



Course ATCM 4395.001
Course Title Advanced Topics in Arts, Technology, and Emerging Media: Games and Social Justice
Professor Josef Nguyen
Term Fall 2018
Meetings Mondays, 4:00-6:45PM in ATC 2.918

Professor's Contact Information

Office Phone 972-883-7552
Office Location ATC 1.513
Email Address jdn160330@utdallas.edu
Please consult this resource for proper email etiquette:
medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087
Office Hours 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-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions ATEC 3353 - Game Studies, or
EMAC 2322 - Theories of Emerging Media and Communication, or
ATCM 3366 - Game Studies I, or
ATCM 2321 - Reading Media Critically, or
Instructor Permission

Course Description This course investigates how games are always political—both as artifacts of as well as opportunities for reimagining existing socioeconomic, material, and cultural forces. Students will play and analyze a range of games while paying attention to uneven distributions of power, violence, opportunity, and care across individual and structural differences. Students will also develop their own interventions by pursuing original research projects, game designs, and other cultural productions informed by commitments to social justice.

Learning Outcomes Students will:

- Become familiar with discussions, methods, and theories for investigating games, gaming practices, and social justice
- Advance proficiencies in critical game design and game studies
- Incorporate insights from existing scholarship in game studies and in social justice into their own research and creative practice
- Integrate both theory- and practice-based knowledges
- Explore and participate in the work of critical, political, activist, and art games

Required Texts & Materials Lucas Pope, *Papers, Please*, [papersplea.se]
Toby Fox, *Undertale*, [undertale.com]
Aether Interactive, *LOCALHOST*, [aetherinteractive.itch.io/localhost]

All readings, free games, and other materials will be available online

through the learning management system.

Course Policies

Grading Criteria

3 Critical game analyses (roughly 500 words each)	30%
Intervention proposals (3 pitches)	10%
Final project (research paper, critically-designed game, or other game-related intervention)	35%
Class participation and discussion	25%

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 at hand as well as create and contribute their own work respectfully and productively.

Disagreements and conflicting perspectives will, unavoidably, emerge. To ensure that participants feel comfortable contributing a diverse set of thoughts, comments, and views, we will not use oppressive or harmful language, tolerate harassment, personal attacks, and other forms of actions and expressions that unduly distract from the educational mission 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 in good faith. 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, ability, class, etc... Refer to people by their names, pronouns, and other identifiers that they disclose. Avoid insisting on imposing identity markers onto others. Allow people to self-identify as they feel comfortable.

What you discuss in, create for, and share with this class reflects not only you as both a student and a civic subject, but it also reflects on me as your instructor, the class as a learning community, and UT Dallas as an academic institution.

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 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 (such as not having done the necessary reading) 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 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 go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies for these policies.*

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1: Monday, 20 August 2018

Beginnings Course introduction

Week 2: Monday, 27 August 2018

Uneven Differences Read:

Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
Ed Chang, “Cards against Humanity Is ___: Playing with and Playing up
Difference in Games,” [firstpersonscholar.com/cards-against-humanity-is/]

Play:

Project Implicit, choose and take at least 3 of these tests: Gender-Career IAT; Sexuality IAT; Race IAT; Disability IAT; Weight IAT; Age IAT, [implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html]

Week 3: Monday, 3 September 2018

NO CLASS IN OBSERVANCE OF LABOR DAY

Week 4: Monday, 10 September 2018

Thinking Social Justice Read:

Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color”

Nancy Fraser, “Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation”

Paul Kuttner, “The Problem with that Equity vs. Equality Graphic You’re Using,” [culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/]

Play:

Lucas Pope, *Papers, Please*, [papersplea.se/]

Week 5: Monday, 17 September 2018

Thinking about Games

Read:

Jane McGonigal, “What Exactly is a Game?,” *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*

Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum, “Groundwork for Values at Play” and “Uncovering Values at Play,” *Values at Play in Digital Games*

Play:

Molleindustria, *Unmanned*, [unmanned.molleindustria.org/]

Peter Brinson and Kurosh ValaNejad, *The Cat and the Coup*, [thecatandthecoup.com/]

Week 6: Monday, 24 September 2018

Gamers and Non-Gamers*

Read:

Janine Fron, Tracy Fullerton, Jacquelyn Ford Morie, and Celia Pearce, “The Hegemony of Play”

Adrienne Shaw, “On Not Becoming Gamers: Moving Beyond the Constructed Audience,” [adanewmedia.org/2013/06/issue2-shaw/]

Chloe Spencer, “The *Undertale* Drama,” [kotaku.com/the-undertale-drama-1798159975]

Play:

Toby Fox, *Undertale*, [undertale.com/]

Week 7: Monday, 1 October 2018

Gender and Sexuality*

Read:

Justine Cassell and Henry Jenkins, “Chess for Girls? Feminism and Computer Games,” *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games*

Amanda Phillips, “Welcome to MY Fantasy Zone: *Bayonetta* and Queer Femme Disturbance,” *Queer Game Studies* (eds. Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw)

Play:

Carly A. Kocurek and Allyson Whipple, *Choice: Texas*, [playchoicetexas.com/]

Porpentine, *Cry\$tal Warrior Ke\$ha*, [aliendovecote.com/uploads/twine/kesha.html]

Nicky Case, *Coming Out Simulator 2014*, [ncase.itch.io/coming-out-simulator-2014]

Mattie Brice, *Mainichi*, [mattiebrice.com/mainichi/]

Week 8: Monday, 8 October 2018

Ability and Disability*

Read:

Tobin Siebers, "Introduction," *Disability Theory*
Gerard Goggin and Christopher Newell, "Disability in Its Social Context," *Digital Disability: The Social Construction of Disability in New Media*

Play:

Meeple Like Us, [meeplelikeus.co.uk/]
Bennett Foddy, *QWOP*, [foddy.net/Athletics.html]
Find and play a one-button game (examples include *Flappy Bird* (dotGears) and *Geometry Dash* (Robert Topala))
Find and play an audio game, [audiogames.net/]

Week 9: Monday, 15 October 2018

Control, Consent, and Care*

Read:

Janet Murray, "Agency," *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*
Aaron Trammell and Emma Waldron, "Playing for Intimacy: Love, Lust, and Desire in the Pursuit of Embodied Design," *Rated M for Mature: Sex and Sexuality in Video Games* (eds. Matthew Wysocki and Evan Lauteria)

Play:

Robert Yang, *Hurt Me Plenty*, [radiatoryang.itch.io/hurt-me-plenty]
Jimmy Andrews and Loren Schmidt, *Realistic Kissing Simulator*, [jimmylands.com/experiments/kissing/]
Aether Interactive, *LOCALHOST*, [aetherinteractive.itch.io/localhost]

Week 10: Monday, 22 October 2018

Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality*

Read:

Tanner Higgin, "Blackless Fantasy: The Disappearance of Race in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games"
David J. Leonard, "High Tech Blackface: Race, Sports Video Games and Becoming the Other"
Evan W. Lauteria, "Affective Structuring and the Role of Race and Nation in *XCOM*," [analoggamestudies.org/2016/01/affective-structuring-and-the-role-of-race-and-nation-in-xcom/]

Play:

Molleindustria, *Phone Story*, [phonestory.org]
Bring example of a custom character creator from a digital game (game, video footage, screenshots, other records)

Week 11: Monday, 29 October 2018

Blurring and Bending*

Read:

Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*
Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New

Consciousness,” *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Play:

micha cárdenas, *Redshift & Portalmetal*, [micharoja.itch.io/redshift-and-portalmetal]

Week 12: Monday, 5 November 2018

**Devising
Interventions**

Read:

Amanda Phillips, “Game Studies for Great Justice,” *The Routledge Companion to Media Studies and Digital Humanities* (ed. Jenterey Sayers)

Bring three pitches for interventions to share and workshop

Suggested Resources:

anna anthropology, “Making the Games,” *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters*
Marc C. Barlet and Steven D. Spohn, “Includification: A Practical Guide to Accessibility,” The AbleGamers Foundation,
[includification.com/AbleGamers_Includification.pdf]

Game Accessibility Guidelines, “Game Accessibility Guidelines,”
[gameaccessibilityguidelines.com/]

“How to Do a Let’s Play: 13 Steps (with Pictures),” wikiHow,
[wikihow.com/Do-a-Let's-Play]

Let’s Play Social Justice, Explanatory Pages and Several Posts tagged with #letsplayers, [letsplaysocialjustice.tumblr.com/]

Mohini Dutta, “Designing for the Other: Serious Games, Its Challenges, and Mindful Play,” [firstpersonscholar.com/designing-for-the-other/]

Week 13: Monday, 12 November 2018

**In-Progress
Workshop #1**

First half of students update/workshop their interventions

Week 14: Monday, 19 November 2018

**In-Progress
Workshop #2**

Second half of students update/workshop their interventions

**Monday, 26 November 2018
NO CLASS FOR FALL BREAK**

Week 15: Monday, 3 December 2018

**Passing and
Precarity**

Young Horses, *Octodad: Dadliest Catch*,

[octodadgame.com/octodad/dadliest-catch/]

(You do not need to purchase a copy or play before class)

Finals Week Monday, 10 December 2018

NO CLASS MEETING

Interventions due by 11:59PM*

*Contact instructor to make arrangements for non-digital submissions

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.