



## IASC 1P04: New Media and Games Fall 2015

Lecture: W 8-10:50am

Labs: *Monday, 8-8:50am*

*Monday, 10-10:50am*

*Monday, 11-11:50am*

Course Number: IASC 1P04

Term/Year/Duration: Fall 2015

Course Title: New Media and Games

---

Instructor Name: Dr. Alex Christie  
Email: [achristie@brocku.ca](mailto:achristie@brocku.ca)  
Office Location: MC A219  
Office Hours: Monday, 1:30-2:30  
Liaison Librarian: John Dingle  
Teaching Assistant: Julie Domitrek  
TA Email: [jdomitrek@brocku.ca](mailto:jdomitrek@brocku.ca)

---

### Times and Locations:

**Lecture:** *Wednesdays from 8-9:50 am. TH 259.*

**Labs:** *Monday, 8-8:50 am. TH 269H*

*Monday, 10-10:50 am*

*Monday, 11-11:50 am*

*Note: Classes at Brock University end ten minutes ahead of the hour or half hour to facilitate transfer time.*

---

### Course Calendar Description:

Information, knowledge and expression in interactive and networked media environments are explored in this course along with the technologies and socio-political infrastructures that make such media possible. The historical development of and precedents for interactive media as well as concepts in poetics, hypertextuality, hypermediacy, remediation, social relations and play are also examined by students.

### Overview:

Welcome to New Media and Games. While graduates of the GAME program anticipate careers in a range of technical positions, employers consistently emphasize of soft skills as key attributes they look for when hiring employees. Skills in the areas of imaginative problem-solving, collaboration, communication, abstract thought, and creativity are essential for producing stand-out and award-winning new media products, of the type we will study in this class. As such, this course introduces you to a range of complex and theoretical concepts in new media and games. Throughout the course, we will emphasize pairing theory with practice—understanding a complex and abstract idea and using a deep grasp of that idea to inform how and why we implement technical knowledge. By challenging ourselves with complex course readings and abstract theory, we will come to understand how to appreciate and architect creative digital objects. Learning to creatively blend theory and practice will form the bedrock of your success at university in your careers to come.

## Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will demonstrate a concrete grasp of the following:

- Examine and generalize from theory and discourse related to games and other media
- Relate historical and contemporary notions of games and related media
- Assess social and cultural impacts of games and other interactive media
- Apply critical thinking in the analysis of conceptual and creative frameworks in computing, the arts and media
- Interpret game, play and narrative structures and patterns as well as their uses and effects
- Integrate diverse concepts for the purpose of devising new forms of expression.
- Devise unique game concepts, narratives, design patterns, mechanics and dynamics relevant to varied purposes and audiences
- Articulate complex ideas, arguments, and concepts in oral presentations and in writing reports including game treatments and comprehensive design documentation
- Produce informed and inspired creative expression in the diverse framework of games
- Experiment with, test and evaluate of concepts in games in relation to other disciplines and practices to discover its capacities and limitations
- Define work commitments and meet production deadlines
- Interact respectfully with peers
- Reflect upon the results of practice to generate insights into future conceptual and technical options and their iterations
- Adhere to the spirit of professional codes of conduct, (such as IGDA) with respect to legal, ethical, societal, environmental, health, safety, legal and cultural issues
- Maintain commitment to research and inquiry in support of independent learning to expand new knowledge in a constantly evolving field
- Work independently and collaboratively within a team in a variety of roles

## Course Communications:

All course communications are to be handled by e-mail and Isaak/Sakai, each of which should be checked daily. You can expect responses to e-mails within 48 hours of sending them. I do not respond to e-mails during the weekend.

All correspondence with the professor and teaching assistant for this course are professional communications and should be treated as such. For further details on writing a professional electronic correspondence, [read the following: “Re: Your recent email to your professor.”](#)

---

## Evaluation Components and Due Dates

---

IASC 1P04 has two components: the **Lecture**, assignments for which are worth **70%** of your final grade, and the **Lab**, with assignments worth **30%** of your final grade. The lectures are designed to discuss the theory and concepts related to interactive and digital media, while the labs are designed to help you build or strengthen your technical skill set. You should not view the two as entirely separate, but as two inter-related and complementary components. Indeed, a core principle of the Interactive Arts and Science program is that theory and practice are inextricably linked. The two individual technical projects (TED Talk and Twine prototype) constitute the 30% lab grade, while attendance & participation cuts across lectures and labs.

Care of Jason Hawreliak

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Attendance & participation	15%	Each class

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Course blog/forums	10%	Friday Sept 23, Oct 21, Nov 11 by 5pm
TED Talk (script)	15%	Wednesday, Oct 5 (8am)
Twine game (prototype)	15%	Friday, Nov 4
Team Presentations	20%	Weeks of Oct 17-Nov4
Kickstarter Final Projects	25%	Wed Nov 23, 30
Total	100%	

## Attendance and Participation

### Course Blog/Forums

Throughout the semester, you will be asked to write three different posts to our course blog/forum on Isaak/Sakai. The prompt for each of these three posts will be distributed in class the week before the post is due. These posts must be at least two full (five sentence) paragraphs in length, approximately 750 words. Posts should demonstrate clear writing skills, as articulated in this class, and a complex and thoughtful engagement with the given prompt. Each post is worth 3<sup>1/3</sup>%, with a cumulative total of 10% for this assignment.

### First Assignment: TED Talk (script)

Write the script for a 3-minute (500 words, or 1½-2 double-space pages) TED Talk that examines the history of a specific videogame mechanic or new media design, analyzes it from a theoretical perspective, and proposes an innovation to that mechanic or design based on such theory. While students are encouraged to incorporate images and screen grabs into their scripts, the scripts themselves will be marked primarily for the overall polish and coherence of their writing, in addition to the depth of engagement with material at hand. The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate clear communication skills used to reference and analyze technical/formal components of a new media object.

### Second Assignment: Twine Game (prototype)

Create a short, 3-5 minute, Twine game and write a one page developer doc explaining how it implements the concepts discussed thus far in class. The goal of this assignment is to implement theoretical concepts in interactive storytelling in the practical production of an interactive Twine game, effectively combining theory and practice. As such, both the technical and formal polish of the prototype will be considered alongside the theoretical concepts demonstrated in the prototype and describe in the developer doc, with particular emphasis on the overlap between theory and practice the assignment demonstrates.

### Team Presentations

Teams of 4-6 will present a videogame or new media object/platform and discuss its relationship to at least three keywords in the course. At least one of these three keywords must be the keyword for the week in which the presentation takes place (and presentations must reference concepts mentioned in that week's reading in detail). The subject chosen must not be one mentioned in lecture or in assigned course reading/viewing. Presentations should run roughly ten minutes in length and demonstrate a detailed grasp of the game/object/platform, its production/distribution/reception, as well as the keywords discussed.

## Kickstarter Final Project Presentations

Teams of 4-6 will propose a game or new media platform that innovates the social/cultural/political deployments of its category. Teams will develop a prototype/proof-of-concept for the project, which must include a technical demonstration (we will focus on Axure in this course, although teams are free to incorporate additional technical elements beyond those made with it). Each team member will occupy a different role/position within the team and teams will “pitch” their project to the class of investors in a 15-minute live Kickstarter presentation. Each team member must produce assets that correspond to her role, and these assets must account for the corresponding fraction of the workload (evenly divided between all team members).

### Late Submission Policy:

The penalties for late submission of assigned coursework (e.g., papers, assignments, weekly reflections) are **5%** per day, unless accompanied by medical documentation. See Medical Exemption Policy and the medical health certificate at <http://www.brocku.ca/health-services/policies/exemption>

### Relationship between attendance and grades:

Students are expected to attend all classes and must submit all assignments in order to pass this course. After more than 3 unexcused absences from lab meetings, you will be deducted a full letter grade from your final grade (for instance, a “B” becomes a “B-“). After more than 7 unexcused absences, you will receive an “F” for this course.

**Important dates:** (check the section on sessional or important dates in the relevant online University calendar at <http://brocku.ca/webcal/>)

**November 8, 2016** is the date for withdrawal from the course without academic penalty.

**November 11, 2016** is the date you will be notified of 15% of your course grade (Note: this date should be at least one week before the date for withdrawal listed above).

**October 10-14, 2016** is/are the scheduled reading week(s).

---

## Academic Policies

---

### Academic Integrity:

#### Statement for undergraduate courses

Academic misconduct is a serious offence. The principle of academic integrity, particularly of doing one’s own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students should consult Section VII, “Academic Misconduct”, in the “Academic Regulations and University Policies” entry in the Undergraduate Calendar, available at <http://brocku.ca/webcal> to view a fuller description of prohibited actions, and the procedures and penalties.

#### Plagiarism software:

If plagiarism software is used (Turnitin.com), a statement to that effect must be included on the outline including an option to opt out.

#### Sample statement regarding Turnitin.com

This course will not use Turnitin.com, phrase-matching software. However, the instructor may check assignments for academic integrity concerns using alternate means.

#### **Intellectual Property Notice:**

All slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other course materials created by the instructor in this course are the intellectual property of the instructor. A student who publicly posts or sells an instructor's work, without the instructor's express consent, may be charged with misconduct under Brock's Academic Integrity Policy and/or Code of Conduct, and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

#### **Academic Accommodation:**

As part of Brock University's commitment to a respectful work and learning environment, the University will make every reasonable effort to accommodate all members of the university community with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations related to a documented disability to participate in this course, you are encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities in the Student Development Centre (4th floor Schmon Tower, ex. 3240). You are also encouraged to discuss any accommodations with the instructor well in advance of due dates and scheduled assessments.

#### **Academic Accommodation due to Religious Obligations:**

Brock University acknowledges the pluralistic nature of the undergraduate and graduate communities such that accommodations will be made for students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event. Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements.

#### **Medical Exemption Policy:**

The University requires that a student be medically examined in Health Services, or by an off-campus physician prior to an absence due to medical reasons from an exam, lab, test, quiz, seminar, assignment, etc. The Medical Certificate can be found at: <http://www.brocku.ca/health-services/policies/exemption>

#### **Respectful Engagement:**

Abusive or offensive language and behavior of any sort will not be tolerated in this classroom. Interacting respectfully with your peers is not only a core life skill; it is also a required learning outcome for the GAME program: this is how game developers build and maintain loyal customers, how students and employees build positive professional relationships (the cornerstone of a successful career), and how people become more happy and satisfied in society at large (through a diverse range of supportive connections to other people). Learning how to engage respectfully with a diversity of peers means learning how to build things that people value, how to work with a team, and how to enjoy positive working and learning environments.

#### **The Brock University Code of Conduct States:**

No student shall:

- Harass another person. Harassment is defined as a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Single acts of sufficient severity may also constitute harassment. This definition includes Workplace Harassment under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Harassment may include: verbal, written (including electronic, digital

communications whether by email, text messages, posting on internet sites or otherwise), and/or actual or threatened physical actions directed at an individual or group by another individual or group who know(s) or reasonably ought to know that the behaviour is unwanted. (See also Brock University's Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy).

All members of the Brock community are bound to the University Code of Conduct, as stated at <https://brocku.ca/student-discipline/code-of-conduct>.

### **Dealing with Stress:**

University can be both an exciting and challenging time in your life. While you are doing all you can to succeed, you may experience feeling overwhelmed or stressed. These feelings can happen for a number of reasons such as a lack of confidence in your abilities, the number of assignments due or personal/family issues. A way you can deal with these feelings is by learning different strategies to manage your stress. Luckily, there are services at Brock you can access to help you! A-Z Learning Services offers a number of free workshops to help students succeed. These workshops include:

- Time Management
- Procrastination Busting
- Essay Writing
- Exam Preparation
- And many more!

You can register for workshops through A-Z Learning Services website (<https://brocku.ca/learning-services>) or on the Experience BU site. Sometimes you want or need extra support. If you feel this way, don't hesitate to contact Personal Counselling Services at <https://brocku.ca/personal-counselling>.

Care of Allyson Miller, Learning Services

## Fall 2016 Schedule

Please note that this is simply a guideline and may be subject to change based on student interest, world events, etc. The readings listed are expected to be completed before the Wednesday lecture of each week.

Week	Keyword(s)	Homework/Due Dates	Further reading/viewing/playing; spoiler alerts (not required)
<b>Sept 7-9</b>	Hello, world!	Get some sleep	
<b>Sept 12-16</b>	Difficulty	Juul, " <a href="#">Fear of Failing? The Many meanings of difficulty in videogames</a> "	Inside (Playdead)
<b>Sept 19-23</b>	Medium Mechanic	McLuhan, " <a href="#">The Medium is the Message</a> " Chiang, " <a href="#">Story of your Life</a> "	The Witness (Thekla) "eps1.0_hellofriend.mov," Mr. Robot
<b>Sept 26-30</b>	Remediation Reality	Bolter & Grusin, " <a href="#">Introduction: The Double Logic of Remediation</a> " Jones, " <a href="#">The Emergence of the Digital Humanities (as the Network is Everting)</a> " <b>Blog post due (Friday, Sept 23   5pm)</b>	Fez (Polytron) Woolf, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
<b>Oct 3-7</b>	Social Gamify	Harris, " <a href="#">How Technology Hijacks People's Minds</a> " Tanz, " <a href="#">The Curse of Cow Clicker: How a Cheeky Satire Became a Videogame Hit</a> " Barthes, " <a href="#">Toys</a> " <b>TED Talk (script) due (Wednesday, Oct 5   8am)</b>	Cow Clicker "The Game," Star Trek: The Next Generation
<b>READING WEEK</b>			
<b>Oct 17-21</b>	Expression	Drucker, " <a href="#">Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display</a> " Wells, <i>The War of the Worlds</i> , chapters 14-16 <b>Blog post due (Friday, Oct 21   5pm)</b>	Portal (Valve)
<b>Oct 24-48</b>	Representation	" <a href="#">Damsel in Distress</a> ," Parts 1-3. Tropes versus Women in Videogames <b>Team Presentations</b>	<i>The Mask You Live In</i> Lemonade (visual album) Nelson, <i>The Argonauts</i>
<b>Oct 31-Nov 4</b>	Interactive Procedure	Juul, " <a href="#">Introduction</a> " <i>Half-Real</i> Part 1, <a href="#">Life is Strange</a> <b>Team Presentations</b>	Parts 2-3, Life is Strange (Dontnod)
<b>Nov 7-11</b>	Communication	Chandler, " <a href="#">Models of the Sign</a> " Borges, " <a href="#">The Library of Babel</a> " <b>Blog post due (Friday, Nov 11   5pm)</b> <b>Team Presentations</b>	Parts 1-4, Kentucky Route Zero (Cardboard Computer)
<b>Nov 14-18</b>	Prototype	Galey and Ruecker, " <a href="#">How a Prototype Argues</a> " <b>Twine Game due (Wednesday, Nov 16   8am)</b>	
<b>Nov 21-25</b>	Project Team	<b>Kickstarter Presentations</b>	
<b>Nov 28-Dec 2</b>	Project Team	<b>Kickstarter Presentations</b>	
<b>WINTER BREAK</b>			