BIS 313: Game Studies

Winter 2020 | T/Th 1:15-3:15pm| UW2 221

COURSE INFORMATION

INSTRUCTORS	**Dr. Mark Chen, Professor**	@mcdanger	markdangerchen@gmail.com **Melynda Phung, Peer Facilitator**	melphu@uw.edu **Sasha Vinnichenko, Peer Facilitator**	Sashinkav98@gmail.com **Office Hours:** by appointment (prob after class) or just email **HOW TO EMAIL:** 1. write a relevant subject, 2. get our names and titles right, 3. provide context for your email, and 4. sign it with who the heck you are. Also, check the syllabus first.
DESCRIPTION	We live in crazy times. A trash fire, amirite? You have to wonder, why games? Why now? I mean… our lives must have meaning beyond laying down and letting it happen so escaping to games seems irresponsible... Right? Well, as it happens, gaming culture is the perfect microcosm of culture writ large, and any thoughts that you can just escape completely are quickly obliterated once you start examining it in detail. Gaming is a part of our lives in a way that's NOT separate from other lived realities. In fact, to call it not real--to assume that just because you don't examine it critically it's not real--is completely ridiculous. To think that gaming is extra, that it doesn't contain political messages, that representations in them therefore don't matter, that it isn't art, and to feel "why can't we just have our games?" is total BS. And once we start realizing this, a whole bunch of interesting avenues for self reflection and self expression open up. And we can answer: why games? Pretty readily, in fact. Because they are a part of us and we are them. And learning how to make gaming better is not separate from making the world better. Therefore, engaging in gaming now can be a valid form of--not escapism--but engagement with the world. We are gamers, and we don't take life laying down. This course will help students develop a critical eye to game playing practice and gaming culture. We'll learn how to examine games and their meaning from different academic traditions; we'll engage in that debate and try to elevate our view of gaming to give it the light it deserves. In addition to reading and playing games, students will primarily create new criticism through recording and editing a Let's Play video that captures the essence of the experience they have for a game of their choosing (video game OR tabletop game OR pretty much any game, really) as seen through the lens of particular academic texts and sociological

		frameworks. Topics will include diversity and inclusion in games (LGBTQA, disability, fat shaming, hypermasculinity and hypersexualization), developing good play communities and a lusory attitude toward life, and how games are structured to interact with players to build meaning and discover wonder.
LEAR NING OBJEC TIVES		● Gain an understanding of various scholarly traditions for examining games and gaming practice ● Learn processes for creating and editing videos with critical analysis of gameplay ● Practice peer review and evaluations through iterative work ● Gain a broad knowledge of gaming controversies and issues in historic and current game studies ● Build teamwork skills that value diversity and empathy through class projects ● Practice presentation and facilitation skills **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 less than 5 hours. The remaining time should be spent on working on your projects.
TECH		Google Team Drive (most of the assignments and course materials will be here): https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0AKLoNv_izwNQUk9PVA Slack (discussion board and group work coordination): https://313winter2020.slack.com Canvas (announcements and grades): https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1363479 Remember to turn on notifications!

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Note: To calculate your grade, ignore the percentage columns in Canvas; instead look at the grading table below. I.E., just add up your points and consult the table to see what that translates to on a 4.0 scale.

Assignment	*Deliverables*	*Points*
Presentation and Facilitation of Reading Topics Each week, different groups of 2 or 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 (by finding other articles and/or videos to share). Include information and history of the author, show us videos, have us do an in-class activity, and prepare discussion questions, which will be posted to our online discussion.		**12**

  More info can be found on the **Presentation and Facilitation of Reading Topics assignment doc**.		
### *Weekly Online Discussions* Thoughtful writing about complex topics demonstrates a level of mastery and understanding as well as the ability to critically engage with the material in a way that's meant to result in more questions than answers. Writing well takes time and practice. It's a skill that you can develop and become better at no matter your current skill level. More info can be found on the **Weekly Online Discussions assignment doc**.		**20-25**
### *Critical Let's Play (Main Quarter-long Project)* Alongside livestreaming through Twitch and other platforms, Let's Play videos offer another form for expression and sharing game experiences. Like livestreaming, these are often videos of game playing, showing in-game action with voice-over narration or inset webcam video of player reactions. An alternate type of Let's Play, however, includes edited and polished video, sometimes cut with other source video and images and extra voice over that examines specific moments of play. In scholarly tradition, this analysis blends emotional reactions with academic literature and interrogation of in-game events and representation. Sometimes called Academic Let's Plays, we're calling them Critical Let's Plays in this course. More info about the different parts of this assignment are in the **Critical Let's Play assignment doc**.	• **Team contract, Jan 14** • **LP review, Jan 21** • **Idea, Jan 28** • **Outline, Feb 4** • **Draft LP, Feb 18** • **Feedback/Response, Feb 25/27** • **Final LP, Mar 10/17**	**45**

Personal Learning Reflection (individual) 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. Full points if it's clear that the student is being thoughtful about their reflection. Submit via Canvas.	***Due Thursday Mar 19*** ● Personal reflection	**2**
Participation Students who go above and beyond assignment requirements will receive full participation points. Post frequently in Slack, participate in class activities, be responsive to your team, etc. This is not attendance but that generally helps with being able to actively participate. Note: I'll rarely give out the full 15 here. There will be lots of time in class to work on your projects. Please take advantage of it and coordinate well with your team. If you must miss a class, you must also let Mark and the peer facilitators AND YOUR TEAM know so we/they can figure out how you can participate fully. Furthermore, we will be taking group notes during days of presentations and assigning notetakers on those days. We'll cover what good notes are in the first couple of weeks but generally focus on what presenters say, not just copy their slides, and work together with all the other notetakers. ***Be sure to capture any discussions during afterward, too, not just the presentations.***	● Introduce yourself in Slack by Thursday Jan 9 ● **Tip: Attempt positive interactions with us and your peers in class and online so we remember who you are.** ● Take GOOD notes on **your assigned day**. ● Other 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.	**21** intro = 2 gp = 15 notes = 2 other = 2

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

Week	Topics and Activities	Readings
01 **Jan 7 / 9**	**Game Definitions and Gaming Literacy** crash course on Let's Plays: ● Nerd³ Plays… Kerbal Space Program ● Rainy Day Let's Play. Let's Playing As An Art – Episode 1: Let's All Let's Play ● Solon Scott - "Let's Play: The New Media Phenomenon" (Lecture) ● Wallace, Chris. (May 6, 2019). How YouTube let's plays are preserving video game history. *Rock, Paper, Shotgun.*	● Salen & Zimmerman. (2004). *Rules of play.* Chapter 7. **Mark** ● Chen, Mark. (2014). A new definition for games: Meaningful play. **Mark** ● Bogost, Ian. (2013). Persuasive Games. *UX Week 2013* [video]. **Mark**

02 Jan 14 / 16	**Critical Let's Plays and Gaming Identities** individually watch a bunch of LPs (hint: change the speed setting in YouTube): ● 10 Gaming Let's Plays You Should Watch ● Let's Play: *Journey* - Meskeram and Rainer ● Let's Play *Proteus* - Part 1: Pharos - Solonface ● Lim ~ A Loving Review - Solonface ● *The Stanley Parable*, *Dark Souls*, and Intended Play - Folding Ideas ● In depth look at *Far Cry 3*, An Idiot plays - Kulmeet Singh ● *Hack N Slash* - Matt Jones ● Well Played Let's Play *Fallout 4*: Succumbing to the Simulacra - Mark Chen ● *The Witness* - A Great Game That You Shouldn't Play - Joseph Anderson ● *The Stanley Parable* - Errant Signal ● The Artist is Absent: Davey Wreden and *The Beginner's Guide* - Innuendo Studios ● The Villain of Edith Finch - Joseph Anderson ● The Morality of *Shadow of the Colossus* - Folding Ideas	● Gee, James Paul. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy* Chapter 3: Learning and identity. ● Lalone, Nick. (2018). More than affordances: Limitations and the systems they create: A review of Ian Bogost's *Play Anything*. *First Person Scholar.*
03 Jan 21 / 23	**New Games Journalism and Analog Game Studies** in class videos (to do either in front of class or on own with laptops): ● Language of Editing: Basic Cuts - Folding Ideas ● playlist from Writing on Games ● playlist from Errant Signal ● My Trip To Liberty City - Jim Monroe also check out: ● Critical Distance Feb-Mar 2018 Roundup: History	● always_black. Bow nigger. ● Flood, J. (2012). Playing *Assassin's Creed 3* on the Pine Ridge Rez. *Killscreen* (Nov. 28, 2012). ● Dashiell, Steven. (2018). "Rules as written": Game algorithms as game capital. *Analog Game Studies.*

	● Lincoln, Kevin. (2018). I Want My Chess TV. *Topic.* ● Walker, Austin. (Jun 10, 2015). Editorial: Why We Write: On Game Critique, Influence, and Reach. *Giant Bomb.*	
04 Jan 28 / 30	**Systems and Textual Analysis** also check out: ● Zimmerman, Eric. (Jan 11, 2017). Every game is a language [video].	● Kazemi, Darius. (2014). How mercenaries and gun culture shaped one of the best strategy games ever made. *Motherboard.* ● Yin-Poole, Wesley. (2018). The horror of Vault 11. *Eurogamer.* ● Keogh, Brendan. (2017). An Incomplete Game Feel Reader
05 Feb 4 / 6	**Cultural Analysis (and History)** also check out: ● Gough, Cody. (Mar 24, 2018). Chutes and Ladders Began as a Game to Teach Morality 2,000 Years Ago. *Curiosity.*	● Mishra, Peter (dir.). (2018). The artists: Wordsmiths. *Topic.* ● Donlan, Christian. (2017). Why did ancient Egypt spend 3000 years playing a game nobody else liked? *Eurogamer.* ● Paul, Chris. (2018). Room to reflect: Video games, meritocracy, and toxicity. *First Person Scholar.*
06 Feb 11 / 13	**Analyzing Gaming Practice (and Culture)**	● Chen, Mark. (2012). *Leet noobs.* Chapter 2. **Mark** ● Twitch Talks with Dr. TL Taylor from MIT. ● Gironi, Fabio. (Jan 9, 2019). Gaming's hidden toxicity. *First Person Scholar.*
07 Feb 18 / 20	**Identity, Addiction, and Exclusion** also check out: ● Takahashi, Dean. (Aug 23, 2019). Riot Games closes a chapter with sexual harassment lawsuit settlement. *VentureBeat.*	● Quantic Foundry. (2016). Our gaming motivation data distilled into a 20-minute talk. *GDC* ● Cover, Rob. (2006). Gaming (ad)diction: Discourse, identity, time, and play in the production of the gamer addiction myth. *Game Studies.* ● Alexander, Julia, and Kuchera, Ben. (Jul 10, 2018). ArenaNet's firings reinforced gaming culture's worst impulses. *Polygon.* and

			D'Anastasio, Cecilia. (Sep 7, 2018). Two Riot employees leave under complicated circumstances after PAX session excluding men. *Kotaku.*
08 Feb 25 / 27	**Representation and Inclusion** also check out: • PBS Game/Show. Representation in Games series. • Sarkeesian, Anita. (Dec 23, 2019). Anita Sarkeesian looks back at GamerGate. *Polygon.*		• Feminist Frequency. Tropes vs Women in Video Games series. and Do Gamers Need Anita Sarkeesian's Feminism? • Yussef Cole And Tanya DePass. (Mar 1, 2017). Black Skin Is Still A Radical Concept in Video Games. *Vice.* • PBS Game/Show. (2014). How are games biased against the disabled?, and Gwaltney, Javy. (2015). Day in the life: Disability and representation in videogames. *Paste.*
09 Mar 3 / 5	**New Power Fantasies** also check out: • Plunkett, Luke. (Feb 27, 2018). There was a 1908 board game about women fighting cops in the streets. *Kotaku.*		• Yee, Nick. (Aug 29, 2017). Just how important are female protagonists? *Quantic Foundry.* and Clark, Nicole. (Mar 29, 2018). The importance of female friendships in video games. *The Mary Sue.* • Alexander, Leigh. (Nov 29, 2016). It's time for a new kind of power fantasy. *How We Get To Next.* and Kunzelman, Cameron. (2018). Games need more power fantasies beyond beefy dudes with big guns. *Waypoint.*
10 Mar 10 / 12	**Games for Good** also check out this list of articles from Not Your Mama's Gamer on games and mental health! http://www.nymgamer.com/?s=mental+health		• Shaffer, David William, Squire, Kurt D., Halverson, Rich, and Gee, James Paul. (2004). Video games and the future of learning. University of Wisconsin-Madison and Academic Advanced Distributed Learning Co-Laboratory. • Thurm, Eric. (2018). Do not pass go, do not engage in class warfare. *Topic.*

COURSE RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

Further readings/resources:
- *Games and Culture* first issue.
- *Gamestudies.org*
- *Queer Game Studies*
- *How to Talk about Videogames*
- *Gaming at the Edge*
- PBS Game/Show
- Critical Gaming Project blog.
- This Week in Videogame Blogging. ← One of the most important sites about critical gaming.
- *Tabletop: Analog game design* (esp. The greatest gift, p. 111).
- Connected Learning / Digital Media and Learning
- Network Society
- Moral panics
- History of the desktop http://bestreviews.com/#reviews
- Making Games in a F****d Up World https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MflkwKt7tl4 and http://www.molleindustria.org/blog/making-games-in-a-fucked-up-world-games-for-change-2014/

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMERS AND INFO

Late Policy:
Most of the activities for this course are done in teams or have certain milestones requiring you give and receive feedback from peers. As such, it's quite difficult to get the same experience if you turn in late assignments. They become 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. Also, extreme circumstances sometimes do occur, 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.

Classroom Technologies:
Electronic devices are welcome and indeed necessary, **but PLEASE stay on task.** I'll trust you to do that and be disappointed if you don't. I'm going to assume you're adults, and we'll go from there. We'll be using Google docs for shared class notes, and *participation in co-creating the notes is highly recommended*.

A Note on Stress:
Success in this course depends heavily on your personal health and wellbeing. 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. 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. Please 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. In addition to your academic advisor, I strongly encourage you to contact the many other support services on campus that stand ready to assist you.

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, 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.

Student Conduct:
The University of Washington Student Conduct Code (WAC 478-121) defines prohibited academic and behavioral conduct and describes how the University holds students accountable as they pursue their academic goals. Allegations of misconduct by students may be referred to the appropriate campus office for investigation and resolution. More information can be found online at
https://www.washington.edu/studentconduct/

You are responsible for knowing what constitutes a violation of the University of Washington Student Code, and you will be held responsible for any such violations whether they were intentional or not.

Academic Integrity:
The University takes academic integrity very seriously. Behaving with integrity is part of our responsibility to our shared learning community. If you're uncertain about if something is academic misconduct, ask me. I am willing to discuss questions you might have.

Acts of academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:
- Cheating (working collaboratively on quizzes/exams and discussion submissions, sharing answers and previewing quizzes/exams)
- Plagiarism (representing the work of others as your own without giving appropriate credit to the original author(s))
- Unauthorized collaboration (working with each other on assignments)

Respect for Diversity:
Diverse backgrounds, embodiments and experiences are essential to the critical thinking endeavor at the heart of university education. In IAS and at UW Bothell, students are expected to:

- respect individual differences which may include, but are not limited to: age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender presentation, immigration status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status.
- engage respectfully in discussion of diverse worldviews and ideologies embedded in course readings, presentations, and artifacts, including those course materials that are at odds with personal beliefs and values.

Students seeking support around these issues can find more information and resources at http://www.uwb.edu/diversity.

Religious Observance:
Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Faculty Syllabus Guidelines and Resources. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form available at: https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/

Access and Accommodations:
Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but are not limited to: mental health, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 425.352.5307 or rosal@uw.edu.

DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s), and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Health and Wellness Resource Center
Is balancing life, work, and college getting in the way of your success? Are you looking for support but aren't sure where to go? The Health and Wellness Resource Center (HaWRC) is a one-stop hub connecting UW Bothell and Cascadia students with on-campus and community resources to help you thrive. Through a partnership with the United Way Benefits Hub, we provide resource connections, financial coaching and assistance, and public benefits enrollment. Learn more at https://www.uwb.edu/arc/hawrc, or visit us in ARC-120.

Parenting Student Resources:
Parenting students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources provided on campus. These resources include the Parent Union at UWB, the Childcare Assistance Program, priority access at Bright Horizons Bothell and Bothell KinderCare; and back-up/sick care at one of these locations. On campus resources include lactation rooms and baby changing stations. For additional information about resources for parenting

students visit https://www.uwb.edu/studentaffairs/resources/student-parents, contact the Parent Union on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PUUWB/ or by email: alicelp@uw.edu.

For Our Veterans:
Welcome! We at UW Bothell understand that the transition into civilian life can be challenging for our veteran students and we have many resources for any who may want to reach out for guidance or assistance. This includes our Vet Corp Navigator through the WDVA and our Student Veterans Association (SVA). Please contact Veteran Services at 425.352.5307 or rosal@uw.edu. For those of you needing more URGENT support, please call Veterans Crisis Line 1.800.273.8255 or connect with the UWB CARE Team https://www.uwb.edu/studentaffairs/care-team.

Safety:
Call SafeCampus at 206-685-7233 anytime – no matter where you work or study – to anonymously discuss safety and well-being concerns for yourself or others. SafeCampus's team of caring professionals will provide individualized support, while discussing short- and long-term solutions and connecting you with additional resources when requested.

Inclement Weather:
Please check if the campus may be closed due to weather. Information on suspension of operations will be made public and available through the media. Students can learn of campus operations status from the website or by calling the Campus Information Hotline 425.352.3333. You may also sign up with an alert system that will contact you via email or text message if classes are canceled. For more information on the alert process, please see http://www.uwb.edu/alert. Class activities will be rescheduled as needed.

Student Support Services:
- Library: http://library.uwb.edu, 425-352-5340
- Writing and Communication Center: http://www.uwb.edu/wacc, 425-352-5253
- Quantitative Skills Center: http://www.uwb.edu/qsc, 425-352-3170
- Student Success and Career Services: http://www.uwb.edu/studentservices/success-services, 425-352-3776
- Student Counseling Services: http://www.uwb.edu/studentservices/counseling, 425-352-3183

IAS Learning Goals:
Undergraduate students in all majors within Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (IAS) focus on five core learning objectives: collaboration and shared leadership; critical and creative thinking; diversity and equity; interdisciplinary research and inquiry; writing and communication.
- **Collaboration and Shared Leadership:** IAS students develop their collaboration and shared leadership abilities by learning to work with others to identify dimensions of a project, generate and refine ideas, follow through on the consequences of collective decisions, and pursue specific tasks without losing a sense of the whole. As part of this process, they learn to assess and draw on group members' diverse histories, strengths, and potential contributions. They develop skills in listening, mediating conflict, playing different roles, and

reflecting on the outcomes of collaborative work. Students learn different ways of managing groups, communicating effectively and respectfully across differences, and reflecting critically and creatively on collaboration processes.

- **Critical and Creative Thinking:** IAS students develop their critical and creative thinking abilities by learning how to identify assumptions, and to work out how those assumptions inform results. They assess multiple perspectives, with an eye to understanding why and how they differ, and developing the capacity to engage in controversy productively. Students learn to identify central questions or concerns informing other work, and to develop their own work with an awareness of their own social positions and clear animating questions. Students develop a range of skills in interpretation, analysis, argumentation, application, synthesis, evaluation, and reflection.
- **Diversity and Equity:** IAS students develop their ability to live and work within and across diverse communities composed of multiple intersecting identities. Learning from the lived experiences, creative expressions and intellectual perspectives of historically-marginalized groups, students recognize and name historical and cultural relationships between power, knowledge, and difference. They develop the confidence and skills needed to transform unequal relations of power ethically and self-reflexively in order to foster greater equity.
- **Interdisciplinary Research and Inquiry:** IAS students develop their ability to assess and conduct interdisciplinary research by engaging with and across multiple areas of knowledge and kinds of inquiry. They learn to think critically and creatively as they develop research questions, pursue them with appropriate sources and methods, and present results in a form suited to their purpose and intended audience. In this process, they learn to position their own work in relation to other research literatures and methods of inquiry, and in relation to relevant debates and diverse social contexts.
- **Writing and Communication:** IAS students develop their writing and communication abilities by advancing an awareness of the interconnected relationships between purpose, audience, author and context. They learn to communicate their purposes effectively to diverse audiences through writing, presentations, and other media, and to use a range of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, to develop ideas and support claims in ways that best serve their needs. As part of this process, they develop the ability to indicate clearly and self-reflexively the ways their specific acts of communication relate to the work of others.

IAS Portfolio:

Student majoring in any degree offered by IAS begin the process of creating a capstone portfolio in BIS 300: Interdisciplinary Inquiry and conclude it in BIS 499: Capstone Portfolio. IAS students should maintain an archive of all of the work they have done in (or in relation to) their undergraduate education, preferably through their UW Google Site. For more information about the IAS portfolio, visit the IAS webpage: http://www.uwb.edu/ias/iasdegreeportfolio. For help on the technical or rhetorical development of your IAS portfolio, visit the Writing and Communication Center (www.uwb.edu/writingcenter or 425-352-5253) or Learning Technologies (learningtech@uwb.edu or http://www.uwb.edu/learningtech/eportfolios). You can also get help from a student tutor in the campus's Open Learning Lab in UW2-140.

Syllabus Revisions:

This syllabus is subject to change during the quarter to accommodate the needs of the class. You are responsible for all materials, updates and announcements covered during class sessions. I also expect you to use your UW email account regularly and to participate in the online discussions so that I can communicate with you between classes.

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.

Presentation and Facilitation of Reading Topics

Each week, different groups of 2 or 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 (by finding other articles and/or videos to share). Include information and history of the author, show us videos, have us do an in-class activity, and prepare discussion questions, which will be posted to our online discussion.

You MUST COLLABORATE on the presentation with the other students who've signed up for the same reading. This means getting together early to figure out how you're going to communicate and coordinate and to agree on the work. Each presenter needs to work together on all aspects of the presentation; DO NOT just divide up the work and then not talk to each other.

Signing Up for a Reading to Present

On the syllabus, the readings are listed per week. Each one that is NUMBERED is one that will be presented in class. Students should sign up for one of those readings. Limit 3 students per reading until all of them have 3.

How to Prepare for Presenting

The first task is to **create a Google doc to write an outline together** and share it with Mark and the peer facilitators to get feedback. **Email or message us in Slack when it's ready to look at!** This document must have:

- an outline that gives a rough idea of what each slide or section of your talk will be about
  - Include details for what you'll say, not just a description of what you'll say. For example, writing "Slide 2: Author Bio" is not what we're looking for. Instead, we want the actual content such as "Slide 2: Tracy Fullterton, Professor at USC, Author of *Game Design Workshop*" etc.
- a written paragraph reflection from each student that covers what stood out for you from the reading and what you think should be emphasized in the presentation
- an indication for who will be doing the work. Maybe you want to assign different slides to different team members, which is fine. Or maybe one person is in charge of finding photos and doing the aesthetics of the presentation while someone else is in charge of filling in the content. That's fine, too. However, every team member must okay and vet each section, and there should be an overall main aesthetic to the visuals as well as a logical flow through the whole presentation.

Each student should show evidence of working on this in the Google doc unless you explicitly let us know that you're working side-by-side on one person's computer.

Then create and go through multiple iterations of visual aids for your in-class presentation. (Google Slides is preferred since we can comment on them and you can work on them simultaneously, but, if you want to use something else, just ask!)

Please write exactly what you'll be saying in each slide in the speaker notes. If you're not doing a slideshow, plan on sharing a script of what you'll say, too. We want to try to provide a standalone presentation that people can refer back to and get the same info.

Be creative and show videos or whatever you want to make your presentations engaging. Also, remember to have fun! We're doing this so that every student has practice giving presentations. We'll be providing feedback, and, ideally, each week will be better as the whole class learns together.

It seems to work really well to identify a couple of quotes that get at the heart of the reading or topic and then highlight them in your slides and talk about what they mean and why they're important.

CHALLENGE: Try to make it humorous and throw in a joke or a pun related to your topic! Go meme heavy if you want!

That said, not EVERYONE needs to be physically presenting equally. It's up to teams how you want to divide up the work, and you can choose to specialize if you want. Maybe someone is an awesome graphic designer so they will concentrate on the visuals while someone else is good at public speaking and will be doing most of the talking. That's fine, so long as everyone feels like they're putting in their fair share of the work AND YOU LET US KNOW WHAT THE PLAN IS! That said, EVERY person is expected to work on the outline.

Presenting

Remember, if you're not having fun, chances are high that we're not having fun. Pretend we're just a bunch of friends talking about something around a table at a cafe or something. Find something interesting in the reading's topic that you want to discuss with us, and try to be relaxed but project and enunciate well. It's okay to have questions; you don't need to be experts of the reading topics, just knowledgeable about your particular reading and some other research you've done, and then we'll just chat about it, k?

After Presentation

Remember to post a very short summary of what you presented and your two questions onto the week's Slack channel. Also remember, you're still expected to answer at least one question or continue one thread from another group's presentation.

If you worked on a team for the presentation, please also fill out a team evaluation and send it to Mark either via email or Canvas. Just use the same template that we're using for the main team projects.

If you did not work on a team for this presentation, just sent a quick note on how well you thought it went and if there were any particular struggles during the week while creating it.

Finally, please read over answers to your group's questions and help Mark and the peer facilitators comment on them.

General Tips for Presentations and Timeline:

- Use keywords/phrases; don't use sentences.
- Only have one topic per slide. In your outline, just one topic per bullet.
- Use lots of visuals to illustrate your points.
- Construct a logical argument or flow for your talk, not just a monotonous list of what the reading covered.
- Cover extra stuff you find related to the reading.
- Speak clearly and loudly.
- Add jokes, memes, or other humorous content to keep us engaged (if appropriate).
- Your primary focus is trying to figure out if everyone in the class understands the reading and your extensions to the topics.

Deliverables	Due	Points
Share a draft of the group's presentation outline in Google docs with Mark and the peer facilitators. This needs to have some cohesive argument and logical flow from point to point so that we can follow what you'll be planning to present. This should also have a short reflection from each team member about their takeaways from the reading.	Thursday at midnight the week before the presentation	3
Share a draft of the presentation slides or other visuals for feedback.	Sunday at midnight	2
Revised visuals	Tuesday at midnight	1
In-class presentation	Thursday	2
Post a short summary and your two questions to the discussion board.	Thursday at the end of class	1
Each team member email Mark a team evaluation, using the template found in our Team Drive.	Thursday at midnight	1
Each team member should help respond to online discussions that are about your reading. Shoot for at least	Ongoing until Tuesday the	2

two responses each.	following week.	

313 Weekly Online Discussions

Thoughtful writing about complex topics demonstrates a level of mastery and understanding as well as the ability to critically engage with the material in a way that's meant to result in more questions than answers. Writing well takes time and practice. It's a skill that you can develop and become better at no matter your current skill level.

Also, these days, there's actually a lot of support, both social and technical, to help you get better at writing informed posts. Take advantage of **UWB's writing center** and use a grammar checker like **Grammarly**. I expect some level of grammar editing and spell checking in your posts. Another tactic is to get friends to read what you post before posting! That said, what matters more is that you are able to write in a logical manner where you use evidence to support your statements. I DO NOT generally grade on grammar so don't stress over perfect English!*

*It should go without saying, but whenever you copy someone else, you need to attribute the original author. You can quote them and then explain how their quote is related to the ideas you're trying to express. Do not quote them without crediting them and letting us know where to find the original source. Not crediting them makes it look like you're trying to pretend that you wrote it, which is plagiarism. Also, do not hire someone to write for you. For this course, that's just a waste of money in addition to being another form of academic dishonesty, requiring reporting to the main UW office.

Weekly Responses and replies in Slack, due every Tuesday

Students are expected to participate in the weekly discussion on Slack. We use Slack because it does a better job than Canvas and is also a useful skill to have for after you graduate since it's what most tech and media companies use. It seemed hypocritical of me to have you all not practice using standard media platforms in a course about interactive media. Each week, students must post at least once, worth 2-3 points.

For the first point, students must:
- post a response to at least one of the presenter questions after presentations with something substantial. You may opt to combine questions and/or connect questions to previous weeks' topics, too.

OR
- post in someone else's response thread in a meaningful way, adding to the discussion, that clearly demonstrates an understanding of the readings.

For the second point, students must include:
- a quote from the week's reading that best exemplifies the post's argument with an explanation of how it does so. **Be explicit about page numbers, timecodes on videos, etc. *Challenge: Try to pick a quote that someone else hasn't used.***

OR
- a quote from an outside source such as a news article or to one of the other readings in the course's other weeks. Again, explain how the quote relates to the post, and **provide**

a link to the source with page numbers, etc. for the quote. The idea is to connect ideas to each other, further extending themes, etc.

The post is due on Tuesday at midnight, but if you post by Sunday at midnight, you get an extra credit point (maximum of 5). This is to encourage people to post early so that there's enough content for others to reply.

Here's a good guide to critical thinking:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/learning/documents/student-support/value-map/valuemap1516/criticalthinkingandwriting171015alg.pdf

- Please highlight your **"quotes in bold."** (in Slack do this with *asterisks*.).
- Also, be sure to @tag people when responding to them.
- Tip: If you are @tagged and asked a question, you are expected to reply!
- Slack's useful how-to pages: https://get.slack.help/hc/en-us/categories/200111606

Critical Let's Play

Alongside livestreaming through Twitch and other platforms, Let's Play videos offer another form for expression and sharing game experiences. Like livestreaming, these are often videos of game playing, showing in-game action with voice-over narration or inset webcam video of player reactions. An alternate type of Let's Play, however, includes edited and polished video, sometimes cut with other source video and images and extra voice over that examines specific moments of play. In scholarly tradition, this analysis blends emotional reactions with academic literature and interrogation of in-game events and representation. Sometimes called Academic Let's Plays, we're calling them Critical Let's Plays in this course.

Students will form teams of three or so to create a Let's Play video of a game of their choosing. This can be a video game, a tabletop game, an AR/VR game, or whatever game you want. The key, however, is to closely examine game play (emotion, reaction, habits, ritual, other in-room practice, visual representation, game mechanic metaphors, etc.) through an academic lens, referencing the thoughts and work of other game scholars or critics. Just doing a fan video for your favorite MOBA, BG, or CCG without critical analysis will result in a terrible CLP video.

Many of the readings will provide a whole bunch of different ways of looking at games, but it will be up to teams to find a suitable game to record and which academic angles to use in examining the game. The recording must be scripted and edited, and we'll be creating drafts and rough cuts to receive peer feedback before producing final videos. I've taught LP videos before, and I cannot stress enough the importance of getting started early with familiarizing yourself with a bevy of games and literature about games and then to also continually meet to work on the video production. To do it well takes time. A lot of it.

Teams must work on this together, but the actual division of work does not have to be split evenly for all activities. All students must co-write their main thesis, but one student may opt to focus on video shooting and editing while another does the voice over and collects resources. A third student might do a deep dive into academic literature and support the others. That's just one example; there's many different ways of sharing the workload.

From past experience, I know many students can feel overwhelmed with the video work if all teammates have never done it before. However, also from past experience, I know that the best work comes from student teams who are communicative and open about their struggles and willing to receive and give help to and from other student teams. The assignments have been structured to try to support you at each step, but that means it behooves you to prioritize each step to stay on top of things during the quarter.

Tips for good teamwork [from Google](#):
- Make sure everyone is talking at roughly the same amount of time.
- Try to develop high social sensitivity, by reading each other's' moods and emotions.

- Become friends and share personal information to create psychological safety.
- Also, work on curbing defensiveness.
- Remember, often the quiet ones have brilliant ideas.

Milestone	Items	Points
Assignment 0: Team Contract We will form teams during the first week of the quarter. Each team must use the Slack channel we've created for your team to communicate throughout the quarter (in addition to other communication channels if you so choose). Each team must also fill in a team contract and contact list so you all can reach each other during the quarter. *Unless otherwise noted, each assignment for the main project is to be done as a team.*	*Due Tuesday Jan 14* *(Week 2)* ● Contract / Contact Info We'll basically do all this in class. For all team assignments (most of the main project) I reserve the right to grade individuals differently dependent on perceived effort, communication level, team evaluations, etc.	**2**
Assignment 1: LP Review Find a Critical Let's Play video (like one of the ones in our syllabus) and write a one-page review in our Google Shared Drive that covers: ● Who produced the video and what game did they choose? ● What's the main thesis of their video? Who do they reference if anyone? ● Describe how the video was produced. How many cuts are there? What other sources are spliced into the video? How are specific moments highlighted? etc. ● Suggest at least one way the video could be improved. ● Reflect on what you learned from watching the video both in terms of the content but also the form of the video.	*Due Tuesday Jan 21* *(Week 3)* ● LP Review Note: For these assignments, use the bullet points as section headings for your write-ups and then just write appropriate text in those sections. In almost all cases, each bullet is worth a point. Be thoughtful and formal in your responses. Be sure to add proper title, filename, headings, the date, etc. to all your documents!	**5**

Assignment 2: LP Idea	Due Tuesday Jan 28	7

Assignment 2: LP Idea

Each team will write a one-page idea in our Google Shared Drive for an LP to work on for the quarter that includes:

- Game details: title, genre, year made, platform
- Potential thesis or main argument
- Potential academic sources to draw from for doing the analysis
- Who will be doing the recording, playing, editing, etc. for the production of the video
- Whether and what additional video will be required (such as interviews, recording other players, etc.)

Post a link to your Google doc in the #ideas Slack channel.

This doesn't have to be the final idea, but we want a sense of what you're currently thinking.

The rest of the class is encouraged to give feedback on these pitches.

Due Tuesday Jan 28
(Week 4)
- Initial idea (aka pitch)
- Team eval 1

Team Evaluation
We'll also ask each student to submit via Canvas a quick check-in on how the team is doing overall and how each other member specifically is doing. This should follow a team evaluation template. The evaluation is a chance for you to be hyper critical of the process so far with an eye towards improving your team culture. Reflecting this way is an invaluable skill, and you all should share with each other when appropriate to try to coordinate and communicate better as a team. This is worth more than just one point for a reason; it should demonstrate thoughtful reflection on your team.

7

idea
= 5

team eval
= 2

Assignment 3: Script and/or Outline

Write an outline or script for your CLP that includes:

- an introduction to the game and your main thesis,
- a logical sequence to your argument (each point should lead to the following point),
- who you will be referencing,
- a flowchart or visual storyboard for the whole video detailing each scene, and

Due Tuesday Feb 4
(Week 5)
- Script and/or or outline

There should be enough for a strong argument and video that'll last about 10-15 minutes (longer is okay if need be; shorter is okay, too; it really depends on how succinct you will be). I think this means an outline would be about one or

5

script
= 5

● a list of scenes and other video or audio you'll be including in your video.	two pages long. A script maybe 1000-1500 words or so.	
Assignment 4: First Draft LP Assemble a rough cut of your Critical Let's Play video. This could include placeholder clips and non-final voice over and very rough edits, **but the content should basically be all there**. We'll share these videos in class and give each other feedback. Also, append to your Google Doc a section that includes a write-up with: ● What your main argument or point is, ● Which academic literature or other sources you reference in making your point, ● Your thoughts on how the edits you've done serve to make your point, and ● whether there any parts you are unsure about and would like feedback on.	***Due Tuesday Feb 18*** *(Week 7)* ● First draft video in time for class screening ● Written statement ● Team eval 2 (We'll likely need two class periods for this.) We'll use your Google doc to leave feedback for each other.	**10** draft video = 5 write-up = 3 team eval = 2
Assignment 5: Feedback and Response We will all provide feedback and notes to each other during the screening of the first drafts. Each student is expected to give feedback on a minimum of two other projects for 2 points each. Additional feedback will garner 1 extra credit each up to an additional 3. Generally, to count, we're looking for good in-depth feedback, not short unhelpful comments. Each team will then write a short summary of the feedback in your Google doc that categorizes and clumps the responses and then write a short response for how you're going to change the video based on the feedback. Treat this like a short paper.	***Due Tuesday Feb 25 and Thursday Feb 27*** *(Week 7)* ● Feedback (individual in class in Gdrive) to be done in class the previous week ● Summary of feedback and possible responses in a Gdoc	**6-9** 2 pts x 2 groups + extra summary of feedback = 2

Assignment 6: Refined LP Have your finished video uploaded to Vimeo or YouTube and ready to share in class on the last week of instruction. In addition, add to your Google doc a new section that covers: ● An introductory statement of intent: what you were trying to do with the video in terms of how it was shot and put together and in terms of what you're saying and the argument you're trying to make. ● Whether you thought you were successful and what sorts of things you tried that went well and what could've gone better. ● How the final video is different than your draft one. ● What you learned during the quarter while making the video. ● What you would you do differently, if you could create another LP video.	*Due Tuesday March 10 and Tuesday March 17* *(Week 10 + 11)* ● Finished video (ready for class) ● Final document (due during finals week) ● Team eval 3	**12** finished video = 5 final document = 5 team eval = 2