Assignment Overview:

In this assignment, you will be challenged to move beyond traditional modes of argumentation and engage with a complex argument through visual representation. The goal is not merely to summarize or translate the argument, but to *interpret and communicate* its key components, relationships, and implications in a non-standard, visually compelling manner.

Project Guidelines:

1. **Select an Argument:** Choose 2 substantial arguments thus far from the syllabus. Ensure the argument is complex enough to warrant visual representation, containing multiple premises, supporting points, counterarguments, or nuances.
2. **Visualize the Argument:** Create a visual representation of the argument. This may take the form of a:
   - **Flowchart or concept map:** Illustrate the logical flow of the argument, highlighting key claims, premises, and relationships.
   - **Diagram or illustration:** Represent abstract concepts or relationships within the argument through visual metaphors or symbols.
   - **Comic strip or storyboard:** Narrate the argument through a sequence of images and dialogue, capturing its progression and potential counterarguments.
   - **Other creative forms:** Explore additional visual formats that effectively convey the argument's essence (e.g., infographic, animation, interactive visualization).
3. **Explain Your Choices:** Accompany your visualization with a brief written explanation (approximately 500 words) addressing:
   - **Key elements:** Identify the central components of the argument you chose to highlight in your visualization.
   - **Visual choices:** Explain the rationale behind your chosen visual format and specific design elements.
   - **Intended impact:** Discuss how your visualization contributes to understanding the argument and its potential implications.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Accuracy and comprehensiveness:** How well does your visualization capture the key components and complexities of the argument?
- **Creativity and originality:** Does your visualization demonstrate innovative thinking and a unique approach to representing the argument?
- **Clarity and effectiveness:** How well does your visualization communicate the argument's structure, logic, and potential implications?
- **Written explanation:** Does your explanation provide clear insight into your visual choices and intended impact?
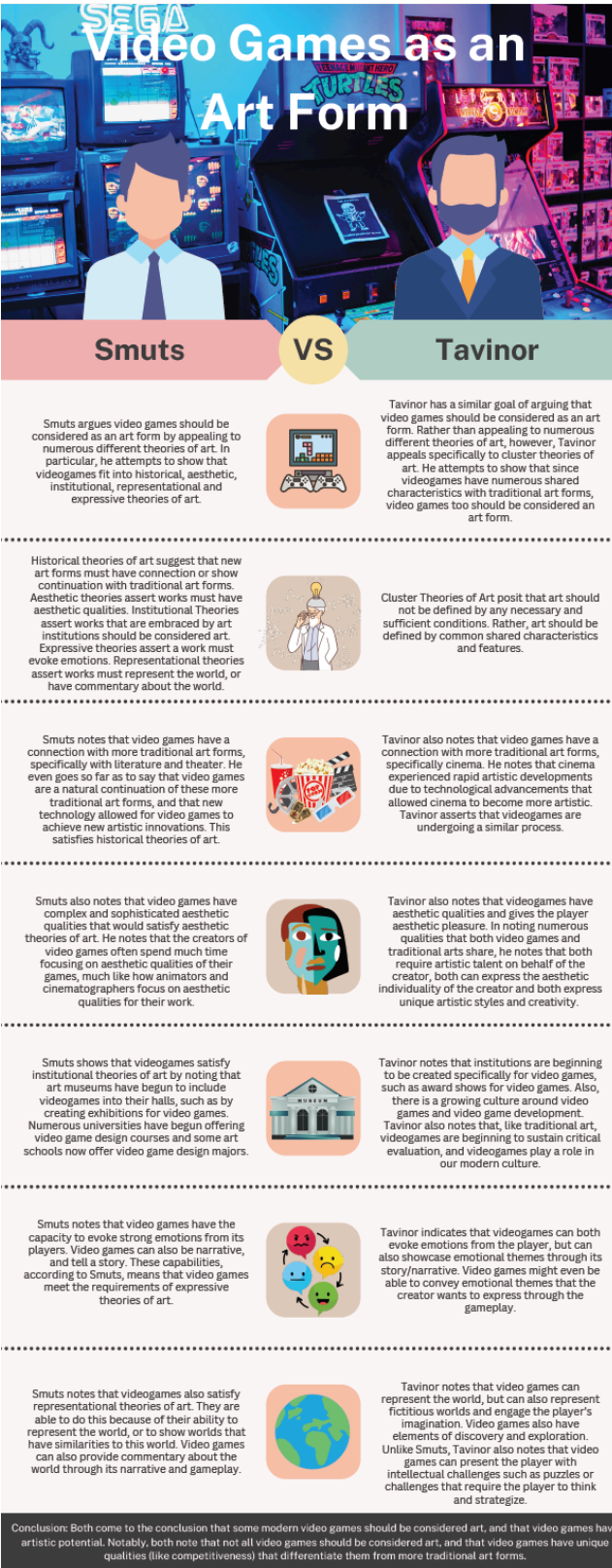
Examples:

Flowchart:

ARE VIDEOGAMES A CATEGORY OF ART?
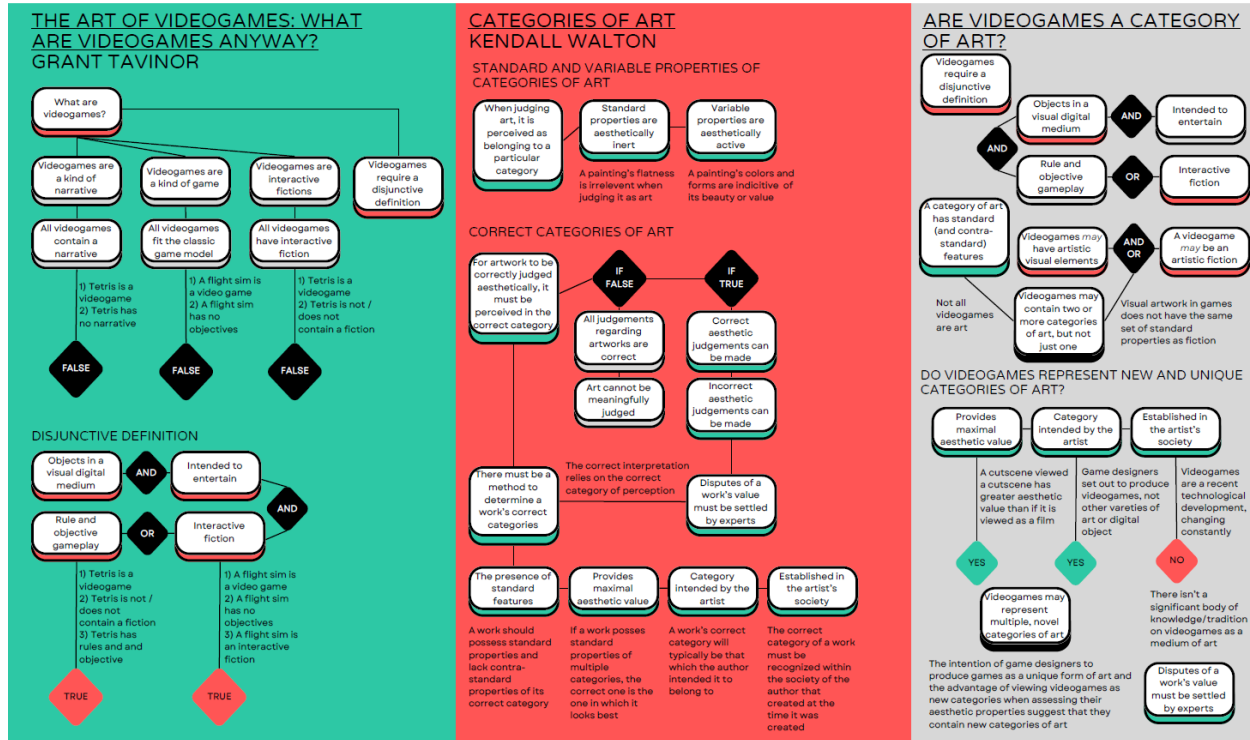
Infographic:

Video Games as an Art Form

Smuts VS Tavinor

Smuts argues video games should be considered as an art form by appealing to numerous different theories of art. In particular, he attempts to show that videogames fit into historical, aesthetic, institutional, representational and expressive theories of art.

Tavinor has a similar goal of arguing that video games should be considered as an art form. Rather than appealing to numerous different theories of art, however, Tavinor appeals specifically to cluster theories of art. He attempts to show that since videogames have numerous shared characteristics with traditional art forms, video games too should be considered an art form.

Historical theories of art suggest that new art forms must have connection or show continuation with traditional art forms. Aesthetic theories assert works must have aesthetic qualities. Institutional Theories assert works that are embraced by art institutions should be considered art. Expressive theories assert a work must evoke emotions. Representational theories assert works must represent the world, or have commentary about the world.

Cluster Theories of Art posit that art should not be defined by any necessary and sufficient conditions. Rather, art should be defined by common shared characteristics and features.

Smuts notes that video games have a connection with more traditional art forms, specifically with literature and theater. He even goes so far as to say that video games are a natural continuation of these more traditional art forms, and that new technology allowed for video games to achieve new artistic innovations. This satisfies historical theories of art.

Tavinor also notes that video games have a connection with more traditional art forms, specifically cinema. He notes that cinema experienced rapid artistic developments due to technological advancements that allowed cinema to become more artistic. Tavinor asserts that videogames are undergoing a similar process.

Smuts also notes that video games have complex and sophisticated aesthetic qualities that would satisfy aesthetic theories of art. He notes that the creators of video games often spend much time focusing on aesthetic qualities of their games, much like how animators and cinematographers focus on aesthetic qualities for their work.

Tavinor also notes that videogames have aesthetic qualities and gives the player aesthetic pleasure. In noting numerous qualities that both video games and traditional arts share, he notes that both require artistic talent on behalf of the creator, both can express the aesthetic individuality of the creator and both express unique artistic styles and creativity.

Smuts shows that videogames satisfy institutional theories of art by noting that art museums have begun to include videogames into their halls, such as by creating exhibitions for video games. Numerous universities have begun offering video game design courses and some art schools now offer video game design majors.

Tavinor notes that institutions are beginning to be created specifically for video games, such as award shows for video games. Also, there is a growing culture around video games and video game development. Tavinor also notes that, like traditional art, videogames are beginning to sustain critical evaluation, and videogames play a role in our modern culture.

Smuts notes that video games have the capacity to evoke strong emotions from its players. Video games can also be narrative, and tell a story. These capabilities, according to Smuts, means that video games meet the requirements of expressive theories of art.

Tavinor indicates that videogames can both evoke emotions from the player, but can also showcase emotional themes through its story/narrative. Video games might even be able to convey emotional themes that the creator wants to express through the gameplay.

Smuts notes that videogames also satisfy representational theories of art. They are able to do this because of their ability to represent the world, or to show worlds that have similarities to this world. Video games can also provide commentary about the world through its narrative and gameplay.

Tavinor notes that video games can represent the world, but can also represent fictitious worlds and engage the player's imagination. Video games also have elements of discovery and exploration. Unlike Smuts, Tavinor also notes that video games can present the player with intellectual challenges such as puzzles or challenges that require the player to think and strategize.

Conclusion: Both come to the conclusion that some modern video games should be considered art, and that video games have artistic potential. Notably, both note that not all video games should be considered art, and that video games have unique qualities (like competitiveness) that differentiate them from more traditional art forms.

Slideshow:

Dominic Lopes' View of Interactivity

- A: Strongly interactive media

- B: Media that allows users to modify the structure

- C: Weakly interactive media

- D: Media that allows users to modify the sequence

- E: Interaction

Interactivity

A logical overview of Smuts' and Lopes' conflicting views

Lopes: Translating into SL

- B>A
  - If the media allows users to modify the structure, then it is strongly interactive media
- D>C
  - If the media allows users to modify the sequence, then it is weakly interactive media
- (B>A)>(D>C)
  - If a media is strongly interactive (which it is if the media allows users to modify the structure), then it is weakly interactive (which it is if the media allows users to modify the sequence)
- E<>((B>A)>(D>C))
  - Interactivity requires users to be able to modify the structure of the media, which only happens in strongly interactive media, which involves users to be able to control the sequence of events, which only happens in weakly interactive media.

Smuts: The full argument

E<>(A&(~B&(~C&~D)))

Interactivity requires the media to be mutually responsive, and the media cannot completely control, and the media cannot be completely controlled, and the media cannot respond in a completely random fashion.