



Course ATCM 6342.501
Course Title Experimental Games Studio
Professor Josef Nguyen
Term Spring 2018
Meetings Tuesdays, 7:00-9:45PM in ATC 3.914

Professor's Contact Information

Office Phone 972-883-7552
Office Location ATC 1.513
Email Address jdn160330@utdallas.edu
Office Hours By appointment; request via email
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 Instructor permission to add

Course Description Experimental Games Studio is a critical production-oriented course interested in exploring how games and toys can be both the platform/medium for and the topic of conceptual, experimental, and politically-engaged art practices. In this course, students will analyze a range of existing experimental art about, informed by, and made from game and play technologies.

The ultimate aim is for students to create their own game-related experimental art projects to exhibit at the end of the semester in a class show. Students do not necessarily need to make or program an experimental game for the course, but they will need to engage critically with games, toys, and/or play in their own original experimental art practice--which can include performance art, speculative design, culture jamming, critical modding, and other practices that will be discussed as frameworks throughout the semester.

Students will complete short writing assignments analyzing existing experimental game projects, pitch three experimental game prototypes, and develop an experimental game project for exhibition in a cohesive class show at the end of the term.

Learning Outcomes Students will:

- Become familiar with frameworks for engaging with games, toys, and play through critical, experimental, and political art practices
- Develop their own original experimental game projects
- Organize a cohesive end-of-term show to exhibit their original game projects as a group

Required Texts & Materials All assigned texts and materials will be available online through the learning management system.

Course Policies

Grading Criteria	2 Curatorial papers (1000 words each; 4 opportunities)	20%
	3 Experimental game prototype presentations	25%
	Class participation and discussion	15%
	Final project (workshop presentations, exhibition, artist statement)	40%

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. For an extension, let me know in advance to 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 will 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	<i>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:</i> <i>“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”</i>
UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures	<i>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.</i>

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1: Tuesday, 9 January 2018

COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Game Projects:

Feng Mengbo, *Long March: Restart*:

[moma.org/explore/inside_out/2010/02/04/new-acquisition-feng-mengbos-long-march-restart/]

[youtube.com/watch?v=tUhMPfMGwRA]

Myfanwy Ashmore, *Super Mario Trilogy*:

[gamescenes.org/2010/12/game-art-myfanwy-ashmores-super-mario-trilogy-2010.html]

Alexander Galloway, *RSG-SMB-TAB How to Win Super Mario*:

[artport.whitney.org/gatepages/artists/galloway/]

Josh Millard, *Ennuigi*:

[lexaloffle.com/bbs/?tid=2232]

Setz, *Communist Mario*:

[romhacking.net/hacks/2365/]

Cory Arcangel, *Super Mario Clouds*:

[coryarcangel.com/things-i-made/2002-001-super-mario-clouds]

Patrick LeMieux, *Coin Heaven*:

[patrick-lemieux.com/projects/Aftermarket/04.php]

Patrick LeMieux, *Brothers*:

[patrick-lemieux.com/projects/Aftermarket/05.php]

Jarrad “Farbs” Woods, *ROM CHECK FAIL*:

[farbs.org/romcheckfail.php]

Week 2: Tuesday, 16 January 2018

Assignment:

Bring an original experimental game prototype or design related to *Super Mario Bros.* to present to the class

Week 3: Tuesday, 23 January 2018

Game Projects:

Backburner, *Statbuilder*:

[newgrounds.com/portal/view/455825]

Erik Frederickson, *Progress Quest*:

[progressquest.com/]

Petri Purho, Heather Kelley, and Jonathan Söderström, *4 Minutes and 33 Seconds of Uniqueness*:

[archive.globalgamejam.org/games/4-minutes-and-33-seconds-uniqueness]

Jesper Juul, *4:32*:

[jesperjuul.net/4.32/]

Marina Abramović and Pippin Barr, *The Artist is Present*:

[pippinbarr.com/games/theartistispresent/TheArtistIsPresent.html]

Robert Yang, *Hurt Me Plenty*:

[radiatoryang.itch.io/hurt-me-plenty]

Robert Yang, *Rinse and Repeat*:

[radiatoryang.itch.io/rinseandrepeat]

Cory Arcangel, *Beat the Champ*:

[vimeo.com/21398744]

[theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/feb/09/cory-arcangel-barbican-exhibition]

Brenda Romero, *Train* (from the “Mechanic is the Message” series):

[brenda.games/train/]

[venturebeat.com/2013/05/11/brenda-romero-train-board-game-holocaust/]

Alberto Giacometti, *Circuit*:

[raws.adc.rmit.edu.au/~e57593/lesson09/giacometti_Circuit.JPG]

[centrepompidou.fr/cpv/resource/cGeBgp/r4bA5b7]

Related Readings:

Mary Flanagan, “Designing for Critical Play”

Bonnie Ruberg, “No Fun: The Queer Potential of Games that Annoy, Anger, Disappoint, Sadden, and Hurt”

Philip Agre, “Notes toward a Critical Technical Practice”

Assignment:

First opportunity for curatorial paper

Week 4: Tuesday, 30 January 2018

Game Projects:

Takako Saito, Chess series:

Sound Chess: [moma.org/collection/works/128119?locale=en]

Nut & Bolt Chess:

[moma.org/collection/works/127354?locale=en]

Smell Chess, Liquids:

[moma.org/collection/works/130571?locale=en]

Spice Chess: [moma.org/collection/works/131553?locale=en]

Weight Chess: [moma.org/collection/works/131554?locale=en]

Mary Flanagan, [*giantJoystick*]:

[maryflanagan.com/work/giant-joystick/]

SF Media Lab, *Joydick*:

[sfmedialabs.com/the-joydick/]

Cory Arcangel, *I Shot Andy Warhol*:

[coryarcangel.com/things-i-made/2002-002-i-shot-andy-warhol]

Julian Oliver, *levelHead*:

[julianoliver.com/levelhead/]

Interpretive Arson, *Dance Dance Immolation*:

[interpretivearson.com/projects/ddi/]

//////////fur//// art entertainment interfaces, *Painstation*:

[painstation.de/]

Edo Stern, *Torture Tekken*:

[eddostern.com/works/tekken-torture-tournament/]

Imagineering, *Desert Bus* mini-game from *Penn & Teller's Smoke and Mirrors*:

[gamesetwatch.com/2006/03/penn_jillette_discusses_unrele.php]

[polygon.com/2013/7/10/4510388/why-teller-created-desert-bus-the-worst-video-game-in-history]

Christian Moeller, *Cheese*:

[christianmoeller.com/Cheese]

Related Readings:

Rital Raley, "Introduction: Tactical Media as Virtuosoic Performance" in *Tactical Media*

Michel de Certeau, "General Introduction" in *The Practice of Everyday Life*

Douglas Wilson and Miguel Sicart, "Now It's Personal: On Abusive Game Design"

Assignment:

Second opportunity for curatorial paper

Week 5: Tuesday, 6 February 2018

Assignment:

Bring an original experimental game prototype or design informed by critical play, no fun, critical technical practice, tactical media, and/or abusive design to present to the class

Week 6: Tuesday, 13 February 2018

Game Projects:

Julian Oliver, *ioq3aPaint*:

[julianoliver.com/ioq3apaint/]

Orhan Kipcak and Reini Urban, *Ars Doom*:

[youtube.com/watch?v=w9r_f8un3NE]

Mary Flanagan, [*pile of secrets*]:

[maryflanagan.com/work/pile-of-secrets/]

Joseph de Lappe, *Dead-in-Iraq*:

[delappe.net/project/dead-in-iraq/]

Wafaa Bilal, *Domestic Tension*:

[wafaabilal.com/domestic-tension/]

Anne-Marie Schleiner, *Operation Urban Terrain (OUT): A Live Action Wireless Gaming Urban Intervention*:

[\[opencore.net/OUT/index.htm\]](https://opencore.net/OUT/index.htm)

Natalie Jeremijenko, *Feral Robotic Dogs*:

[\[nyu.edu/projects/xdesign/feralrobots/\]](https://nyu.edu/projects/xdesign/feralrobots/)

xline burrough, *Mechanical Olympics*:

[\[mechanicalolympics.org/\]](https://mechanicalolympics.org/)

Twitch, *Twitch Plays Pokémon*:

[\[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitch_Plays_Pok%C3%A9mon\]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitch_Plays_Pok%C3%A9mon)

[\[dorkly.com/post/59505/the-majesty-of-twitch-plays-pokemon\]](https://dorkly.com/post/59505/the-majesty-of-twitch-plays-pokemon)

[\[youtube.com/watch?v=aG2Dc2bp4oU\]](https://youtube.com/watch?v=aG2Dc2bp4oU)

@BobRossSRL, *Bob Ross Speedruns*:

[\[go.twitch.tv/videos/187561276\]](https://go.twitch.tv/videos/187561276)

Related Readings:

Matt Ratto, “Textual Doppelgangers: Critical Issues in the Study of Technology”

Mark Dery, “Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs,”

[\[project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/culture_jamming.html\]](https://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/culture_jamming.html)

Claire Bishop, “Participation and Spectacle: Where Are We Now?”

Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye, and Michael Shanks, “Introduction: Archaeologies of Presence”

Assignment:

Third opportunity for curatorial paper

Week 7: Tuesday, 20 February 2018

Game Projects:

Christian Croft and Kate Harman, *Energy Dérive Shoes*:

[\[xncroft.com/Energy-Harvesting-Derive\]](https://xncroft.com/Energy-Harvesting-Derive)

xline burrough, *Walk on Wire*:

[\[misconceptions.net/walk-on-wire/\]](https://misconceptions.net/walk-on-wire/)

NYU Interactive Telecommunications Graduate Program, *Pac Manhattan*:

[\[pacmanhattan.com\]](https://pacmanhattan.com)

Blast Theory, *Uncle Roy All around You*:

[\[blasttheory.co.uk/projects/uncle-roy-all-around-you/\]](https://blasttheory.co.uk/projects/uncle-roy-all-around-you/)

Blast Theory, *Can You See Me Now?*:

[\[blasttheory.co.uk/projects/can-you-see-me-now/\]](https://blasttheory.co.uk/projects/can-you-see-me-now/)

[\[blasttheory.co.uk/projects/can-you-see-me-now-installation/\]](https://blasttheory.co.uk/projects/can-you-see-me-now-installation/)

Jörg Lukas Matthaei, *Thresholdland: An Expatriation in Ten Days*:

[\[matthaei-und-konsorten.de/en/projekte/schwellenland/\]](https://matthaei-und-konsorten.de/en/projekte/schwellenland/)

Garnet Hertz, Will Odom, et al. *Slow Game*:

[\[conceptlab.com/slowgame/\]](https://conceptlab.com/slowgame/)

The Onion, “‘Warcraft’ Sequel Lets Gamers Play a Character Playing ‘Warcraft’”:

[\[theonion.com/video/warcraft-sequel-lets-gamers-play-a-character-playi-14240\]](https://theonion.com/video/warcraft-sequel-lets-gamers-play-a-character-playi-14240)

The Onion, “Hot New Video Game Consists Solely Of Shooting People Point-Blank In The Face”:

[\[entertainment.theonion.com/hot-new-video-game-consists-solely-of-shooting-people-p-1819594804\]](https://entertainment.theonion.com/hot-new-video-game-consists-solely-of-shooting-people-p-1819594804)

Joe Lindley and Paul Coulton, *Game of Drones*:
[[youtube.com/watch?v=6b_30d7yW2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6b_30d7yW2s)]

Related Readings:

Guy Debord, “The Theory of the Dérive,”

[cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html]

Michel de Certeau, “Walking the City” in *The Practice of Everyday Life*

Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, “Designer as Author” in *Design Noir: The Secret Life of Electronic Objects*

Patrick Jagoda, “Gamification and Other Uses of Play”

Assignment:

Fourth opportunity for curatorial paper

Week 8: Tuesday, 27 February 2018

Assignment:

Bring an original experimental game prototype or design informed by participatory and performance art, critical making, culture jamming, dérive, and/or critical and speculative design to present to the class

Week 9: Tuesday, 6 March 2018

WORKSHOP CYCLE 1, PART 1

SPRING BREAK: Tuesday, 13 March 2018

NO CLASS MEETING

Week 10: Tuesday, 20 March 2018

WORKSHOP CYCLE 1, PART 2

Week 11: Tuesday, 27 March 2018

Exhibition planning

Optional workshop opportunity

Week 12: Tuesday, 3 April 2018

WORKSHOP CYCLE 2, PART 1

Week 13: Tuesday, 10 April 2018

WORKSHOP CYCLE 2, PART 2

Week 14: Tuesday, 17 April 2018

Exhibition preparation

Optional workshop opportunity

Week 15: Tuesday, 24 April 2018

Exhibition night

Finals Week Monday, 7 May 2018

Final projects and creative statements due by 11:59PM

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