

USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS - INTERACTIVE MEDIA AND GAMES

CTIN-190 INTRODUCTION TO INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Instructor: Jane Pinckard
Office Location: SCI 201W
Office Hours: Monday, 1:00 -
2:00 and by appointment
Email: miyukijane@gmail.com

SAs: Cathy Trang, Jocelyn Kim

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

REQUIRED TEXTS

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

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

Recommended Reading

The following texts are recommended to students as starting points for research.

- Aarseth, Espen J. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

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

ASSIGNMENTS

You will engage with the themes of this course through writing, presentations, in-class participation, and a game jam. Detailed constraints and prompts will be provided when assignments are issued in class. Additional materials and assignment documents can be downloaded from [a shared Google drive](#).

https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B_kNeccgctubVGU3QUVZNzBOVke&usp=sharing

Assessment breaks down as follows:

Game Story	15%	September 20
Research Paper	35%	November 22 or 29*
Presentation	15%	Variable
Game Jam Presentation	10%	October 25
Pop Quizzes**	20%	Variable
Participation***	5%	N/A
Total	100%	

* Research papers handed in by 11:59 PM on November 22 will receive full comments. The absolute final deadline is 11:59 PM on November 29.

** Multiple choice pop quizzes will occur **unpredictably** during class time over the course of the semester. Generally speaking, there will be one or two quizzes around the middle of the course, and one or two around the end. The quizzes are easy grades if you keep up with the readings and pay attention in class. **If you miss more than one pop quiz due to an unexcused absence, you will automatically be deducted a full letter grade.**

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

SCHEDULE

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

Week	Date	Theme & Assignments	Readings
1	August 23	<p>TALKING ABOUT INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND GAMES</p> <p>In class: Introductions, syllabus overview, presentation selection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since you won't have the syllabus before this class, you will have some extra reading to do (just a little, I promise – but it's important to set things up). Make sure to read at least the first three articles listed below before next class (along with the readings for Week 2). • “Speaking of Games” (SZ, 44) • “What is a game?” (SZ, 77) • “What is Play?” (SZ, 83) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roger Caillois, “The Definition of Play: The Classification of Games” (SZ, 122) • Leigh Alexander, “Gaming Made Me: Colossal Cave Adventure” http://www.rockpapershotgun.com/2011/06/04/colossal-cave-review/
2	August 30	<p>PLAY AND PLAYERS</p> <p>Pecha Kucha I Assigned: Game Story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Player Experience” (SZ, 9) • Jesper Juul, “The Game, The Player, The World” http://www.jesperjuul.net/text/gameplayerworld/ • Brian Sutton-Smith, “Play and Ambiguity” (SZ, 296) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johann Huizinga, “Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Phenomenon” (SZ, 96)
3	September 6	<p>RULES AND FORMS</p> <p>Pecha Kucha II</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Rules of a Game” (SZ, 8) • Greg Costikyan, “I Have No Words & I Must Design” (SZ, 192) • Stephen Sniderman, “Unwritten Rules” (SZ, 476) • Robin Hunicke et al, “MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research.” http://www.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/MDA.pdf <p>Recommended:</p> <p>Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXk96RK8qpo</p>

4	September 13	COMPUTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse the various sections of “Bitstory” in The Dot Eaters: http://thedoteaters.com/?page_id=6 • Alexander Galloway, “Gamic Action, Four Moments” pp 1-38 in Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/1536/galloway_ar - gaming - essays on algorithmic culture.pdf
		Pecha Kucha III	<p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Montfort, “Combat in Context” http://gamestudies.org/0601/articles/montfort
5	September 20	NARRATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Jenkins, “Game Design as Narrative Architecture” http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/games&narrative.html (SZ, 670) • Jesper Juul, “Games Telling Stories?” http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/ • Jill Walker, “Distributed Narrative: Telling Stories Across Networks” http://jilltxt.net/txt/Walker-AoIR-3500words.pdf
		Due: Game Story	<p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Costikyan, “Games, Storytelling, and Breaking the String” http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/storyish
6	September 27	SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Game Spaces” (SZ, 64) • Celia Pearce, “Narrative Environments from Disneyland to World of Warcraft” http://remotedevice.net/2b15/pearce-narrative-environments.pdf • Guy Debord, “Theory of the Derive” http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm • Bonnie Ruberg, “Big Reality: A Chat With 'Big Game' Designer Frank Lantz” http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130264/big_reality_a_chat_with_big_.php?print=1
		Pecha Kucha IV	
7	October 4	GUEST SPEAKER TBD	
8	October 11	COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Game Communities” (SZ, 39) • Richard Bartle, Hearts Clubs, Diamonds, Spades: Players who Suit Muds. (SZ, 754) • Edward Castronova, “Virtual Worlds: A First-Hand Account of Market and Society on the Cyberian Frontier” (SZ, 814)
		Pecha Kucha V	

9	October 18	VALUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Flanagan, "Values at Play" http://www.tiltfactor.org/wp-content/uploads2/Values-at-Play.pdf • Ian Bogost, "The Rhetoric of Video Games" http://www.arts.rpi.edu/~ruiz/EGDFall10/readings/RhetoricVideoGames_Bogost.pdf
		Pecha Kucha VI	Recommended:
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augusto Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed
10	October 25	GAME JAM	DO NOT MISS THIS CLASS: please notify us ASAP if you have a conflict.
		Assigned: Research Paper	
11	November 1	GAME JAM PRESENTATIONS	
		Due: Game Jam Presentation	
12	November 8	DIFFERENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse the video interviews at http://valuesatplay.org/ • Tracy Fullerton, et al. "A Game of One's Own: Towards a New Gendered Poetics of Digital Space." http://lmc.gatech.edu/~cpearce3/PearcePubs/LudicADAC07.pdf • Henry Jenkins, "Complete Freedom of Movement: Video Games as Gendered Play Spaces." (SZ, 330-363) • James Gee, "Cultural Models: Do You Want To Be The Blue Sonic or the Dark Sonic?" (SZ, 610-639) • "Cultural Representation" (SZ, 70)
		Pecha Kucha VII	
13	November 15	AESTHETICS OF INTERACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenova Chen, "Flow in Games (and everywhere else)" http://www.jenovachen.com/flowingames/p31-chen.pdf • David Sudnow, "Eyeball and Cathexis" (SZ, 558) • Phillip D. Deen, "Interactivity, Inhabitation and Pragmatist Aesthetics" http://gamestudies.org/1102/articles/deen
		Pecha Kucha VIII	

14	November 22	CRITICAL FUTURES	•
		Pecha Kucha VIV(?)	
		Due: Research Paper	
15	November 29	CONCLUSION & WRAP PARTY	
		Due: Research Paper	

BOILERPLATE

Boilerplate is “any text that is or can be reused in new contexts or applications without being greatly changed from the original” (Wikipedia). That’s what this section contains. If you’ve taken a course at USC before, you’ve probably read much of this material already. If not, find below a set of reminders about important things like plagiarism (don’t do it), attendance (it’s mandatory), disabilities (if you have one, DSP can help you out), citation guidelines (use APA 5th^h edition), our commitment to diversity and safer spaces, and other matters.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

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

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

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook (<http://scampus.usc.edu>), contains

the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

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

Fair Use

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

Citation Guidelines

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

Diversity

In making games and interactive media in a professional and ethical way, it is important that you consider diversity. When looking at your projects, you should consider who is depicted and how this work will impact others. What kinds of individuals and communities are represented in your work? What point of view does your work express? This class will assist you in learning how to make work that includes diverse viewpoints, and may discuss racial, religious, gender and sexual orientation issues in the context of games and interactive media.

Safer Spaces

In this class, we make a commitment to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. This means that we will issue content warnings as appropriate, use preferred pronouns, and respect self-identifications. While debate and discussion are welcome, please remain aware of the implications of your words and the images that you include in your work. If the instructor or another student points out that something you have said or shared with the group might be offensive, avoid being defensive; this is a valuable opportunity for us to grow and learn together. If you have a concern about any aspect of the class, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor. If you feel uncomfortable speaking with the instructor, you are also welcome to speak with either the undergraduate or graduate advisor for the division, who can discuss the issue with

you directly or point you toward other on- and off-campus resources for addressing your concern.

Disruptive Student Behavior

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

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. And here is a secret message, which will earn you a special advantage if you can decode it before midnight, January 18th, 2016: *fraq zr na rznvy jvgu gur fhowrpg yvar "yhfbel nggvghqr" naq lbhe anzr va gur obql bs gur zrffntr*. Please activate your course in Blackboard with access to the course syllabus. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC's Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at <http://blackboard.usc.edu>.

Confidential Resources

USC Center for Work and Family Life
213.821.0800
<http://www.usc.edu/programs/cwfl/>

The center for Work and Family Life offers confidential counseling for faculty and staff, free of charge. Services offered include:

- anxiety, depression, and other mental and emotional problems and disorders
- family and relationship issues
- substance abuse and other addictions
- sexual abuse and domestic violence
- social and emotional difficulties related to disability, illness, relationships

USC Center for Women & Men

For students impacted or affected by gender-based harm, or to discuss issues of healthy relationships, please contact USC Center for Women & Men, which is the home of the Sexual Assault Resource Center (sarc.usc.edu).

The Center for Women & Men offers confidential 24-hour crisis counseling:
business hours: (213) 740-4900
after hours, call the on-call counselor at (213) 321-3982

Other On-Campus Resources (Not Confidential)

USC Department of Public Safety (DPS)
University Park Campus
Emergency: (213) 740-4321
Non-Emergency: (213) 740-6000
Health Sciences Campus
Emergency: (323) 442-1000
Non-Emergency: (323) 442-1000

USC Office of Equity and Diversity (includes Title IX compliance)
University Park Campus: (213) 740-5086
Health Sciences Campus: (323) 442-2020

Off-Campus Resources

Rape Treatment Center at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center

The Rape Treatment Center is nationally recognized for its comprehensive, free treatment for sexual assault victims, including 24-hour emergency medical care. Victim advocacy services available. The Rape Treatment Center offers 24-hour help at (310) 319-4000.

Sex Assault Center within the VIP Urgent Care Center at the LAC+USC Medical Center

2010 Zonal Avenue, Los Angeles (Health Sciences Campus). Victim advocacy services available. Includes 24-hour care. (323) 226-3961.

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

National Sexual Assault Hotline, (800) 656-HOPE(4673)
National Sexual Assault Online Hotline

Peace Over Violence

Peace Over Violence is a nonprofit 501c3, multicultural, community based and volunteer centered organization that offers as 24-hour rape hotline at (213) 626-3393.

BE GOOD TO ONE ANOTHER. WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.