CTIN 190

INTRODUCTION to INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Jeff Watson – remotedevice@gmail.com - @remotedevice

CTIN-190 INTRODUCTION TO INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Instructor: Jeff Watson
Office Location: SCI 201J
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: remotedevice@gmail.com
Twitter: @remotedevice

Student Assistant: Kevin Wong
Office Location: TBD
Office Hours: TBD
Email: kevinjwo@usc.edu
Twitter: @ThatKevinWong

Day and Time: Tues 2:00 - 4:50
Location: SCI 108
Units: 4.0
Prerequisites: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The rapid rise in the power and accessibility of digital technology has made possible myriad new forms of entertainment, artistic expression, and socio-political engagement. Among these new forms, videogames and other kinds of interactive entertainment offer artists and designers unprecedented opportunities to engage not just with *audiences*, but with *players* and *participants*. Drawing on voices from game studies, cultural studies, art history, social psychology, game design practice, and games journalism, this course will explore a range of critical frameworks for understanding and analyzing digital games and related forms of interactive entertainment. To facilitate this exploration, digital works and practices will be contextualized within the broader history of games, interaction design, and play – a history that predates electronic computation by thousands of years and includes diverse cultural practices such as performance art, ritual, and political activism.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The primary required text for this course, *The Game Design Reader*, is available online at Amazon.com in both electronic and physical editions. Copies of the book may also be found at the USC bookstore or at other local booksellers. Additional required readings will be provided in class, on Blackboard, and/or via links included in this syllabus.

- Salen, Katie, and Eric Zimmerman. *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology*. MIT Press, 2005.

Recommended Reading

The following texts are recommended to students as starting points for research. <u>Your research paper must cite at least two of these sources.</u>

- Aarseth, Espen J. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Anthropy, Anna. *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters*. Seven Stories Press, 2012.
- Bogost, Ian. *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. The MIT Press, 2007.
- ---. *How to do Things With Videogames*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Costikyan, Greg. *Uncertainty in Games.* The MIT Press, 2013.
- Flanagan, Mary. *Critical Play: Radical Game Design*. The MIT Press, 2009.
- Fullerton, Tracy. *Game Design Workshop (3rd Edition)*. CRC Press, 2014.
- Galloway, Alexander R. *Gaming: Essays On Algorithmic Culture*. 1st ed. Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Harrigan, Pat, and Noah Wardrip-Fruin. *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*. The MIT Press, 2006.
- ---. *Second Person: Role-Playing and Story in Games and Playable Media*. The MIT Press, 2010.
- ---. *Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives*. The MIT Press, 2009.
- Juul, Jesper. *Half-Real: Video Games Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*. illustrated edition. The MIT Press, 2005.
- McGonigal, Jane. *Reality is Broken*. Penguin, 2011.
- Montfort, Nick. *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction*. The MIT Press, 2005.
- Montfort, Nick, and Ian Bogost. *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System*. The MIT Press, 2009.
- Pearce, Celia, and Artemesia. *Communities of Play: Emergent Cultures in Multiplayer Games and Virtual Worlds*. The MIT Press, 2009.
- Salen, Katie and Eric Zimmerman. *Rules of Play*. The MIT Press, 2003.
- Wardrip-Fruin, Noah. *Expressive Processing: Digital Fictions, Computer Games, and Software Studies*. The MIT Press, 2009.
- Wark, McKenzie. *Gamer Theory*. Harvard University Press, 2007.

ASSIGNMENTS

You will engage with the themes of this course through writing, presentations, in-class participation, and a game jam. Detailed constraints and prompts will be provided when assignments are issued in class. Additional materials and assignment documents can be downloaded from http://remotedevice.net/ctin-190/. Assessment breaks down as follows:

Assignment	Grade	Due Date
Game Story	25%	September 30
Research Paper	35%	December 2 or 8*
Presentation	15%	Variable
Pop Quizzes**	15%	Variable
Participation***	10%	N/A
Total	100%	

* Research papers handed in by 11:59 PM on December 2 will receive full comments. The absolute final deadline is 11:59 PM on December 8.

** Multiple choice pop quizzes will occur unpredictably during class time over the course of the semester. Generally speaking, there will be one or two quizzes around the middle of the course, and one or two around the end. The quizzes are easy grades if you keep up with the readings and pay attention in class.

*** We want to hear your thoughts on the readings and games we discuss each week. Your participation will be appreciated and honored.

SCHEDULE

Readings specified for each week must be read in advance of the class. I will call on you to participate in the discussion, so try not to show up without having done the readings. Additional required readings will occasionally be assigned during class. All readings marked "SZ" are from the main course textbook (Salen and Zimmerman).

Week	Date	Theme & Assignments	Readings
1	August 26	**TALKING ABOUT GAMES** **In class: Introductions, syllabus overview, presentation selection**	Since you won't have the syllabus before this class, you will have some extra reading to do (just a little, I promise – but it's important to set things up). Make sure to read at least the first three articles listed below before next class (along with the readings for Week 2). • "Speaking of Games" (SZ, 44) • "What is a game?" (SZ, 77) • "What is Play?" (SZ, 83)

Recommended:

- Roger Caillois, "The Definition of Play: The Classification of Games" (SZ, 122)
- Leigh Alexander, "Gaming Made Me: Colossal Cave Adventure" http://www.rockpapershotgun.com/2011/06/04/colossal-cave-review/
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2	September 2	**PLAY AND PLAYERS** **In class: Presentations I** **Assigned: Game Story**	- "The Player Experience" (SZ, 9) - Jesper Juul, "The Game, The Player, The World" http://www.jesperjuul.net/text/gameplayerworld/ - Brian Sutton-Smith, "Play and Ambiguity" (SZ, 296) Recommended: - Johann Huizinga, "Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Phenomenon" (SZ, 96)
3	September 9	**RULES AND FORMS** **In class: Presentations II**	- "The Rules of a Game" (SZ, 8) - Greg Costikyan, "I Have No Words & I Must Design" (SZ, 192) - Stephen Sniderman, "Unwritten Rules" (SZ, 476) - Robin Hunicke et al, "MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research." http://www.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/MDA.pdf Recommended: - Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXk96RK8qpo
4	September 16	**COMPUTATION** **In class: Presentations III**	- Browse the various sections of "Bitstory" in The Dot Eaters: http://thedoteaters.com/?page_id=6 - Alexander Galloway, "Gamic Action, Four Moments" pp 1-38 in Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/1536/galloway_-_gaming_-_essays_on_algorithmic_culture.pdf Recommended: - Nick Montfort, "Combat in Context" http://gamestudies.org/0601/articles/montfort
5	September 23	**NARRATIVE** **In class: Presentations IV**	- Henry Jenkins, "Game Design as Narrative Architecture" http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/games&narrative.html (SZ, 670) - Jesper Juul, "Games Telling Stories?" http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/ - Jill Walker, "Distributed Narrative: Telling Stories Across Networks" http://jilltxt.net/txt/Walker-AoIR-3500words.pdf Recommended:

			• Greg Costikyan, "Games, Storytelling, and Breaking the String" http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/storyish
6	September 30	**SPACE** **In class: Presentations V, mystery** **Due: Game Story**	• "Game Spaces" (SZ, 64) • Celia Pearce, "Narrative Environments from Disneyland to World of Warcraft" http://remotedevice.net/2b15/pearce-narrative-environments.pdf • Guy Debord, "Theory of the Derive" http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm • Bonnie Ruberg, "Big Reality: A Chat With 'Big Game' Designer Frank Lantz" http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130264/big_reality_a_chat_with_big_.php?print=1
7	October 7	**COMMUNITY** **In class: Presentations VI**	• "Game Communities" (SZ, 39) • Richard Bartle, Hearts Clubs, Diamonds, Spades: Players who Suit Muds. (SZ, 754) • Edward Castronova, "Virtual Worlds: A First-Hand Account of Market and Society on the Cyberian Frontier" (SZ, 814) Recommended: • Check out *Twitch Plays Pokémon* • Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" http://itu.dk/~miguel/ddp/Deep%20play%20Notes%20on%20the%20Balinese%20cockfight.pdf
8	October 14	**VALUES** **In class: Presentations VII**	• "Cultural Representation" (SZ, 70) • Mary Flanagan, "Values at Play" http://www.tiltfactor.org/wp-content/uploads2/Values-at-Play.pdf • Ian Bogost, "The Rhetoric of Video Games" http://www.arts.rpi.edu/~ruiz/EGDFall10/readings/RhetoricVideoGames_Bogost.pdf • Browse the video interviews at http://valuesatplay.org/ Recommended: • Augusto Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed
9	October 21	**DIFFERENCE** **In class: Presentations VIII** **Assigned: Research Paper**	• Tracy Fullerton, et al. "A Game of One's Own: Towards a New Gendered Poetics of Digital Space." http://lmc.gatech.edu/~cpearce3/PearcePubs/LudicaDAC07.pdf • Henry Jenkins, "Complete Freedom of Movement: Video Games as Gendered Play Spaces." (SZ, 330-363) • James Gee, "Cultural Models: Do You Want To Be The Blue Sonic or the Dark Sonic?" (SZ, 610-639)
10	October 28	**GAME JAM**	

		In class: Presentations IX	
11	November 4	**AESTHETICS** **In class: Presentations X, special topics planning**	• Jenova Chen, "Flow in Games (and everywhere else)" http://www.jenovachen.com/flowingames/p31-chen.pdf • David Sudnow, "Eyeball and Cathexis" (SZ, 558) • Phillip D. Deen, "Interactivity, Inhabitation and Pragmatist Aesthetics" http://gamestudies.org/1102/articles/deen
12	November 11	**CRITICAL FUTURES** **In class: Presentations XI**	• Ian Bogost, "Gamification is Bullshit" http://bogost.com/writing/blog/gamification_is_bullshit/ • Jesse Schell, "Design Outside the Box" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLwskDkDPUE • Leon Hurley, "The Future of Oculus Rift" http://www.kotaku.co.uk/2014/08/15/future-oculus-rift-according-man-invented
13	November 18	**SPECIAL TOPICS I** **In class: Presentations XII**	Readings TBD based on class feedback.
14	November 25	**SPECIAL TOPICS II** **In class: Presentations XIII**	Readings TBD based on class feedback.
15	December 2	**CONCLUSION & WRAP PARTY** **In class: Presentations XIV, presentation catch-up** Due: Research Paper	

BOILERPLATE

Boilerplate is "any text that is or can be reused in new contexts or applications without being greatly changed from the original" (Wikipedia). That's what this section contains. If you've taken a course at USC before, you've probably read much of this material already. If not, find below a set of reminders about important things like plagiarism (don't do it), attendance (it's mandatory),

disabilities (if you have one, DSP can help you out), citation guidelines (use APA 5th edition), and other matters.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to an SA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

DSP Website: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook (http://scampus.usc.edu), contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/. Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html.

Fair Use

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. In keeping with section 107 of the Copyright Act we recognize four factors that should be considered when determining whether a use is fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.

Citation Guidelines

All projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. The style we use is APA 5th edition (see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. And here is a secret message, which will earn you a special advantage if you can decode it before August 26th: *fraq zr na rznvy jvgu gur fhowrpg yvar "yhfbel zvffvir" naq lbhe anzr va gur obql bs gur zrffntr.* Please activate your course in Blackboard with access to the course syllabus. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC's Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at http://blackboard.usc.edu.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. *Still stumped? Try searching for "rot-13".* A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.