ENGL 486: Introduction to Game Studies, Proctor 41
ENGL 406: Lab, Science Library, B90
Class: 2-3:50 M/W
Lab: 2-3:50 Tues
https://ufolio.uoregon.edu/gamestudies
Twitter Hashtag: #uogs2010

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DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction to the emerging field of game studies with specific emphasis on humanistic approaches to the study of digital games and their philosophical implications. In addition to studying a range of critical and theoretical approaches to digital games, the course will pay particular attention to the gendered and racialized dimensions of games and game play.

This course is also an experiment: a collaborative effort among faculty members, librarians, and students to provide an overview of a new and emerging field of study. We hope that you will provide feedback over the course of the quarter and be patient with us and with one another as we pick our way through the interdisciplinary field of game studies.

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CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

definitions (3 @ 10% ea): Select a concept that's central to a specific reading (algorithm, ludology, narratology, ideology, cultural capital). Write a 2 paragraph (single-spaced) definition of the concept that pays careful attention to what the text itself has to say. The purpose of these definitions is to really grapple with the meanings of the readings, so cite the text and engage with it. Other assignments will allow you to apply the concepts to examples of games and gaming, but for this one, you will focus on the text. Definitions must be posted on the course website by noon on the day they're due. Sign-up for these will take place on the first day of class. You are responsible for keeping track of how many definitions you have signed up for – late definitions will not be accepted.

collaborative analysis (15%): In groups of 2-3, write a 3-page analysis of an assigned reading (sign-up will take place during the first class). An analysis should: a) summarize and synthesize the reading's argument; b) provide an illustration of the assigned reading using facebook's *Frontierville* that critically responds to the reading. We strongly recommend that you begin playing *Frontierville* at the beginning of the quarter, since it will serve as a common text for the duration of the course.

final analysis presentation (5%): You will also be expected to give a brief (5 minute) presentation on the topic of your final analysis by or before Week Five. Presentations will be old school (no powerpoints or other visual aids).

draft of final analysis (20%): a 2-page abstract for your final analysis.

final analysis (8-10 pp. u/g; 15-20 pp. grad) (30%): The analysis will apply one (or more, for those of you who are ambitious) critical theory to a game you will select at the beginning of the quarter. The definitions and collaborative analytics are designed to help you focus over the course of the quarter and generate a sufficiently narrow and original analysis. You might wish to focus on race and representation in the game you've selected; you may want to focus on some aspect of fan culture; you may want to consider the political economy of the genre of the game you've selected. We are also encouraging students to work on clustered topics (MMOs, fps games, cell phone games), so that you can share citations and play experience with one another.

NB: Should you at any point have an alternative suggestion for an assignment that grows more directly out of your own research interests, just let us know by email and we can discuss options.

LAB ASSIGNMENTS:

draft bibliography (40%): Without a good bibliography, you'll spend a lot of time spinning your research wheels, wondering, "Where did I read that!?" This draft should be comprehensive, building on resources you use for writing your definitions, collaborative analytic piece, and what you anticipate you'll need for your final analysis. You are strongly encouraged to use Endnote, Zotero, or Mendeley as you build your bibliography. It must be formatted using *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. This assignment is weighted heavily to encourage you to start your research early. Credit will be given primarily for content (the breadth, depth, and creativity of your research). For this draft, we are less concerned with proper formatting.

final bibliography (20%): Essentially your draft bibliography with the addition of any resources you've discovered since its submission. This will include the works cited in your final analysis. Full credit will be earned only through extreme attention to detail regarding the formatting requirements of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed.

in-lab questions (20%): These will be completed in-class during the first 5 minutes of every lab. The questions will use a short-answer format to gauge engagement with assigned lab readings and will help tie together the readings with the games we will be playing in each lab.

play logs (20%): We expect that you will maintain a play log for the duration of class, detailing how much time you spend playing specific games outside of class. You'll fill out play logs via a web form on the course website (http://ufolio.uoregon.edu/gamestudies/playlog/). The log will consist of the date and duration of play sessions, as well as the name(s) of the game(s) played.

NB: You will be assigned a separate grade for the class and the lab. Questions about grades for the class should be directed to Carol. Questions about grades for the lab should be directed to Annie and David.

TIME LINE

1. Week One:
   - Sign up for definitions
   - Sign up for collaborative analysis
   - Schedule a meeting with Carol, David, and Annie to discuss possible focus for final analysis and select game you'll be playing
   - Begin maintaining play log

2. Week Two:
   - Continue maintaining play log
   - Workshop final analysis ideas
   - Definitions due

3. Week Three:
   - Continue maintaining play log
   - Workshop final analysis ideas
   - Definitions due

4. Week Four:
   - Continue maintaining play log
   - All workshops of final analysis ideas completed
   - Definitions due

5. Week Five:
   - Draft of bibliography and final analysis due
   - Definitions due

6. Week Six:
   - Continue maintaining play log
   - Definitions due

7. Week Seven:
   - Final analysis abstracts due on Monday, February 14
   - Definitions due

8. Week Eight:
   - Continue maintaining play log
   - Definitions due

9. Week Nine:
  - Collaborative analysis due

10. Week Ten:
  - Final play log entry
  - Turn in final bibliography in lab
  - Last round of definitions due

11. Final analyses due on Tuesday, 3/15 by noon

READINGS

WEEK ONE
i. Histories/Contexts
<u>Monday, January 3</u>
  - Christopher J. Ferguson, "The School Shooting/Violent Video Game Link: Causal Relationship or Moral Panic?" *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling* 5 (2008), 25-37
  - Workshop final analysis ideas (2 graduate students)

<u>Tuesday, January 4</u>
  - Italo Calvino, "Chapter One," *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1981, 3-9
  - Darby McDevitt, "The Deaths of Game Narrative," http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/5952/the_deaths_of_game_narrative.php
  - Workshop final analysis ideas (3 graduate students)

<u>Wednesday, January 5</u>
  - Carolyn Marvin, "Introduction," *When Old Technologies Were New*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, 3-8
  - Jonathan Sterne, "Hello," *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, 1-30
  - Workshop final analysis ideas (2 undergrads)
Recommended:
  - Raymond Williams, "The Technology and the Society," *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, Routledge, 2003, 1-25

WEEK TWO
<u>Class, Monday, January 10</u>

- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/interviews/turkle.html?utm_campaign=videoplayer&utm_medium=fullplayer&utm_source=relatedlink
- "History of Video Games," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_video_games
- In-class screening: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)
- Definitions posted by noon on website

Lab, Tuesday, January 11
- Jorge Luis Borges, "The Double," "One-Eyed Beings," "The Golem," *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, New York: Penguin, 1969, 80-81, 175-177, 112-114
- Alex Chitu, "Google Chrome and the Original Google," *Google Operating System*, http://googlesystem.blogspot.com/2009/04/google-chrome-and-original-google.html
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)

Class, Wednesday, January 12
- Lev Manovich, "What is New Media?", *The Language of New Media*, MIT Press, 2001, 19-61
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)
- Definitions posted by noon on website

Recommended:
- Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, London; Blackwell, 2001,166-176

WEEK THREE
ii. Critical Theories
Class, Monday, January 17
- Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday – no class

Lab, Tuesday, January 18
- Dan Gallagher, "Is Your Video Game Machine Watching You?" *WSJ Blogs: Digits*, http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2010/11/11/is-your-videogame-machine-watching-you/

- David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest*, Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1996, 144-151
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)

Recommended:
- Kate Mondloch, "Body and Screen: The Architecture of Screen Spectatorship," *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, 20-39

<u>Class, Wednesday, January 19</u>
- Walter Holland, Henry Jenkins, Kurt Squire, "Theory by Design," *The Video Game Theory Reader*
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)

WEEK FOUR
<u>Class, Monday, January 24</u>
- Alex Galloway, *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006,85-106.
- Definitions posted by noon on website
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)

<u>Lab, Tuesday, January 25</u>
- William J. Mitchell, "Homo Electronicus," *Placing Words: Symbols, Space, and the City*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005, 181-185
- Chad Birch, "Understanding Pac-Man Ghost Behavior," *Game Internals*, http://gameinternals.com/post/2072558330/understanding-pac-man-ghost-behavior
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)

Recommended:
- Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994, 1-42
- Jorge Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science," Collected Fictions, New York: Penguin, 1999 http://languagescraps.blogspot.com/2008/09/borges-short-story-relating-to-foucault.html

<u>Class, Wednesday, January 26</u>
- McKenzie Wark, *Gamer Theory*, para 1-125, http://www.futureofthebook.org/gamertheory/
- Workshop final analysis ideas (3 undergrads)

WEEK FIVE
Class, Monday, January 31
- Jesper Juul, "Games Telling Stories?"
  http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/MacKenzie
- draft of final analysis abstract and draft bibliography due

Recommended:
- Tom Bissell, "The Unbearable Lightness of Games," *Extra Lives: Why Video Games Matter*, New York: Pantheon, 2010, 33-47
- Linda Hughes, "Beyond the Rules of the Game: Why are Rooie Rules Nice?" *The Game Design Reader*. Ed. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006, 504-517

Lab, Tuesday, February 1
- Amanda Lange, "Why Can't We Make Another Shadow of the Colossus?" *Second Truth Blog*, http://second-truth.blogspot.com/2010/05/why-cant-we-make-another-shadow-of.html
- Edmund McMillen, "Why am I so… hard?" *Team Meat Blog*, http://supermeatboy.com/13/Why_am_I_so____hard_/#b
- The Pokemon Database, "Pokemon dual-type charts," http://pokemondb.net/type/dual

Class, Wednesday, February 2
- Gonzalo Frasca, "Ludologists Love Stories, Too: Notes from a Debate that Never Took Place" http://www.digra.org/dl/db/05163.01125
- Henry Jenkins, "Game Design as Narrative Architecture," http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/games&narrative.html
- Definitions posted by noon on website

WEEK SIX
iii. Representation, Identity, and Fandom
Class, Monday, February 5
- Pierre Bourdieu, "How Can One be a Sports Fan?" *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Ed. Simon During, 1993
  http://books.google.com/books?id=Vv_ocJqva_kC&pg=PA427&lpg=PA427&dq=pierre+bourdieu+sports&source=bl&ots=1BpBrxBO0_&sig=HPG3Qz76KgZ50QH7nh3ZpqAnA9o&hl=en&ei=g8AQTYerKYzAsAP_rLSwCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CFsQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=pierre%20bourdieu%20sports&f=false

- Ellen Seiter, "Practicing at Home: Computers, Pianos, and Cultural Capital," *Digital Youth, Innovation, and the Unexpected*, Ed. Tara McPherson, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 27-52
- Definitions posted by noon on website

Recommended:
- Pierre Bourdieu, "Postscript: Towards a 'Vulgar' Critique of 'Pure' Critiques," *Distinction*, 485-500
- T.L. Taylor, "Beyond Fun: Instrumental Play and Power Gamers," *Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006, 67-92
- Loic Wacquant, "Prologue," *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*, New York: Oxford, 2004, vii-xii

Lab, Tuesday, February 6
- MacGregor Campbell, "Can a Machine Beat a Human at Starcraft?" *Gizmodo*, http://gizmodo.com/5679355/can-artificial-intelligence-beat-humans-at-starcraft
- Vulajin, "2: Weapon Selection and Talent Builds," *Rogue: PvE DPS*, Elitist Jerks, (Read through "Choosing Talents" section) http://elitistjerks.com/f47/t24301-rogue_pve_dps/#Weapon_Selection_and_Talent_Builds

Recommended:
- Bernard Tschumi, "Six Concepts," *Architecture and Disjunction*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994, 227-260

Class, Wednesday, February 7
- Tom Boellstorff, "Personhood," *Coming of Age in Second Life*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, 118-150
- Definitions posted by noon on website

Recommended:
- Alex Golub, "Being in the World (of Warcraft): Raiding, Realism, and Knowledge Production in a Massively Multiplayer Online Game," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 83(1), 2010: 17-46
- Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," *Resources of Hope*, New York: Verso, 1989, 3-18

WEEK SEVEN

Class, Monday, February 14

- Joshua Green and Henry Jenkins, "The Moral Economy of Web 2.0: Audience Research and Convergence Culture," in Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren (eds.) *Media Industries: History, Theory and Method* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, http://www.henryjenkins.org/2008/03/the_moral_economy_of_web_2 0_pa.html
- Definitions posted by noon on website

Lab, Tuesday, February 15
- ROM Hacking: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rom_hacking
- *Super There Will Be Blood*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg_8BiyDGCI
- *Super Mario Brothers – Frustration*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in6RZzdGki8
Recommended:
- Don DeLillo, *White Noise*, New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985, 12-13

Class, Wednesday, February 16
- Henry Jenkins, "Why Heather Can Write," http://www.technologyreview.com/Biztech/13473/?a=f
- Clive Thompson, "The Xbox Auteurs," *New York Times*, 7 August 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/07/magazine/07MACHINI.html?_r =1&ei=5090&en=a0b469a4346f3cbb&ex=1281067200&partner=rssu serland&emc=rss&pagewanted=all
- Definitions posted by noon on website
Recommended:
- Matt Hills, "Negative Fan Stereotypes ('Get a Life!') and Positive Fan Injunctions ('Everyone's Got to be a Fan of Something!'): Returning to Hegemony Theory in Fan Studies," *Spectator* 25(1), Spring 2005: 35-47.

WEEK EIGHT

Class, Monday, February 21
- Tanner Higgin, "Blackless Fantasy: The Disappearance of Race in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games," *Games and Culture* 4(1), January 2009, 3-26
- http://jezebel.com/5478367/our-avatars-our-projected-selves
- T.L. Taylor, "Where the Women Are," *Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006, 93-124

- Collaborative analysis due in class

Recommended:
- Searle Hub and Dmitri Williams, "Dude Looks Like a Lady: Gender Swapping in an Online Game," *Online Worlds: Convergence of the Real and the Virtual*. London: Springer-Verlag, 2010, 161-174

Lab, Tuesday, February 22
- Margaret Hartmann, "How Video Game Makers Design Characters," *Jezebel*, http://jezebel.com/5715630/how-video-game-makers-design-characters
- Tanner Higgin, "Making Men Uncomfortable: What Bayonetta Should Learn from Gaga," *Gaming the System*, http://www.tannerhiggin.com/2010/12/making-men-uncomfortable-what-bayonetta-should-learn-from-gaga/
- "There's a Soldier in All of Us," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pblj3JHF-Jo

Class, Wednesday, February 23
- Dean Chan, "*Dead-in-Iraq*: The Spatial Politics of Digital Game Art Activism and the In-Game Protest." *Joystick Soldiers*. Ed. Nina Huntemann and Matthew Thomas Payne. New York: Routledge, 2010, 252-271
- Randy Nichols, "Target Acquired: *America's Army* and the Video Games Industry," *Joystick Soldiers*. Ed. Nina Huntemann and Matthew Thomas Payne. New York: Routledge, 2010, 39-52
- Definitions posted by noon on website

WEEK NINE
iv. Political Economies
Class, Monday, February 28
- Mia Consalvo, "A Mage's Chronicle: Cheating and Life in Vana'diel," *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009, 149-174
- Julian Dibbell, "Part One: The Noob," *Play Money*. New York: Basic Books, 2006, 1-27

Lab, Tuesday, March 1
- Eric Caoili, "Study: Social Games to Generate Over $1 Billion In 2012," *Gamasutra*,

http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/29511/Study_Social_Games_To_Generate_Over_1_Billion_In_2012.php
- Laurie Penny, "FarmVille: They Reap What You Sow," *Comment is Free*, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/nov/19/farmville-they-reap-what-you-sow

Recommended:
- Ian Cook, "The Body Without Organs and Internet Gaming Addiction," in *Deleuze and New Technology*, Eds. Mark Poster and David Savat, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 185-205

Class, Wednesday, March 2
- Lisa Nakamura, "Illegal Workers in Virtual Worlds: Unfree Labor, Incivility, and the New Orientalism….," Critical Themes Conference, Department of Media Studies, The New School for Social Research, http://www.youtube.com/user/criticalthemesconf#p/u/3/MUGWNYpK4Tg (NB: watch all five parts)
- Jack Linchuan Qui, "Places and Communities," from *Working-Class Network Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009, 157-196
- http://www.wow.com/2010/08/04/15-minutes-of-fame-cory-doctorow-on-gold-farming/
- http://blog.games.yahoo.com/blog/160-gamer-makes-a-cool-half-million-by-selling-virtual-property
- http://coldsgoldfactory.blogspot.com/2010/09/xt-53-from-trade-chat.html

Recommended:
- Richard Heeks, "Real Money from Virtual Worlds," *Scientific American*, January 2010, 68-73

WEEK TEN
Class, Monday, March 7
- Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter, "Cognitive Capitalism: Electronic Arts," *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 35-68
- Nina Huntemann, "Irreconcilable Differences: Gender and Labor in the Videogame Industry," *FlowTV*, http://flowtv.org/2010/01/irreconcilable-differences-gender-and-labor-in-the-video-game-workplace-nina-b-huntemann-suffolk-university/

Lab, Tuesday, March 8

- Ea_spouse, *EA: The Human Story*, http://ea-spouse.livejournal.com/274.html
- Jas Purewal, "Thoughts on the WoW Glider Appeal," *Gamer/Law*, http://www.gamerlaw.co.uk/2010/12/thoughts-on-wow-glider-appeal.html

Class, Wednesday, March 9
- Jonathan Belman and Mary Flanagan, "Designing Games to Foster Empathy," *Cognitive Technology* 14(2), 5-15
- Antonio López, "Circling the Cross: Bridging Native America, Education, and Digital Media," *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*, 2007: 109-126

Recommended:
- Thomas Malaby and Timothy Burke, "The Short and Happy Life of Interdisciplinarity in Game Studies," *Games and Culture* 4(4), 2009: 323-330

March 15 (Tuesday)
- Final analyses due by noon in Carol's office

APPENDIX (MISC POLICIES):

1. **Attendance:** This course is designed for motivated, respectful students who do all the readings and attend classes. You are responsible for asking questions if you don't understand something. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to get materials covered during that session from a classmate and to make sure you understand what was discussed in your absence. Students who fail to meet these very basic expectations will perform poorly in this class.

2. **Participation:** This course will be run as a seminar. What that means is that much of class time will be devoted to discussing the assigned readings and related ideas. In order to fully participate, you will need to have completed the readings. In addition, we often focus so much on what we have to say in a course that we neglect to pay attention to what others are saying. We would ask that you listen carefully to other students and address what they have to say. Given the size of the course, we would ask that you keep your own comments pithy and refrain from meandering lines of conversation.

3. **Getting to Class Late and Leaving Early:** Late arrivals and early departures distract and disrupt class. Your teachers find them especially annoying. If you know that you have to leave early, let us know before class and please leave the classroom quietly. If you are more than 10 minutes late, do not bother coming to class. Here again, experience demonstrates a simple truth: students who do not attend class perform poorly.

4. **Assignments and Extensions:** All assignments are listed on the syllabus and will be announced well before they are due. If you know ahead of time that you can't turn an assignment in on time, please talk to Carol, Annie, and David about this before the due date. Requests for extensions after a due date will be given only in exceptional circumstances and must include (a) one typed, double-spaced page explaining the reason for missing the deadline, and (b) supporting documentation (e.g. an official doctor's note). Any such written request must be received by us no later than one week after the missed due date. In addition, any assignments that are accepted after the due date may suffer a significant grade penalty.

5. **Missed Labs:** If you miss a lab, you are responsible for contacting Annie and David regarding materials missed.

6. **Grades:** We really want you to do well on your assignments. The best advice we can give for doing well on assignments is to visit us during office hours to ask us questions when you are working on an assignment or reviewing material. If you have questions about a grade, please see the person who has evaluated your assignment as soon as you have received the grade to get further feedback. These are the circumstances under which we would change a grade: (a) if we have made an error, or (b) if we have failed to hold you to the same standard as everyone else. If you believe that you have received an undeserved grade, you should make your case in writing to the professor **within two weeks of receiving the grade**.

7. **Incompletes:** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of the quarter but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated causes beyond the student' s control, has been unable to take or complete some limited amount of term work.

8. **Students with disabilities:** If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please let Carol know as soon as possible.

9. **Academic Misconduct:** The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

10. **Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment):** The University will not tolerate discriminatory conduct. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well being of students, faculty, and staff. Such behavior will not be allowed in this classroom.

11. **Announcements:** Any changes to the syllabus, class cancellations, or other matters pertaining to the class will be posted on blackboard. You should check this site at the beginning of each week.

12. **Inclement Weather:** in the case of snow, please check the course website for information about class/lab cancellations.

For further information about university policies, please see the UO Student Conduct Code:
http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=puLfAzFDbsg%3D&tabid=69