



Course ATCM 4366.001
Course Title Game Studies II:
About and Beside Games
Professor Josef Nguyen
Term Fall 2017
Meetings Wednesdays, 4:00-6:45PM in ATC 2.602

Professor's Contact Information

Office Phone 972-883-7552
Office Location ATC 1.513
Email Address jdn160330@utdallas.edu
Office Hours Mondays and Wednesday, 2:00-3:00PM; and by appointment
Other Information Please allow up to 24 hours for responses to emails
Please do not leave voicemail messages on the office phone

General Course Information

Pre-requisite ATEC 3353/ATCM 3366 – Game Studies I or equivalent class with instructor permission

Course Description This course further develops the analytic, research, and writing skills necessary to engage in the field of critical game studies introduced in Game Studies I. Not simply just sets of rules or material artifacts, games operate as sites to negotiate work and play, equity and fairness, education and development, utopia and dystopia, identity and performance, and creativity and competition, among other social practices and values. Students will analyze a range of media and cultural texts explicitly about games—including films, novels, television shows, academic scholarship, and games themselves—to investigate the meaning-making processes associated with games, gaming practices, and gaming cultures.

Through the readings in this course, students will engage with many scholarly fields to understand how games are invested with and contested in meaning, examining the very idea of games itself. Students will write short analytic papers throughout the semester, document a game space, and submit an in-depth research paper at the end of the term.

Learning Outcomes Students will:

- Become familiar with the field of critical play and game studies, including a range of discussions, methods, and theories for investigating games, gaming practices, and gaming cultures
- Develop proficiencies in situating analyses of discourses about games in their material, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts
- Improve skills in conducting independent research
- Incorporate insights from existing scholarship in play and game studies into their own research

Required Texts & Materials Georges Perec, *W, or the Memory of Childhood* [ISBN: 978-1567921588]
Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* [ISBN: 978-0439023528]
Ernst Cline, *Ready Player One* [ISBN: 978-0307887443]
Cory Doctorow, *For the Win* [ISBN: 978-0765333841]

Joe Johnston, *Jumanji* [film]
 Episodes 1-9, *Pokémon: Indigo League* [television show]*
 John Badham, *WarGames* [film]*
 Paul Owens, *Minecraft: The Story of Mojang* [film]*
 Joe Lynch, *Knights of Badassdom* [film]*
 “Make Love, Not Warcraft,” *South Park* [television show]
 Seth Gordon, *The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters* [film]*

 Tomorrow Corporation, *Little Inferno* [game]

All other texts and materials will be available through the online learning management system. A single copy of each media marked with * is available to check out from the instructor.

Course Policies

Grading Criteria

3 Short critical response papers (500 words each)	30%
Game space documentation and analysis (750 words)	15%
Final research paper (2000-2500 words)	35%
Class participation and discussion	20%

Accommodation

Students with disabilities are encouraged to utilize the on-campus resources at the Office of Student AccessAbility. You can contact the office at 972-883-6104 or by email: studentaccessability@utdallas.edu. Their office is located in the Student Service Building (SSB), suite 3.200. They can provide documentation and details for accommodations to address your individual needs. If you need any special accommodations to complete this course successfully, please provide me with this information as soon as possible, so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Classroom
Citizenship**

It is our responsibility to work together to produce a classroom environment where everyone can share, discuss, and question the materials being discussed respectfully.

Disagreements and conflicting perspectives will unavoidably emerge. To ensure that participants feel comfortable voicing a diverse set of thoughts, comments, and views, we will not tolerate harassment, personal attacks, and other forms of actions and expressions that unduly distract from the educational mission at-hand and inflict emotional, physical, or psychological harm on those involved.

Part of the role of encouraging a diverse learning environment is acknowledging that individuals should feel safe and respected to contribute to the classroom. This involves not only allowing everyone opportunities to contribute their thoughts but to be mindful of how we recognize and address others. Do not assume things about others’ identities, backgrounds, or experiences—whether that is age, race, gender, sexuality, class, etc... Refer to people by the names, pronouns, and other identifiers that they prefer. Avoid insisting on imposing identity markers onto others. Allow people to self-identify as they feel comfortable.

Please discuss with me any concerns you have regarding an unsafe or hostile classroom environment, particularly if something arises that causes distress.

Late Work

Late work will be penalized 10% (a full letter grade) for each 24-hour period beyond the deadline. If you need an extension, let me know well in advance, so we can make arrangements.

Academic Honesty All work must be original for this class. Unless you are specifically told to collaborate with classmates, complete your graded work individually. Plagiarism is using the words and materials of others as if they were your own. It is a serious offense with serious consequences. Use proper citation to indicate the use of other people’s work to support and strengthen your own. All suspicions of plagiarism will be investigated.

For more information on academic honesty, please consult <http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/gspolDishonesty.htm>

Class Attendance Attend class regularly and in full. Any absences should include documentation of a valid excuse (family or medical emergency, for example). Unexcused absences may impact course grades. Discuss upcoming potential absences with me to make appropriate arrangements.

Arriving more than 30 minutes late or leaving more than 30 minutes early, without prior clearance, may be grounds for marking that day as an absence. Failure to prepare for class participation will also be regarded as conditions for an absence.

Technology in the Classroom Laptops and computers can be used in the classroom solely for purposes directly pertinent to the activities and discussions at-hand. Do not use computers for other purposes, including but not limited to idle web-surfing, social media management, and completing work for other courses. The use of cell phones is prohibited during class time. I should not see them on your desk or in your hand at any point. Excessive misuse of technology in the classroom will result in an absence for the day.

Campus Carry For more on campus carry policy, see <http://www.utdallas.edu/campuscarry/>

Comet Creed *This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:*

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures *The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.*

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1: Wednesday, 23 August 2017
About and Beside COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Week 2: Wednesday, 30 August 2017
About Games and Rules Bernard Suits, “Construction of a Definition” and “Triflers, Cheats, and Spoilsports” in *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*
 Jesper Juul, “Video Games and the Classical Game Model” in *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*
 Joe Johnston, *Jumanji* [film]

Week 3: Wednesday, 6 September 2017
About Playing and Cheating Mia Consalvo, “Gaining Advantage,” in *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames*
 Henry Jenkins, “Spoiling *Survivor*: The Anatomy of a Knowledge Community” in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and*

New Media Collide

Episodes 1-9, *Pokémon: Indigo League* [television show]

- Week 4: Wednesday, 13 September 2017**
About Game Histories Patrick Crogan, “From the Military-Industrial to the Military-Entertainment Complex” in *Gameplay Mode: War, Simulation, and Technoculture*
 John Badham, *WarGames* [film]

Sunday, 17 September 2017
Critical response paper 1 (for Weeks 2-4) due @ 5:00PM

- Week 5: Wednesday, 20 September 2017**
About Games and Utopia Bernard Suits, “Resolution” in *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*
 Georges Perec, *W, or the Memory of Childhood* [novel]

- Week 6: Wednesday, 27 September 2017**
About Games and Dystopia Nick Yee, “The Labor of Fun: How Video Games Blur the Boundaries of Work and Play”
 Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* [novel]

- Week 7: Wednesday, 4 October 2017**
About Making Games Nadav Lipkin, “Examining Indie’s Independence: The Meaning of ‘Indie’ Games, the Politics of Production, and Mainstream Cooptation”
 anna anthropology, “Making the Games” in *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters: How Freaks, Normals, Amateurs, Artists, Dreamers, Drop-outs, Queers, Housewives, and People Like You Are Taking Back an Art Form*
 Paolo Perdicini, “A Computerless Videogame Modding Workshop,” [molleindustria.org/blog/a-computerless-videogame-modding-workshop/]
 Paul Owens, *Minecraft: The Story of Mojang* [film]

- Week 8: Wednesday, 11 October 2017**
About Performing Play Josef Nguyen, “Performing as Video Game Players in Let’s Plays” [dx.doi.org/10.3983/twc.2016.0698]
 Geek and Sundry, “Dixit,” *TableTop* hosted by Wil Wheaton [youtube.com/watch?v=J6UlbxeDE0w]
 Joe Lynch, *Knights of Badassdom* [film]

- Week 9: Wednesday, 18 October 2017**
About Practicing Playing T. L. Taylor, “Computer Games as Professional Sport” in *Raising the Stakes: E-Sports and the Professionalization of Computer Gaming*
 The Onion, “Newsroom: Warcraft Sequel Lets You Play A Character Playing Warcraft,” [youtube.com/watch?v=Rw8gE3lnpLQ]
 “Make Love, Not Warcraft,” *South Park* [television show]
 Seth Gordon, *The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters* [film]

Sunday, 22 October 2017

Critical response paper 2 (for Weeks 5-9) due @ 5:00PM

- Week 10: Wednesday, 25 October 2017**
About Game Spaces
- Henry Jenkins, "Complete Freedom of Movement: Video Games and Gendered Play" in *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games* (edited by Justine Cassell and Henry Jenkins)
- Carly Kocurek, "The Microcosmic Arcade: Playing at the Cultural Vanguard" in *Coin-Operated Americans: Rebooting Boyhood at the Video Game Arcade*
- Bonnie Nardi, "Culture: WoW in China... and North America" in *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*
- Eric Grundhauser, "How to be Cool (According to a Video Game Magazine From 1982)" [atlasobscura.com/articles/how-to-be-cool-according-to-a-video-game-magazine-from-1982]

- Week 11: Wednesday, 1 November 2017**
About Games in the Wild
- NO CLASS - WORK ON GAME SPACE ASSIGNMENT**

Sunday, 5 November 2017

Game space documentation and analysis due @5:00PM

- Week 12: Wednesday, 8 November 2017**
About Game Nostalgia
- Carly Kocurek, "The Arcade is Dead, Long Live the Arcade: Nostalgia in an Era of Ubiquitous Computing" in *Coin-Operated Americans: Rebooting Boyhood at the Video Game Arcade*
- Ernest Cline, *Ready Player One* [novel]

- Week 13: Wednesday, 15 November 2017**
About Game Collecting
- Steven Jones, "Collecting *Katamari Damacy*" in *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*
- WatchMojo, "Top 10 Stupidest Ways to Die in a Video Game" [[youtube.com/watch?v=_kpx_z2kg7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kpx_z2kg7s)]
- Feminist Frequency, "Damsel in Distress: Part 1 – Tropes vs Women in Video Games" [[youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r_Q)]
- LGBTQ Video Game Archive [lgbtqgamearchive.com/]
- Co-Optimus: Your Prime Source for Co-Op Gaming [co-optimus.com/]

THANKSGIVING WEEK **Wednesday, 22 November 2017**
NO CLASS

- Week 14: Wednesday, 29 November 2017**
About Game Products
- Nick Dyer-Witheyford and Greig de Peuter, "Exodus: The Metaverse and the Mines" in *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*
- Tomorrow Corporation, *Little Inferno* [game]

Week 15: Wednesday, 6 December 2017
About Game Worlds Lisa Nakamura, "Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game: The Racialization of Labor in *World of Warcraft*"
Cory Doctorow, *For the Win* [novel]

Sunday, 10 December 2017
Critical response paper 3 (for Weeks 12-15) due @ 5:00PM

Finals Week NO CLASS MEETING
Research papers due by 11:59PM on Thursday, 14 December 2017

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.