020). The Art of Video Game Photography. YouTube.
https://youtu.be/PWnLD39b6Y0

Jacob Geller. (19 Oct 2020). Art Restoration (and the Biggest Mod in Resident Evil History). YouTube. https://youtu.be/7uJuTKyM4rQ

March 1: Defining Videogames as Art

Assigned Readings:

Sharp, J. (2015). Game Art. Works of game: On the aesthetics of games and art. MIT Press, 19-48.

Nylund, N. (2018). Constructing Digital Game Exhibitions: Objects, Experiences, and Context. Arts, 7(4)http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/arts7040103

Parker, F. (2018). Roger Ebert and the Games-as-Art Debate. Cinema Journal 57(3), 77-100. doi:10.1353/cj.2018.0032.

Game(s) of the Week:

[namethemachine] x Arbitrarily Good Productions. (2021). Kid A Mnesia Exhibition (Windows, PlayStation 5, macOS). Epic Games Publishing.

McQuater, Cassie. (2017). Black Room (Web browser). Cassie McQuater.

Optional Readings/Videos:

Polansky, L. (3 Aug 2016). Towards An Art History for Videogames. Rhizome. https://rhizome.org/editorial/2016/aug/03/an-art-history-for-videogames/

Jacob Geller. (19 May 2019). Who's Afraid of Modern Art: Vandalism, Video Games, and Fascism. YouTube. https://youtu.be/v5DqmTtCPiQ

NYU Game Centre. (16 Dec 2019). NYU Game Center Lecture Series Presents Marie Foulston. YouTube. https://youtu.be/j43OcLVLrpM

Critical Distance. (15 May 2020). Keywords in Play Episode 2: Emilie Reed [Podcast episode]. Critical Distance.. https://critical-distance.com/2020/05/15/emilie-reed-keywords-in-play-podcast-episode-2/

Polygon. (14 Dec 2018). How Red Dead Redemption 2's landscapes are connected to 19th century art. YouTube. https://youtu.be/A0XbWUEv0Ho

March 8: History, Preservation, and Materiality

*Reminder(s):

The recommended due date for the game analysis assignment is today before 11:59 PM EST.

Assigned Readings:

Guins, R. (2014). Museified. In Game after: A cultural study of video game afterlife (pp. 31-75). MIT Press.

Swalwell, M. (2007). The Remembering and the Forgetting of Early Digital Games: From Novelty to Detritus and Back Again. Journal of Visual Culture, 6(2), 255–273. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412907078568

Nooney, L. (2013). A Pedestal, A Table, A Love Letter: Archaeologies of Gender in Videogame History. Game Studies, 13(2). http://gamestudies.org/1302/articles/nooney

Game(s) of the Week:

jackbugajski20. (2020). unreal P.T. remake (Windows). jackbugajski20. (*Note: If you already own or have access to the original P.T., or know of any other high-quality remakes, these would both be acceptable options as well.)

On-Line Systems. (1980). Mystery House (Playable in a web browser via the Internet Archive, or on Windows via an Apple emulator from Sierra Help). On-Line Systems.

Optional Readings/Videos:

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (11 Apr 2019). It's Still Emulation: Saving Video Game History Before It's Too Late. YouTube. https://youtu.be/dp-DRU24J18

Symonds, S. (2019). Preserving Carol Shaw's Polo. ROMChip: A Journal of Game Histories, 1(2). https://romchip.org/index.php/romchip-journal/article/view/89

The Icon. (25 Sept 2020). Muriel Tramis | The First Black Female Game Designer. YouTube. https://youtu.be/rHM0U-IBqxc

Checkpoint TV. (17 Dec 2019). Preserving Game History by Melanie Swalwell - Collaborative Game Histories Keynote. YouTube. https://youtu.be/G_MQZlHGpHs

Stony Brook University. (14 Dec 2012). Laine Nooney: (Cultural Studies) "How we Compute History". YouTube. https://youtu.be/exq80XZbpQw

March 15: Experience, Embodiment, and Affect

Assigned Readings:

Anable, A (2018). Touching Games. Playing with feelings: Video games and affect (pp. 37-70). University of Minnesota Press.

Schmalzer, M. D. (2020). Janky Controls and Embodied Play: Disrupting the Cybernetic Gameplay Circuit. Game Studies, 20(3). http://gamestudies.org/2003/articles/schmalzer

Carr, D. (2014). Ability, Disability and Dead Space. Game Studies, 14(2). http://gamestudies.org/1402/articles/carr

Game(s) of the Week:

Foddy, Bennett. (2008). QWOP (Web browser, iOS). Bennett Foddy.

npckc. (2018). one night, hot springs (Android, Microsoft Windows, Linux, Macintosh operating systems, Classic Mac OS). npckc. (*Note: If possible, it would be most ideal to play the Android version of this game so that you can engage with the touch screen aspects of the Anable reading.)

Optional Readings/Videos:

NYU Game Center. (2 Nov 2017). NYU Game Center Lecture Series Presents Robert Yang. YouTube. https://youtu.be/YSFi8VeVf4w

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (March 2019). Sexy Microtalks: Making Intimacy, Romance, and Sex in Games. GDC Vault. https://www.gdcvault.com/play/1025771/Sexy-Microtalks-Making-Intimacy-Romance

de la Puente, G. (25 Apr 2021). Fall Guys [Podcast game review and episode transcript]. The White Pube. https://www.thewhitepube.co.uk/fall-guys

↪ **(https://www.thewhitepube.co.uk/fall-guys)** Game Maker's Toolkit. (10 Dec 2021). How Accessible Were This Year's Games? YouTube. https://youtu.be/-IhQl1CBj9U

Game Studies Study Buddies. (29 May 2019). 12 – Anable – Playing With Feelings [Podcast episode]. Ranged Touch. http://rangedtouch.com/2019/05/29/12-anable-playing-with-feelings/

March 22: Culture, Politics, and Representation

*Reminder(s):

The recommended due date for the second quiz and reading response is today before 11:59 pm EST.

Assigned Readings:

Russworm, T. M. (2017). Dystopian Blackness And The Limits Of Racial Empathy In The Walking Dead And The Last Of.Us. In Malkowski, J., & Russworm, T. M. (Eds.). Gaming representation: Race, gender, and sexuality in video games (pp. 179-196). Indiana University Press.

Fickle, T., Patterson, C., Han-Tani, M., Kim, S. Y., Kittaka, M., & Ung, E. (2021). Asian/American Gaming. Verge: Studies in Global Asias, 7(2), 19–56.

Jenson, J., & de Castell, S. (2018). "The Entrepreneurial Gamer": Regendering the Order of Play. Games and Culture, 13(7), 728–746. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412018755913

Game(s) of the Week:

Lei, B. (2017). Butterfly Soup (Microsoft Windows, Linux, Classic Mac OS). Brianna Lei.

LaPensée, E. (2019). When Rivers Were Trails (Android, iOS, Microsoft Windows, Macintosh operating systems). Elizabeth LaPensée, Indian Land Tenure Foundation, Michigan State University GEL Lab.

Optional Readings/Videos:

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (1 Oct 2021). What to Do When 'Toxic Gamer Culture' Enters the Classroom. YouTube. https://youtu.be/wXcMPi_qCio

Feminst Frequency. (31 Jan 2017). Not Your Exotic Fantasy - Tropes vs. Women in Video Games. YouTube. https://youtu.be/K2hYdBxxTTM

MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing.(18 Sept 2020). Kishonna Gray, "Exploring the Black Cultural Production of Gamers in Transmediated Culture". YouTube. https://youtu.be/TVKjQyCVwlM

NYU Game Center. (7 Feb 2018). NYU Game Center Lecture Series Presents Austin Walker. YouTube. https://youtu.be/EM4S_dD2-Q8

DiGRA India. (5 Dec 2021). DiGRA India Conference 2021 Keynote #1: Meghna Jayanth (White Protagonism and Imperial Pleasures in Game Design #DIGRA21). YouTube. https://youtu.be/HsYN0H7Z1sc

March 29: Streaming, E-Sports, and Live-Service Games

Assigned Readings:

Anderson, S. L. (2017). Watching People Is Not a Game: Interactive Online Corporeality, Twitch.tv and Videogame Streams. Game Studies, 17(1). http://gamestudies.org/1701/articles/anderson (Links to an external site.)

Boluk, S., & Lemieux, P. (2017). The Turn of the Tide: International E-Sports and the Undercurrency in Dota 2. In Metagaming: Playing, Competing, Spectating, Cheating, Trading, Making, and Breaking Videogames (pp. 207-274). Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press. doi:10.5749/j.ctt1n2ttjx.8

Game(s) of the Week:

Riot Games. (2009). League of Legends. (PC and macOS). Riot Games. (*Note: It is also acceptable to play League of Legends: Wild Rift which is the new Android/iOS version of the game.)

Pick and watch/analyze an individual Twitch stream where the streamer is playing a videogame or doing something else that you are interested in (chatting, making art, doing game development, etc.) for at least 30 minutes. Try to critically reflect on how your selected stream relates to the concepts and arguments found in the Anderson reading.

Optional Readings/Videos:

Game Studies Study Buddies. (31 August 2021). 38 – Taylor – Play Between Worlds [Podcast episode]. Ranged Touch. http://rangedtouch.com/2021/08/31/38-taylor-play-between-worlds/

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (11 Sept 2017). Grassroots Growth: How Game Communities Built an eSport Scene from the GroundUp. YouTube. https://youtu.be/wzAcr6tc5G4

Game Informer. (27 Jan 2018). Bennett Foddy On Designing Great Streaming Games. YouTube. https://youtu.be/I4yLXh3s-uw

VICE. (8 Aug 2020). What Professional Fortnite Looks Like for Women. YouTube. https://youtu.be/JmAqdL9gQLA

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (10 Nov 2016). Twitch Plays Pokemon: An Analysis. YouTube. https://youtu.be/tHtWglRXfqI

April 5: Hobbyist, Indie, and AAA/Triple-A Game Development

Assigned Readings:

Chia, A. (2021). Self Making and Game Making in the Future of Work. In O. Sotamaa & J. Švelch (Eds.), Game Production Studies (pp. 47–64). Amsterdam University Press.

Dyer-Witheford, N., and de Peuter, G. (2009) Immaterial Labor: A Workers' History of Videogaming. In Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games (pp. 3-34), University of Minnesota Press. (Links to an external site.)

Keogh, B. (2019). From Aggressively Formalised To Intensely In/Formalised: Accounting For A Wider Range Of Videogame Development Practices. Creative Industries Journal, 12:1, 14-33

Game(s) of the Week:

The Haunted PS1. (2021). The Haunted PS1 Demo Disc 2021 (Windows). The Haunted PS1.

miHoYo, Shanghai Miha Touring Film Technology Co., Ltd. (2020). Genshin Impact (PlayStation 4, Android, Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, iOS). miHoYo.

Optional Readings/Videos:

NoClip - Video Game Documentaries. (15 Apr 2017). The Making of Spelunky - Documentary. YouTube. https://youtu.be/jv434Xyybqc

Eggplant: The Secret Lives of Games (8 Oct 2021) Envisioning a Future with JETT: The Far Shore [Podcast episode]. https://eggplant.show/80-envisioning-a-future-with-jett-the-far-shore

NYU Game Center. (1 Mar 2019). NYU Game Center Lecture Series Presents Cara Ellison. YouTube. https://youtu.be/m83JaFmn3Ko

Critical Distance. (19 Nov 2021). Keywords in Play Episode 16 - Felan Parker on Cultural Intermediaries [Podcast episode]. Critical Distance. https://www.critical-distance.com/2021/11/19/felan-parker-keywords-in-play-episode-16/

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (4 Apr 2019). Put Your Name on Your Game, a Talk by Bennett Foddy and Zach Gage. YouTube. https://youtu.be/N4UFC0y1tY0

April 12: Platforms, Engines, and Tools

Assigned Readings:

Nicoll, B., & Keogh, B. (2019). The Unity Game Engine and the Circuits of Cultural Software. The unity game engine and the circuits of cultural software (pp. 1-19). Springer International Publishing AG.

Werning, S. (2021). Tool Essays: From Tool Fandom and Aesthetic Ecosystems to the Evolution of Tool Affordances. In Making games: The politics and poetics of game creation tools (pp. 41-82). MIT Press.

Whitson, J. R. (2018). Voodoo software and boundary objects in game development: How developers collaborate and conflict with game engines and art tools. New Media & Society, 20(7), 2315–2332. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817715020

*Game Engine(s) of the Week:

This week I want you to do something a little bit different and instead of playing (or watching) two videogames, I want you to pick one of the following beginner-level game engines and experiment with it to try to make some kind of short interactive experience. While tinkering with your selected engine, I also recommend that you take some critical notes on how your experiences with them relate to this week's readings. I have included some tutorial videos in the "Optional Readings/Videos" subsection below to get you started but feel free to look at other guides and resources on your own as well. We will talk about each of these engines and discuss your experiences with them in our weekly Teams meeting in much the same way we would regularly talk about the games of the week.

Twine: This is an engine for producing interactive fiction and branching path, text-based games.

PICO-8: This is a game engine in the form of a fictional old pixelated computer console. Most games produced using PICO-8 have a kind of retro or arcade quality to them.

Bitsy: This is an engine for making extremely simple, emulated 1-bit games. This is especially unique as the engine is run in your web browser rather than requiring any sort of install.

Optional Readings/Videos:

Game Maker's Toolkit. (28 Sept 2021). How I learned Unity without following tutorials. YouTube. https://youtu.be/vFjXKOXdgGo

GDC [Game Developer's Conference]. (18 Nov 2021). Let's make a PICO-8 Game in 30 Minutes!. YouTube.
https://youtu.be/RJN83kSzh2k

CCH [Centre for Computing History] Learning. (26 Apr 2020). How to Create Adventure Games using Twine. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Fp9Sxiv-O-0

Babycastles. (29 Oct 2020). Emilie Reed - Game Engines as Tools for Mass Art. YouTube. https://youtu.be/B0Kz2CtPqcs

Juan Morales-Rocha. (15 Aug 2020). Making a Bitsy game | Game Design Tutorial for Beginners. YouTube. https://youtu.be/SJtuDQuZvQY

April 19: Virtual Worlds, Commodities, and Currencies

*Reminder(s):

The recommended due date for the third quiz and reading response is today before 11:59 pm EST. The take-home exam is due next week before 11:59 PM EST on April 26th. I will not be using any Canvas Discussion forum or Techsmith Knowmia Conversation posts made after 11:59 pm EST on April 26th when calculating your final participation grade. Any late submissions for any assignments or quizzes will not be accepted after April 26th at 11:59 pm EST.

Assigned Readings:

Leggatt, J. (2016). Material Connections in Skawennati's Digital Worlds. Canadian Literature, 230/231, 216–232.

Joseph, D. (2021). Battle pass capitalism. Journal of Consumer Culture, 21(1), 68–83.

Taylor, N., Bergstrom, K., Jenson, J., & de Castell, S. (2015). Alienated Playbour: Relations Of Production In Eve Online. Games and Culture, 10(4), 365–388.

Game(s) of the Week:

Epic Games, People Can Fly. (2017). Fortnite [Windows, macOS, PlayStation 4/5, Xbox One/Series X and S, Switch, Android, iOS]. Epic Games Publishing.

Roblox Corporation. (2006). Roblox [Microsoft Windows, Android, iOS, Xbox One, macOS]. Roblox Corporation

Optional Readings/Videos:

How Money Works. (6 July 2021) EVE Online's Self Imposed Economic Collapse - How Money Works. YouTube. https://youtu.be/lte3JOnyXlo

People Make Games. (19 Aug 2021). Investigation: How Roblox Is Exploiting Young Game Developers. YouTube. https://youtu.be/_gXlauRB1EQ

People Make Games. (21 Mar 2019). Can I stop Fortnite from stealing my dance move? YouTube. https://youtu.be/Pa5EuVA5kMg

Alex Westfall. (11 Mar 2021). Skawennati: Nurturing Indigenous imagination in virtual worlds. KIll Screen. https://killscreen.com/skawennati/

Pipkin, E. (2021, August 30). I Know A Place: Beauty And Solace In The Abandoned Worlds Of Roblox. Pioneer Works. https://pioneerworks.org/broadcast/i-know-a-place-pipkin

Assignments, Critiques, and Exams

This table shows the titles, due dates, and grade weights of all of the course's

assignments.

Name	Due Date	Weight
Reading Response #1	February 22 2022, 11:59pm	5%
Reading Response #2	March 22 2022, 11:59pm	5%
Reading Response #3	April 19 2022, 11:59pm	5%
Key Term Quiz #1	February 22 2022, 11:59pm	5%
Key Term Quiz #2	March 22 2022, 11:59pm	5%
Key Term Quiz #3	April 19 2022, 11:59pm	5%
Game Analysis Essay	March 8 2022, 11:59pm	20%
Take-Home Exam	April 26 2022, 11:59pm	35%
Participation	April 26 2022, 11:59pm	15%

Total: 100%

Late Work

In accordance with OCAD's Guidelines for Hybrid and Online Course Delivery, I will not be deducting any marks for assignments that are handed in after their recommended due dates. However, due to my own work schedule and internal deadlines with getting final grades to the university registrar, no late assignments will be accepted more than one week after the last class. Additionally, please keep in mind that there will also be an inversely proportional relationship between how late you submit your assignment and how detailed my feedback and suggestions will be when grading your assignment (i.e., the later you hand in your work the more brief and minimal my additional comments will be).

Participation

Learning Outcomes: Due to the remote/online nature of this class, your degree of participation will significantly impact how you learn from and enjoy the course material. With this in mind, I am expecting you to try and participate in whatever ways that you are able and comfortable at least once a week so that you are consistently and critically engaging with me, your peers, and the course content.

Summary: I have attempted to design the course to allow for as wide a variety of participation methods as possible. This may include, in no particular order, any combination of the following activities:

- Introducing yourself in the "Introductions" discussion section on the Canvas course page.
- Attending the synchronous portion of lectures in weekly Teams meetings.
- Asynchronously watching the reading review videos and the lecture recording on Canvas.
- Responding (either verbally or textually) to discussion questions or other students' answers and comments during the synchronous portion of lectures in weekly Teams meetings.
- Responding asynchronously in the weekly "Games of the Week" Canvas discussion forums.
- Responding asynchronously to the discussion questions or other students' comments that are included in any of the weekly uploaded video lectures via the TechSmith Knowmia Conversation chat window.
- Sharing links to relevant articles or videos in the "Share Zone" discussion section on the Canvas course page.
- Scheduling time to speak with me during my weekly office hours.
- Reaching out to me via email or Canvas direct messages with questions or comments related to course content.

*If for whatever reason you have a circumstance that makes participation in this class difficult for you, please let me know as soon as possible and we can discuss alternative forms of assessment.

Deadlines: The only deadline to speak of in relation to your participation grade is that I will not be assessing any asynchronous responses made in any of the Canvas Discussion forums or TechSmith Knowmia Conversation chat windows after 11:59 pm EST on April 26th (one week after the last class). Otherwise, I will be working to continually and holistically assess your synchronous and/or asynchronous participation throughout the semester.

Grading: You will be graded on how often and how much effort you dedicate to the participation activities listed above. A more extensive rubric will be provided on the relevant Canvas assignment page within the first couple of weeks of the course. Your participation grade will not be finalized until the end of the course but if you are curious about how you are currently doing please send me an email and I will try to give you a very approximate/provisional grade based on your previously demonstrated participation.

Grading Breakdown

Numerical grades may be translated into letter grades based upon the following scale:

Exceptional

90–100% A+

Demonstrated an exceptional degree of creative and/or logical thinking, a superior ability to organize, to analyze, and to integrate ideas, thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques, and exceptional skill

in their application in satisfying the requirements of the course.

Excellent

80–84% = A−
85–89% = A

Demonstrated a high degree of creative and/or logical thinking, a superior ability to organize, to analyze, and to integrate ideas, thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques, and a very high degree of skill in their application in satisfying the requirements of a course.

Good

70–73% = B−
74–76% = B
77–79% = B+

Demonstrated a good evidence of creative and/or logical thinking, a good ability to organize, to analyze, and to integrate ideas, knowledge of concepts and/or techniques, and considerable skill in their application in satisfying the requirements of a course.

Satisfactory

60–63% = C−
64–66% = C
67–69% = C+

Demonstrated a satisfactory level of creative and/or logical thinking, a generally adequate grasp of the subject matter, knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and competence in their application in satisfying the requirements of a course.

Poor

50–53% = D−
54–56% = D
57–59% = D+

Demonstrated barely adequate knowledge and ability in creative and/or logical thinking and the application of concepts and/or techniques in satisfying the requirements of a course.

Unsatisfactory

0–49% = F

Failed to meet minimum acceptable command of knowledge and ability in creative and/or logical thinking and the application of concepts and/or techniques in satisfying the requirements of a course; or failure to complete a course; or by sanction as permitted by the university's academic misconduct policy.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a shared responsibility. All members of the OCAD University community are required to abide by the academic misconduct policy, breaches of which are considered a very serious offense. The University is committed to enforcing the policy and all allegations of academic misconduct will therefore be reported and investigated.The most common type of academic misconduct is plagiarism, that is, deliberately misrepresenting someone else's words, ideas or original visual concepts as your own in written or visual work. Other examples of academic misconduct include misuse of written or visual sources ("unintentional plagiarism"), cheating during an examination or test, collaborating on assignments without permission, and submitting any work for evaluation that has previously been submitted in another course without prior approval. Read the **Academic Misconduct policy (http://www.ocadu.ca/students/student-policies/academic-policies.htm)** to ensure you are well informed.

Student Feedback on Courses

OCAD University is committed to ensuring excellence in teaching and learning. As you approach the end of the course you will be asked to complete an online course evaluation during class time on your laptop or other web-enabled device. Your feedback is valued by faculty and is an important part of on-going efforts to enhance course design and teaching across the university. If you have immediate concerns about the teaching of your course, please bring them to your course instructor or Chair.

University Policies

As a student, you are responsible for being familiar with the academic policies, procedures and guidelines. University policies and procedures are subject to change and are not tied to a specific academic year, unless otherwise noted.

Please see the **Policies & Resources (https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/sis_course_id:14955/external_tools/80)** page.

Commitment to Sustainability

OCAD University is committed to developing decolonial approaches to sustainability that foster environmental justice through interdisciplinary solutions. To address the climate crisis, you are encouraged to approach your art, design, creative and critical practices with an understanding of the interconnections among environmental, social, economic and cultural activities. You may also consult the OCAD U **Sustainability Policy (https://www.ocadu.ca/sites/default/files/legacy_assets/documents/Sustainability%20Policy.pdf)** which

builds on the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)** ⤷ **(https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/)** in support of ecologically-informed and holistic thinking that cultivates relationships between people, place, and land. Together we can advance global sustainability goals which include, among others: reduced inequalities; good health and well-being; affordable and clean energy; clean water and sanitation; climate action; and responsible consumption and production.

Production Materials Fees and Laptop Fees

In applicable courses, production materials fees cover the costs of materials consumed and/or incorporated in the making of student work in the shops and studios. Production materials fees are automatically added to your online fees account at the time of course registration, and are due in full by the first tuition payment deadline in August. Production materials fees are non-refundable after the last day to change courses with a 100% refund, as outlined in the Calendar.

Disclaimer Statement

This course outline may be amended as the course proceeds. The class will be notified and consulted about all changes. In keeping with the Grading Policy, once the course outline has been presented, no change in grade weighting may take place unless there is unanimous consent of all students present. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, notice must be given at a regularly scheduled class meeting previous to the class at which the issue is to be decided.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Tue Feb 22, 2022	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #1 (https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38327)**	due by 11:59pm
	🗨 **Reading Response #1 (https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38328)**	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 8, 2022	📝 **Game Analysis Essay (https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38331)**	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 22, 2022	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #2 (https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38325)**	due by 11:59pm
	🗨 **Reading Response #2**	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
	https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38329	
Tue Apr 19, 2022	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #3** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38326)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38326)	due by 11:59pm
	💬 **Reading Response #3** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38330)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38330)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 26, 2022	📝 **Participation** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38332)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38332)	due by 11:59pm
	📝 **Take-Home Exam** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38333)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38333)	due by 11:59pm
	📝 **Game Analysis Essay** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38331)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38331) (2 students)	
	📝 **Game Analysis Essay** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38331)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38331) (1 student)	
	📝 **Game Analysis Essay** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38331)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38331) (1 student)	
	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #1** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38327)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38327) (1 student)	
	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #2** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38325)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38325) (2 students)	
	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #2** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38325)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38325) (1 student)	
	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #3** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38326)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38326) (2 students)	
	🚀 **Key Term Quiz #3** [(https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38326)](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38326)	

Date	Details	Due
	(1 student)	
	💬 **[Reading Response #1](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38328)** (1 student)	
	💬 **[Reading Response #1](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38328)** (1 student)	
	💬 **[Reading Response #2](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38329)** (1 student)	
	💬 **[Reading Response #2](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38329)** (1 student)	
	💬 **[Reading Response #3](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38330)** (1 student)	
	💬 **[Reading Response #3](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38330)** (1 student)	
	💬 **[Reading Response #3](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38330)** (1 student)	
	📝 **[Take-Home Exam](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38333)** (7 students)	
	📝 **[Take-Home Exam](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38333)** (1 student)	
	📝 **[Take-Home Exam](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38333)** (3 students)	
	📝 **[Take-Home Exam](https://canvascloud.ocadu.ca/courses/4381/assignments/38333)** (1 student)	