# BIS 236A: Introduction to Interactive Media → Meaningful Choice-Based Stories About an Uncertain Future

**Dr. Mark Danger Chen | markchen@uw.edu**

**Spring 2023 | on campus UW2 240 Tuesdays with optional online Thursdays, 1:15-3:15 PM**

# −COURSE INFORMATION−

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(INST) RUCTO RS** |  | **Dr. Mark Chen, Professor** \| markchen@uw.edu<br><br>**Office Hours (AKA open meeting times!):** We welcome questions and are available to help online. If you want to meet, email or message us to schedule a meeting or show up to one of the optional Thursdays.<br>**HOW TO EMAIL:** 1. write a relevant subject, 2. get our names and titles right (*Mark is a Dr., not a Mr.*), 3. provide context for your email, and 4. sign it with who the heck you are. Also, check the syllabus first. :)<br>**HOW TO MESSAGE:** 1. if it isn't obvious who you are from your username, please tell us who you are, 2. provide context |
| **(DESC) RIPTIO N** | This course is about how interactive media is shaped by us and how we, in turn, are shaped by it. Through readings, students will get a general overview of interactive media that includes:<br>● the nature of interactivity,<br>● what makes games games,<br>● the rise of the internet, hypertext, and digital media,<br>● and how social media shape people and society.<br><br>This serves as a background for a deeper study on the nature of the (digital) world and various issues that seem exacerbated by the use of social and digital media. These include:<br>● how we relinquish layers of control to algorithms and big data manipulations,<br>● how rhetoric is used to portray exploitation as gamification,<br>● fake news,<br>● conspiracy theories,<br>● surveillance capitalism and hypercapitalism,<br>● and how social media helps or hinders democratic progress. | |

Indeed, the readings are designed to tell a consistent narrative that builds up throughout the quarter and ends with a deep reckoning with how we exist in an absurd and screwed-up world where we struggle to find agency and preserve our individual identities and freedoms.

This course is also about the creation of digital stories where readers make meaningful choices to traverse their narratives. (Think of Choose-Your-Own-Adventure books, *Bandersnatch*, and *Doki Doki Literature Club*, and if you don't know these things, you've got some Googling to do.) Additionally, these stories will feature themes about surviving climate change, the **novel coronavirus**, social and racial justice, and/or how our current existential threats affect mental health. They could include depictions of a future where the **Green New Deal** passes, a present where protagonist islanders must deal with rising sea waters, or any other setting that is affected by extreme weather conditions, encroaching desertification, diminishing resources, and/or societal movements to counter them. They could also depict life in quarantine, intergenerational issues dealing with illness and grief, or optimistic stories about coming together and meeting our current and imminent challenges. They could be big stories that span centuries about the whole of humanity and what a utopian vision of our future might be, or they could be smaller stories about a specific family or individual finding meaning through taking action. It's really up to students to find a tone and genre that they want to explore.

Special emphasis will be placed on artistic, **experimental narrative play and compelling interactions**, while also being about the just use of resources, preventing the loss of habitats and quality of life, countering massive political and corporate greed, fighting issues arising from a networked society ruled by algorithms and ad revenue, and, ultimately, what it means to be human with agency and hope. What this means is that readers must be able to strategize about their path through your story and be thoughtful about the decisions they make and the meaning they derive from your narrative AND the way you're asking them to interact with your story. For example, you could include many references to outside sources that encourage the reader to engage in navigating para-texts to whatever you write, OR you could include puzzles or clues that readers must solve in order to progress. Think about how these interactions cause particular sorts of emotions or feelings and have the form of the story complement the narrative of the story to give the reader a deliberate experience.

**New for 2023!** I invite teams to explore with me the use of ChatGPT and other AI tools as co-authors of interactive stories in creative and ethical ways. We'll discuss this and establish guidelines in class.

| | |
|---|---|
| | This course has a heavy focus on peer learning and group work, devoting much time to projects and student-led presentations, supplemented heavily with online discussions and project work. Success depends on good participation, agile communication, teamwork, and a willingness to work on new topics quickly and iteratively. A lot of the skills it takes to do group work well require deliberate practice, and this course will provide structure and guidelines for how to do that well. Everyone can be better tomorrow than they are today. It just takes reflective action. |
| **LEARNING (OBJ) ECTIVES** | By the end of this course, students should be able to:<br>● Have a basic understanding of the history of interactive media with a focus on the rise of hypertext, the internet, and social media.<br>● Define *interactive media* and related topics such as fake news, real vs. virtual, and games and fun.<br>● Recognize our continued algorithmic existence and explore strategies for coping and finding agency.<br>● Find and use resources related to combating climate change, deal with the pandemic, take part in activism, and strategies for individual sense-making in an absurdist world.<br>● Create interactive stories using online platforms such as Twine.<br>● Engage in teamwork that values diversity and empathy.<br>● Deliver engaging media-rich presentations.<br><br>**Note:** This course is 5 credits. A general guideline for each credit at UW is 2 hours per credit outside of class. Therefore this class is meant to take about 10 hours of outside class time. The readings and responding to others should take about 5 hours. The remaining time should be spent working on your projects. |
| **TECH** | ● **Google Shared Drive** (most of the assignments and course materials will be here): **https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0ADYsUQEopvWWUk9PVA**<br>● **Canvas** (grades, announcements): **https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1647769**<br>● **Perusall** (reading annotations): **Perusall** Use course code: **CHEN-WZ6MM**<br>● **Discord** (announcements, group work, discussions): **https://discord.gg/WGmrwYq6cX**<br>● **Zoom** (for optional Thursdays): **https://washington.zoom.us/j/92571248345**<br>● **Trello** or **ClickUp** (not required but highly recommended to manage group work) **https://trello.com/ https://clickup.com/** |

- **draw.io** or **miro.com** **(or LucidChart or whatever)** (to create flowcharts or diagrams of your story projects)

Choose Save diagrams to Google Drive or Sign in with Google and then use your uw.edu account!
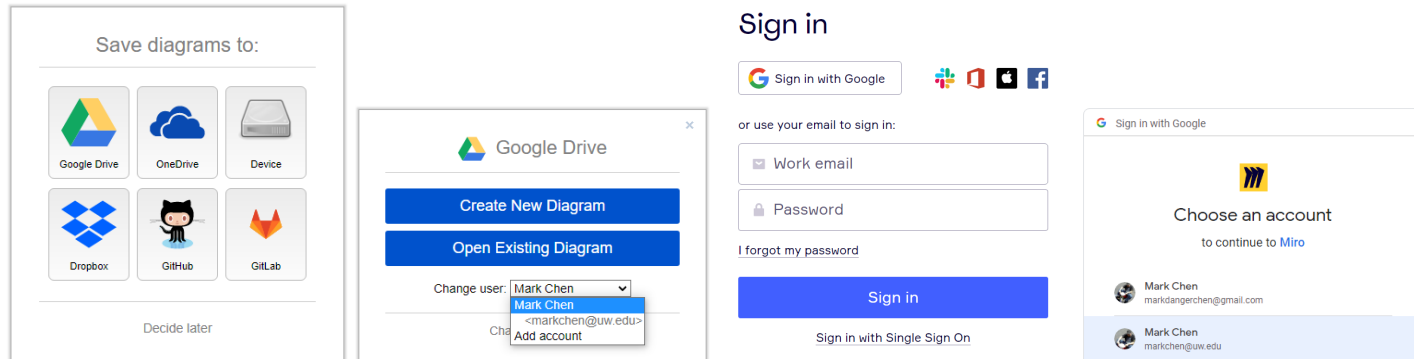


*Note:* This is a course that fully embraces digital media and a connected life. As such, we will be using appropriate tools that will persist and be useful to you outside of UWB. Google Shared Drives should serve as a course archive and be available for a few years after the course is over, but please ask me to add your non-UW email if you want access after graduating. Again, doing group work well just takes practice, and you will have ample time to develop that practice.

*Also note:* Read these **tips for how to do online teamwork** and **how to hold teams accountable**.

# –ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS–

| Assignment | Deliverables | Points |
|---|---|---|
| ***Presentation of Reading Topic***<br><br>Each week, different groups of about 3 students will present topics from one of the readings. This means covering a *brief* summary (main thesis and logical argument) **PLUS** commentary and thoughts *and a more comprehensive overview of the topic* represented in the reading. Include information and history of the author, show us videos or have us do an in-class activity, and prepare discussion questions, which will be posted to our online discussion.<br><br> | ***Once during the quarter:***<br>● draft outline due Tuesday, the week before presentation = 3pts<br>● draft visuals due Friday = 2pts<br>● revisions due Sunday = 1pt<br>● presentation on Tuesday = 2pts<br>● Discord post due Tuesday = 1pt<br>● team eval due Tuesday = 1pt | **10**<br><br>**Read more about the Presentation of Reading Topic assignment** |

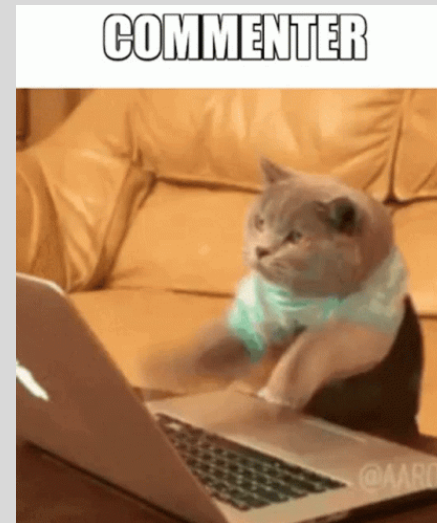| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Online Discussions*<br><br>**Note-taking while Reading**<br>Please use **Perusall** to annotate and comment on the weekly course materials, asking questions, adding clarification, and/or generally posting reactions. Each week, a student's Perusall annotations are worth up to 2 or 3 points (2 points is considered full credit, but it's possible to get 3 if you contribute a lot or do the optional readings), depending on a number of factors including quality and quantity of annotations throughout the documents, commenting on and/or upvoting other people's annotations, etc. At least three notes spread throughout the PDF are required, but they need to be high-quality notes so it's safer to post five or six notes to be sure.<br><br>**Weekly Responses**<br>Students are expected to participate in online discussions about the reading topics on the discussion platform Slack or Discord. We use Slack or Discord because they do a better job than Canvas and are what most tech and media companies use. Each week, students must post at least once, worth 2 points. Bonus for more. | ***Weekly on Sundays:***<br>● using Perusall = 2 x 10wks<br>● Discord discussion = 2 x 9wks<br><br>Course code: **CHEN-WZ6MM**<br><br> | **38+**<br><br>**Read more about the Online Discussions assignments** |
| *Choice-Based Story* **(Main Quarter-Long Project)**<br><br>*(Featuring Climate Change, COVID-19, Social Justice, and/or Mental Health)*<br>Groups of students will be tasked with creating interactive digital short stories that feature climate change, mental health, the coronavirus, and/or political or technological turmoil. The stories must let readers make meaningful decisions while reading, but there's a lot of flexibility | ***Project milestones are due on Tues and Thurs throughout the quarter.***<br>**Team contract:**<br>● April 11 = 2pts<br>**Meeting Notes:**<br>● April 18, May 9, May 30 = 3pts<br>**Choice-Based Story Review:**<br>● April 18 = 4pts<br>**Practice Mini-Story:**<br>● April 25 = 4pts | **42-44**<br><br>**Read more about the Choice-Based Story assignment** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| with genre or plot. It could be a mystery, a romcom, a slow-burn horror, sci-fi, etc.<br><br>There's also a lot of freedom for how the story is presented. It could be a text-based Choose-Your-Own-Adventure style book, a video-based branching narrative like Bandersnatch, or even a digital game of some sort. It really depends on what the group wants to create, how much energy they're willing to commit, and how they can strategically play to their strengths as a group. **The important thing is that these stories must let readers make meaningful decisions while reading.**<br><br>The only requirements for a story are that it includes:<br>● a focus on climate change, the coronavirus, social justice, and/or mental health either as its main topic(s) or as a background theme, and<br>● multiple pathways through the narrative.<br><br>Central to this course are the questions: **How do different forms of interaction and mediums afford us different things?** How do these new configurations change or affect us as humans? and Can we deliberately design empowering interactions that suggest potential futures? In other words, what kinds of (possibly new) meanings can be derived from different types of media interaction? and What new forms of narratives or stories can we tell through different interactions? | **Idea Pitch and Team Eval 1:**<br>● May 2 = 5pts<br>**Draft Story and Team Eval 2:**<br>● May 16 = 7-8pts<br>**Feedback/Response:**<br>● May 18 and 23 = 8pts<br>**Finish Story, Final Write-up, and Team Eval 3:**<br>● June 6 and 8 = 9-10pts<br><br>**Note:** Unless otherwise noted, each assignment for the main project is to be done as a team. For all team assignments, Mark reserves the right to grade individuals differently depending on level of effort and team evaluations. | |
| ***Personal Learning Reflection (individual)***<br>Reflecting on experiences and thinking about lessons learned is one of the key components to lifelong learning. | *Due Sunday, June 11* | **2** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Write a half-page or full-page reflection on how the course went overall, what you learned, what you need to work on, and how the course could be improved. Think about all of the different activities, from the readings to the project, and reflect on what you learned through them or what could've gone better for your learning.<br><br>Full points if it's clear that you're being thoughtful about your reflection. Submit via Canvas. |  | |
| **Community Engagement Points**<br>Students who go above and beyond assignment requirements and generally do things to encourage or develop the whole classroom community will receive extra points. Post (memes) frequently, give good feedback to other teams outside of the required amount, ask others questions, participate in weekly activities, be responsive to your team, help other students, share interesting news or resources on Discord / Slack, etc. | *Ongoing:*<br>● Introduce yourself in Discord *(due April 4)*<br>● Sign up for a reading presentation *(due April 4)*<br>● Community engagement. **Tip: Attempt positive interactions with us and your peers in class and online and use your video camera or have a photo of yourself in Zoom so we remember who you are!**<br><br><br>Thanks for reading the syllabus. I know it's a lot, but this is important stuff. If you email me using the format outlined in a later part of this syllabus, I'll give you 2 extra credit points. | **7**<br><br>intro = 1<br><br>sign-up = 1<br><br>comm = 5 |

# ─GRADING─

To calculate your grade, **ignore the percentage columns in Canvas**. Instead, just add up your points and consult this table.

| Points | Grade | | Points | Grade |
|--------|-------|---|--------|-------|
| >=99 | 4.0 | | 80 | 3.0 |
| 98-97 | 3.9 | | 79 | 2.9 |
| 96-95 | 3.8 | | ... | ... |
| 94-93 | 3.7 | | 70 | 2.0 |
| 92-91 | 3.6 | | ... | ... |
| 90-89 | 3.5 | | 60 | 1.0 |
| 88-87 | 3.4 | | ... | ... |
| 86-85 | 3.3 | | 57 | 0.7 |
| 84-83 | 3.2 | | | |
| 82-81 | 3.1 | | | |

# −WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS−

Readings (both assigned and optional additional resources listed below) can be viewed either online at their source or as a PDF in an archive that Mark has created if it's in purple. While this includes readings that are assigned each week, you should access them through Perusall instead to complete the collaborative note-taking assignments.

We don't really have a textbook. Lots of web articles. Some are lengthy, some are very short. That said, here's a great new book to browse when you have a chance! *Social Media and the Self.* **https://www.mediastudies.press/sms**

| Week | Topics | Readings |
|---|---|---|
| **01**<br><br>**Mar 28** | **Introductions** | We'll cover the syllabus the first Tuesday on campus. We'll also have our first optional online Thursday meeting to just chat and meet each other and so I can go over the syllabus again for anyone who missed the first day and also to record it.<br><br>Meanwhile, watch this Liberated Learner video (esp. starting at 6:40) and check out the Liberated Learner website. |
| **02**<br><br>**Apr 4** | **Superconnected**<br>● Introduction to issues regarding connected digital life<br>● What's interactivity? What's media? What's reality and what's real? | ● Chayko, Mary. (2017). Chapter 3: Inhabiting a digital environment. In *Superconnected: The Internet, digital media, & techno-social life*. **Mark**<br>● also browse **Climate in the Time of Coronavirus**. *Grist.*<br>● **skim this:** Tolentino, J. (2019). The I in the Internet. In *Social Media & the Self: An Open Reader (1st ed.)*. mediastudies.press. https://doi.org/10.32376/3f8575cb.4e17f476<br>**Also, read one or more of these:**<br>● Green New Deal<br>● **Exchanges Special Issue on Climate Fiction** - short fiction regarding possible futures. Could help be inspiration for your projects later in the quarter!<br>● http://faculty.washington.edu/rturner1/Sustainability/Bibliography/Index.htm<br>　○ lots of stuff here from UWB prof Rob Turner to help with researching ideas!<br>● Bledsoe, Paul. (Dec 29, 2018). Going nowhere fast on climate, year after year. *The New York Times.* [PDF] |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | • and a bunch of current issues with digital media<br><br>**Also, Climate Change, the Coronavirus, and Mental Health** | • Davenport, Coral. (Oct 7, 2018). Major climate report describes a strong risk of crisis as early as 2040. *The New York Times.* [PDF]<br>• Fox, J., et al. Bullfrog Films, publisher. (2017). *How to let go of the world: And love all the things climate can't change*. Oley, Pennsylvania: [Bullfrog Films].<br>• WHO report warns we're underestimating the mental health risks of climate change. *Mic.*<br>• Figueres, Christina, and Rivett-Carnac, Tom. (Apr 16, 2020). Two Futures. *Atmos.*<br>**and these are useful:**<br>• How to read in a journal article ← read this, seriously!<br>• What Google learned in its quest to build the perfect team ← read this too! |
| **03**<br><br>**Apr 11** | | **Dangers of the Internet? and AI**<br>• Social Media Effects<br>• Current issues with social media in spreading hate<br>• latest AI affordances | • Clark, Mitchell and Vincent, James. (Mar 15, 2023). What's new with GPT-4 – from processing pictures to acing tests. *The Verge.*<br>• Cohen, Elizabeth L., and Kowert, Rachel. (May 16, 2014). Look Up exaggerates damages of social media. *Scientific American.*<br>• Sottile, Leah. (Aug 19, 2020). The chaos agents. *The New York Times.* [PDF]<br>**Also, skim for inspiration:**<br>• Welcome to the post-text future. *The New York Times* (Feb 9, 2018). ← Click on Read More for each section. [PDF, but the online version is interactive]<br>• Confessore, Dance, Harris, and Hansen. (Jan 27, 2018). The follower factory: Everyone wants to be popular online. Some even pay for it. Inside social media's black market. *The New York Times.* [PDF]<br>• Caines, A. (2020). The Zoom Gaze. In *Social Media & the Self: An Open Reader (1st ed.).* mediastudies.press. https://doi.org/10.32376/3f8575cb.fe579632<br>• Dark participation in online communities: The world of the wicked web. *Media and Communication* special issue. [PDF]<br>• Eudaimonia. (2016). The medium is the message animated book review [video].<br>• Tiffany, Kaitlyn. (Jun 6, 2020). Why K-pop Fans Are No Longer Posting About K-pop. *The Atlantic.* [PDF]<br>• Hull, Alyssa. (Feb 22, 2019). Hopepunk and Solarpunk: On climate narratives that go beyond the apocalypse. *Literary Hub.*<br>• Malone, Noreen. (Jul 24, 2017). Zoë and the Trolls. *New York Magazine.* [PDF]<br>• Duca, Lauren. (Jan 10, 2017). To trolls, with love. *Teen Vogue.* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ● Duca, Lauren. (May 1, 2018). *Netizens shows how cyberharassment is trivialized, especially for women*. *Teen Vogue.* |
| **04**<br><br>**Apr 18** | **Interactivity and Ergodics (ie. Extranoematic Interactions)**<br>● How do we model interactivity?<br><br>To play / read:<br>● *We Made Ourselves Over: 2097*<br>● *Survivor's Guilt*<br>● Voyages in Sentence Space<br>● *17776*<br>● *The Lost Mountain*<br>● and Twine games | 1. Upton, Brian. (2015). Interactivity. In *The aesthetic of play* (pp.23-38). **Team 01:**<br>2. Aarseth, Espen. (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on ergodic literature* (pp. 1-23). ← This reading is DENSE. Whoever picks it will also need to read a discussion about ergodic literature on Grand Text Auto to try to make sense of it. Maybe also listen to http://rangedtouch.com/2019/10/01/16-aarseth-cybertext/ **Team 02:**<br>**Inspirations:**<br>● Reed, Aaron. (2021). 2020: Scents & Semiosis. *50 Years of Text Games.*<br>● *Bandersnatch*<br>● Jones, Mat. (Jan 9, 2019). Some video games that are like Bandersnatch, but better. *Rock Paper Shotgun.*<br>● Ashwell, Sam Kabo. (2015). Standard patterns in choice-based games. *These Heterogenous Tasks* (Jan 26, 2015).<br>● Short, Emily. (2016). Small-scale structures in CYOA (Nov 5, 2016).<br>● The Emily is Away series of games are really good (and cheap) to check out!<br>● Brady, Amy. (Mar 24, 2021). How contemporary novelists are confronting climate collapse in fiction. *Literary Hub.*<br>● Ray, Somdyuti Datta. (Apr 14, 2021). *Choices was the choose-your-own-adventure escape I needed*. *Wired.* |

| 05<br><br>Apr 25 | **Twine as a Platform and Identity in Games** | 1. Salter, Ana, & Moulthrop, Stuart. (2021). *Twining: Critical and Creative Approaches to Hypertext Narratives.* https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12255695. **Read the introduction, then skim Chapters T-1 and T-3, then browse the rest of the book.** **Team 03:**<br>2. Gee, James. (2003). Learning and identity: What does it mean to be a half-elf? *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy.*<br>    **and**<br>Zimmerman, Eric. (Jan 11, 2017). Every game is a language [video].**Team 04:**<br>**Further reading:**<br>● Guardiola, Emmanuel. (2016). The gameplay loop: A player activity model for game design and analysis. *ACE2016.*<br>● Alexander, Leigh. (Nov 29, 2016). It's time for a new kind of power fantasy. *How We Get To Next.*<br>**Twine tutorials!**<br>● Digital Ephemera's Twine video tutorials<br>● Adam Hammond's Twine video tutorials<br>● Allison Parish's Twine text tutorial |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 06<br><br>May 2 | **Conspiracy Theories and Cambridge Analytica**<br>● The internet's role in the rise of conspiracy theories<br>● Cambridge Analytica and population manipulation | 1. Wong, Julia Carrie. (Jun 25, 2020). Down the rabbit hole: how QAnon conspiracies thrive on Facebook. *The Guardian.***Team 05:**<br>2. Grassenger, Hannes, & Krogerus, Mikael. (Jan 28, 2017). The data that turned the world upside down. *Motherboard.* ← whoever signs up for this will need to find other articles to give us an update of what's happened since this article was published. (FB privacy breaches, Russian interference, right-wing conspiracies, oh my!) Here's one from 2020! Fresh Cambridge Analytica leak 'shows global manipulation is out of control' **Team 06:**<br>  ○ Also, if you can, watch the documentaries *The Big Hack*, *The Social Dilemma*, and *Q*.<br>**Also, watch / read**<br>● The Persistence of QAnon in the Post-Trump Era: An Analysis of Who Believes the Conspiracies<br>● Klee, Miles. (March 4, 2022). QAnon is eating up Putin's anti-Ukraine propaganda. *Mel Magazine.*<br>● Gilbert, David. (Mar 18, 2021). QAnon and the far-right are already spreading Atlanta shooting conspiracies. *Vice.* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ● Zadrozny, Brandy, and Collins, Ben. (Aug 14, 2018). How three conspiracy theorists took "Q" and sparked Qanon. *NBC News.* <br> ● Alter, Charlotte. (Sep 10, 2020). How conspiracy theories are shaping the 2020 election—and shaking the foundation of American democracy. *Time.* <br> ● Rabbit Rabbit (aka Reed Berkowitz). (Sep 30, 2020). A game designer's analysis of QAnon. *curiouserinstitute.* <br> ● Volz, Dustin, and Strobel, Warren P. (Mar 17, 2021). Russia, Iran acted to influence 2020 presidential election, report says. *The Wall Street Journal.* <br> ● Feldman-Barrett, Lisa. (Mar 21, 2021). The mind-blowing science behind how our brains shape reality. *Science Focus.* <br> ● Rogers, Kaleigh, and Mithani, Jasmine. (Jun 15, 2021). Why people fall for conspiracy theories. *FiveThirtyEight.* <br> ● D'Anastasio, Cecilia. (Jun 10, 2021). How *Roblox* became a playground for virtual fascists. *Wired.* |
| **07** <br><br> **May 9** | **Algorithmic Culture** <br><br> ● Hyper capitalism and making money through algorithms | | 1. Bridle, James. (Nov 6, 2017). Something is wrong on the internet. *Medium.* [PDF, but the web version has embedded video] **Team 07:** <br> 2. Edelman, Gilad. (Jul 28, 2020). Follow the money: How digital ads subsidize the worst of the web. *Wired.* [PDF] **Team 08:** <br> **Further reading:** <br> ● Wired's guide to Dark Patterns. <br> ● What is neoliberalism? *Teen Vogue.* <br> ● Split screen: How different are Americans' Facebook Feeds? *The Markup.* <br> ● Clegg, Nick. (Mar 31, 2021). You and the algorithm: It takes two to tango. *Medium.* <br> ● Kelly, JP. (Jan 29, 2018). Algorithmic advertising and the perils of personalisation. *Flow Journal.* (and for something more depressing: Pilkington, Ed. (Oct 14, 2019). Digital dystopia: How algorithms punish the poor. *The Guardian.*) <br> ● Kohn, Isabelle. (mid-March, 2021). Sex, lies, and the thumbnails: The enduring mystery of YouTube's secret porn. *MEL.* <br> ● Kois, Dan. (Aug 22, 2021). The clickbaitification of Netflix. *Slate.* <br> ● Lomas, Natasha. (Jul 7, 2021). YouTube's recommender AI still a horror show, finds major crowdsourced study. *TechCrunch.* <br> ● Nichols, Sam. (Jun 3, 2018). Your phone is listening and it's not paranoia. *Vice.* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ● Pasternack, Alex. (Mar 7, 2020). How Wikipedia's volunteers became the web's best weapon against misinformation. *Fast Company.*<br>● Cooke, Richard. (Feb 17, 2020). Wikipedia is the last best place on the Internet. *Wired.* [PDF] |
| **08**<br><br>**May 16** | **Gamification is Bullshit and The Metagame**<br>● Layers of meta-gaming | 1. Bogost, Ian. (2013). Persuasive games. *UX Week 2013* [video].<br>   **and**<br>   Bogost, Ian. (Aug 11, 2011). Gamification is bullshit. *The Atlantic.* [PDF] **Team 09:**<br>2. Wark, McKenzie. (2014). Losing is fun. In *The gameful world* (pp. 163-165). **Team 10:**<br>**Further readings:**<br>● Juul, Jesper. (2003). The game, the player, the world: Looking for a heart of gameness. Keynote presented at the Level Up conference in Utrecht, November 4th-6th 2003.<br>● Chen, Mark. (2014). A new definition for games: Meaningful play.<br>● Scheer, Robert interviewing Ellen Brown. (May 1, 2020). Coronavirus proves capitalism has always been a lie. *KCRW.*<br>● Millman, Noah. (Jul 15, 2020). Coronavirus and the crisis of capitalism. *The Week.*<br>● Kandist, Mallet. (Mar 20, 2020). The coronavirus pandemic demonstrates the failures of capitalism. *Teen Vogue.*<br>● Dellinger, AJ. (Mar 15, 2021). Amazon is expanding its gamification model of warehouse work to at least 20 states. *Mic.*<br>● Clark, Mitchell. (Feb 24, 2021). This browser extension shows what the Internet would look like without Big Tech. *The Verge.*<br>● Lorenz, Taylor. (Mar 10, 2021). For creators, everything is for sale. *The New York Times.* [PDF]<br>● Pipkin, Everest. (Mar 3, 2021). Here is the article you can send to people when they say " But the environmental issues with cryptoart will be solved soon, right?" *Medium.* [PDF] |
| **09**<br><br>**May 23** | **Fake News, Misinformation, and the Coronavirus**<br><br>**Games to play**<br>● Factitious | 1. Silverman, Craig, & Alexander, Lawrence. (Nov 3, 2016). How teens in the Balkans are duping Trump supporters with fake news. *BuzzFeed News.*<br>   **and**<br>   Brunner, Jim. (June 12, 2020). Fox News runs digitally altered images in coverage of Seattle's protests, Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone. *Seattle Times.* [PDF] **Team 11:**<br>2. Savin, Jennifer. (Oct 6, 2022). Deep Fake porn is on the rise – and everyday women are the target. *Cosmopolitan.* **Team 12:**<br>**Further reading / watching:** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | <ul><li>[Fake It to Make It](#)</li><li>[Fake News](#)</li><li>[Bad News](#)</li><li>[Fakey](#)</li></ul>Here's [info on the Russian interference with FB, Twitter, etc.](#) which ties into → | <ul><li>Warzel, Charlie. (Mar 24, 2023). [People aren't falling for AI Trump photos (yet).](#) *The Atlantic.*</li><li>Starbird, Kate. (Mar 8, 2020). [Reflecting on the Covid-19 Infodemic as a Crisis Intervention Researcher](#). *Medium.* [[PDF](#)]</li><li>Mak, Aaron. (Aug 6, 2021). [The lucrative business of stoking vaccine skepticism](#). *Slate.*</li><li>Meyer, Robinson. (Mar 8, 2018). [The grim conclusions of the largest-ever study of fake new](#)s. *The Atlantic.* [[PDF](#)]</li><li>[How Russian bots invade our elections](#). *The New York Times* [video].</li><li>[How Russian trolls operate](#). *act.tv* [video].</li><li>[Evaluating Information guide from UW Libraries](#)</li><li>[Inside the fake news factory of Macedonia](#) [video].</li><li>[Coronavirus myths and misconceptions](#). *Information is Beautiful.*</li><li>[The Technology 202: Protests, coronavirus and election present disinformation challenge for social media companies](#). *Washington Post.*</li><li>[2020 The Course](#)</li><li>Marwick, A., Kuo, R., Cameron, S. J. & Weigel, M. (2021). *Critical Disinformation Studies: A Syllabus*. Center for Information, Technology, & Public Life (CITAP), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. https://citap.unc.edu/critical-disinfo</li><li>Campoamor, Danielle. (Mar 15, 2021). [This cheerleading mom wanted to destroy her daughter's teammates--so she used deep-fakes](#). *Refinery29.*</li></ul> | |
| **10**<br><br>**May 30** | **Alternate Earths and Surveillance Capitalism** | 1. Smith, Dave. (June 6, 2014). [Xanadu, the world's most delayed software, is finally released after 54 years in the making](#). *Business Insider.* ← This is just a portal article to the larger idea of an alternative to the web that is open, free of ads, etc. so whoever chooses will need to jump into a rabbit hole and report back. **Team 13:**<br>2. Doctorow, Cory. (Aug 25, 2020). [How to destroy surveillance capitalism](#). *Medium.* [[PDF](#)] **Team 14:**<br>**Also, read / watch:**<ul><li>Chayko, Mary. (2017). [Chapter 2: Creating the Internet Age.](#) In *Superconnected: The Internet, digital media, & techno-social life*.</li><li>Sacasas, L. M. (2018). Personal Panopticons. In *Social Media & the Self: An Open Reader (1st ed.).* mediastudies.press. https://doi.org/10.32376/3f8575cb.213b33b7</li><li>Rosenzweig, Roy. (2001). [The road to Xanadu](#).</li><li>SciShow. [How the Internet was invented](#) [video].</li></ul> | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | • Hypertext: An educational experiment in English and computer science at Brown University [video].<br>• The Internet as it was in 1996 [video].<br>• Browne, Ryan. (Nov 25, 2019). Web creator Tim Berners-Lee launches plan to fix the internet. *CNBC.*<br>• Gebeloff, Robert. (Jan 26, 2021). Who owns stocks? Explaining the rise in inequality during the pandemic. *The New York Times.* [PDF]<br>• Nelson, Ted. (1975). Computer Lib, Dream Machines. |
| **11**<br><br>**Jun 6** | **The Well-Played Life**<br>• Inclusivity and playfulness as the road to a redemptive future | | • DeKoven, Bernard. (2013). *The well-played game* (pp. 1-88). **Mark**<br>• So the internet didn't turn out the way we hoped. (Nov 11, 2019). *The New York Times Magazine.* [PDF, but the online version is interactive]<br>**Further reading:**<br>• **Beautiful Trouble: A toolbox for revolution.**<br>• Bidshahri, Raya. (Dec 27, 2018). The milestones of human progress we reached in 2018. *SingularityHub.*<br>• Applebaum, Anne, and Pomerantsev, Peter. (Mar 8, 2021). How to put out democracy's dumpster fire. *The Atlantic.* [PDF]<br>• Diavolo, Lucy. (Dec 16, 2020). 2020's historic activism and organizing is a reminder a better world is possible, not inevitable. *Brighter Sides, Teen Vogue.*<br>• 33 Problems With Media in One Chart |

# –COURSE RESOURCES AND MATERIALS–

**Digital and physical texts to play:**
- *Depression Quest*. Zoe Quinn.
- *Save the Date*. Paper Dino Software.
- *Survivor's Guilt*. Matt Fieser.
- *Love Is Zero*. Porpentine.
- *Urs*. Christopher Hayes and Daniel Talsky.
- *Pine Point*
- *Wikipedia: The Text Adventure*

**Sci-fi or Documentary Series or Movies to binge:**
- Black Mirror
- Electric Dreams
- Maniac
- The Big Hack
- The Social Dilemma
- Q
- Don't Look Up

**Resources on Twine:**
- Tiny Game Design Tool
- Twine wiki
- How to Make Games w Twine by Anna Anthropy
- Ashwell, Sam Kabo. (2015). Standard patterns in choice-based games. *These Heterogenous Tasks* (Jan 26, 2015).
- Short, Emily. (2016). Small-scale structures in CYOA (Nov 5, 2016).
- Gamasutra's post-mortem list. ← use these as a guide for your post-mortems
- 10 Seminal Postmortems

**Further readings/resources:**

- [Connected Learning](#) / [Digital Media and Learning](#)
- [Network Society](#)
- [Moral panics](#)
- History of the desktop https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGI00HV7Cfw
- [The Fake News Show](#)
- Understanding Fake News https://jeaninefinn.me/2016/11/15/understanding-fake-news-in-2016-before-the-truth-gets-its-pants-on/
- How the Web Became a Thing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UStbvRnwmQ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CsPHKJWiw0

# ─IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFO─

## IAS Common Syllabus Resources and Policies

✎ **Go read this. It pertains to all of your IAS courses!**

**How to Access Academic Articles:**
In case you didn't know, one of the best ways to find academic resources online is through **https://scholar.google.com**.

Once you find something, you'll often find yourself at a journal that is behind a paywall. This is fine if you're on a UW network since UW usually has library subscriptions, but it can be a pain if you're trying access the article from off campus. But guess what?? You can use **UW Libraries proxy bookmarklet** to access the material remotely! Follow the instructions, and when you get to an article behind a journal paywall, just click on the proxy bookmark and the page will reload through a UW network thus allowing you to download the PDF for free!

**General Teaching Statement:**
First, I believe I have a responsibility to support you for lifelong success and happiness. The way I've designed this course is in line with this guiding principle, from the technologies we use to how I accept revisions for almost all assignments.

Furthermore, **the course is initially destabilizing by design because I want you to practice finding answers, asking when you need help, and learning through trying something, receiving feedback, and trying again until you excel**. I have a tiny blip of a chance to affect you positively in the long scheme of things so I've designed this course to encourage agility, independence, curiosity, and perseverance so that hopefully I've helped you be successful long after this course is over.

Second, I am a scholar and designer who believes in equity, justice, and **maximizing agency for everyone**. But I don't have all the answers, and I am on a lifelong journey to learn as well. Additionally, I try my hardest to decentralize power and to treat you as equals, but there are inherent dynamics that will always exist. I will endeavor to never exercise that power unless it is ethical to do so.

Third, **learning is social.** This is the foundational principle of my Ph.D. research in education and informal learning. I encourage you to communicate with each other, with the peer facilitators, and with me as much as possible, even if all you have to say is just a small status update. You want to develop "[swift trust](#)" and to learn by asking and reasoning aloud and by watching others.

**Late and Revision Policies:**
Most of the activities for my courses are done in teams or have certain milestones requiring you to give and receive feedback from peers. As such, it's quite difficult to get the same experience if you turn in late assignments. **Late work becomes meaningless if they arrive after someone was available to provide you with feedback. Meaningless work gets a zero grade. Late, but still meaningful, work gets at least partial credit, and you must let us know that you are still planning on doing it.** If it's extremely insightful or proves that you've been thinking about the course topics deeply, full points are still possible.

For work in **Perusall, the system is set up to accept late work, but I reserve the right to deduct points for egregiously late work,** especially if you don't let me know beforehand that it will be late. If your notes are late, it helps a lot if the notes are particularly insightful and of high quality to make up for the fact that they're late. Also, **if you post something after the initial deadline, you should let me know** since I don't receive notifications for additions to previous readings.

For Slack or Discord, generally, you should let me know what's going on if you're going to miss a week or be late. Most likely, it'll be okay so long as you're communicative. Then follow up and let me know when you've posted something, and I'll regrade.

If you receive only one point in Perusall or Slack / Discord, it generally means you didn't meet the criteria for two points. **In most cases, you can revise or post more** (Perusall requires at least 3 high-quality notes, but more help make sure you get full points) and then just let me know to regrade.

For anyone who is chronically late with either Perusall notes or Slack / Discord, it is even more important to communicate any issues with me and/or peer facilitators and work with us to figure out a schedule for making up the late work. In most cases, you'll receive at least partial credit, but, again, you must negotiate your case in advance.

I try to email students who are chronically late with work to check in and then escalate by filing a Navigate Student Success Management report if I feel the need. Extreme circumstances sometimes do occur, however, so if that happens, please let me know and we can figure something out. If you know something will come up during the quarter, let us know earlier rather than later so we can figure out how you can still participate.

That said, **revisions are usually encouraged and actually expected if you receive comments or suggestions for edits**. In other words, your best stab by the due date is waaay better than not turning something in on time. **Most of the time, you'll just get comments and can submit revisions to be regraded.** You must, however, let us know what's going on and what your expectations are! So let us know what you're thinking!

**Attendance and Zoom:**
You are expected to be there during class times, but we will not be taking attendance to allow for anyone who needs to be absent for any given week (due to COVID or other reasons). That said, if you miss an in-class activity, that's on you. *If you cannot make it to a class session, you are still expected to let us and your team know!* That's common decency and being responsible and communicative. Not doing so results in fewer community engagement points.

Any Zoom class sessions might be recorded. The recording will capture the presenter's audio, video, and computer screen. Student audio and video will be recorded if they share their computer audio and video during the recorded session. The recordings will be accessible to students enrolled in the course to review materials. Normally, these recordings will not be shared with or accessible to the public.

The University and Zoom have FERPA-compliant agreements in place to protect the security and privacy of UW Zoom accounts. Students who do not wish to be recorded should:

- Change their Zoom screen name to hide any personal identifying information such as their name or UW Net ID, and
- Not share their computer audio or video during their Zoom sessions.

**All that said, you are still highly encouraged to share your video during our Zoom sessions where appropriate.** A lot of online community and *presence* research shows that it is harder to "be social" through online forms of communication since people miss out on gestures, body language, facial expressions, tonal changes, etc., but one way to mitigate this at least a little is to share video and audio. But it is entirely up to you whether you do. If not, there are alternatives such as using a filter (e.g., Snap Camera) or **putting up a photo as your profile image**. If you are simply self-conscious about how you look, one solution would be to **turn off your self-view in Zoom**, which has been shown to alleviate the feeling like everyone is watching. Also, if you don't share your video without some good reason and you complain about not being social when remote, that's sort of on you.

**Online Communication:**
Allow for mistakes. Despite the best intentions, sometimes you might be hurt by something that someone in the course says. Please talk to me about this, as I can help resolve the conflicts. Remember that most students, and humans in general, are clueless and that we don't usually intend to be hurtful. Never ascribe spite when it's more likely incompetence or cluelessness!

Write well. Be clear and concise, and use good spelling and grammar. Stay on topic. To check clarity, read your message aloud to yourself before sending it.

As a general rule, I will not message or respond to students on Slack / Discord or through other means after 9 pm, so if you want to reach me and want a reply that day, please be sure to message me well in advance of that evening. Please write to me on my university email account markchen@uw.edu for any messages that are super important and/or that you do not wish to place on Slack / Discord so that we can keep a good record of the messages (and to ensure I receive

them because DMs on Slack / Discord can sometimes get lost!). You may also want to send a group DM to the PFs and me instead of just me if you need time-sensitive help.

In addition, advising staff in the UW Bothell's Schools of IAS and STEM will have access to Canvas, Slack / Discord, and other communication tools used in courses as a means to support and mitigate issues if any arise.

I take on different roles in my relations with students. I am generally your friend and care about you, but I am also your professor, so keep that in mind in your communications with me.

**A Note on Stress:**



Thinking about the amount of work you have to complete within the next few weeks like

My life is a mess

Success in this course depends heavily on your personal health and well-being. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. And let's be realistic. Life absolutely sucks for most people right now. Stress is a perfectly natural response to world-altering events. If you somehow have made it through the past year completely unaffected, realize that most of your classmates were not so lucky. Some of them may have lost friends or family, have lost their jobs, have been hospitalized, have extra responsibilities such as caring for parents or grandparents or are otherwise dealing with things that make them perform less than optimally.

That said, your other instructors and I strongly encourage you to reframe challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak.

You do not owe me or your teammates personal information about your situation. It is up to you what you choose to share with your team that is personal in nature; however, do let your team know anything that will affect projects (for example, if you'll be late on a deliverable, you should let your team know that you're running late, but you're not obligated

to tell them why). From the other end of things, if others on your team give you bad news about their own status, don't ask for personal information; let your teammates choose whether to volunteer anything additional, don't pressure them to divulge, and respect their decision.

Please DO feel free to reach out to me about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your performance in this course as soon as it occurs and before it becomes unmanageable. And you are always welcome to talk to me about whatever you like, whether it's personal, professional, or a combination. Additionally, your academic advisor and many other support services on campus stand ready to assist you if you need/want.

Again, thanks for reading this syllabus. I know it's a lot, but it's important. If you email me with your name, this course number, and an image of a cat, you'll get 2 extra credit points. If you email me later in the quarter asking for help and the answer is in the syllabus, I'll respond with an image of a cat.

In case you're interested, when COVID hit, I began writing my students letters and continued to do so for about two years in an effort to encourage and inform and to lend support through philosophical thoughts about life. An archive of letters can be found on my website: https://markdangerchen.net/letters/

**Classroom and Online Etiquette:**
Understanding and respecting the fact that people have diverse backgrounds, embodiments, and experiences is at the heart of higher education. In IAS and at UWB, students are expected to:  1) respect differences expressed in readings, by students or instructors which may include: age, cultural/ethnic/racial background, linguistic, disability, gender & gender presentation, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, veteran status, and we can go on (use your good judgment); 2) engage respectfully in discussions of diverse viewpoints and ideologies embedded in course readings, films, and presentations.

Basically, be respectful of other views and experiences, even when they are in conflict with your own. Try not to be defensive. No one wants to brainwash you. Learn everything you can. If you agree, good for you. If you disagree, the knowledge that you gain can provide you with intelligent reasons for why you disagree. Either way, you'll know more and will be smarter on a variety of topics. That is the point of education.

Treating your interactions online as you would in a face-to-face class is imperative for successfully completing this course. Inappropriate interactions will have consequences.

**Syllabus Revisions:**
You are responsible for all materials, updates and announcements covered during class sessions. The course calendar will most likely change over time due to unforeseen circumstances; please be sure you are using the most recent version. I also expect you to use your UW e-mail account and Canvas regularly, so that I can communicate with each of you electronically between classes. If you wish to use another e-mail address as your primary account, set up your UW account to forward to your other address.

**Syllabus Academic Freedom Statement:**
Academic freedom is the principle that scholars have the right - without repression - to teach, conduct research, and/or disseminate ideas, even those that are not widely accepted or convenient, with the primary goal of truth-seeking. This is central to the mission, goals, and values of the academy and is a core principle of academia. As the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) states, "institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good…The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition." This course is based on the most recent and relevant research and scholarship in this discipline and in related fields. Although some of the ideas expressed within this course may not be convenient or fit within your worldview, they are grounded in rigorous and informed study.

Our goal is to have deep, informed, and lively classroom debate and discussion. Students MUST provide logical, rational, and evidence-based argumentation. To be entitled to have your views treated as serious candidates for the truth, you must present evidence for your statements. All "opinions" should be backed up with logical argumentation and evidence with the purpose of seeking truth toward the common good.