



Course ATCM 6357.001
Course Title Virtual Worlds and Communities
Professor Josef Nguyen
Term Spring 2019
Meetings Wednesdays, 4:00-6:45PM in ATC 1.801b

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:
[\[medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087\]](https://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 ATCM 6336 – Critical Game Studies, or Instructor Permission

Course Description Rather than conceive of “virtuality” as simply that which is “immaterial,” “digital,” or otherwise conceived of as “unreal,” this seminar draws on understandings of “virtuality” as that which is emergent, alternative, and possible. This course investigates worlds and communities as practices, relations, and arrangements that are in the midst of becoming—that is, coming into being. To do so, this course explores theories and frameworks for investigating collective practices of worldmaking and community formation from a range of fields, including media studies, cultural geography, anthropology, political theory, science and technology studies, and literary criticism. Central to the course’s conceptualization of virtuality and worldmaking are insights from queer theory (as queerness offers potential for thinking possibility, sideways, and otherwise to normativity, convention, and socially sanctioned reality) as well as studies of games and play (as spatial and temporal practices of generating and regulating virtuality). Readings will cover a range of topics, including virtuality, utopia, escapism, fantasy, speculation, and dreaming.

Students will complete a midterm synthesis paper and work toward a research paper, which will involve composing a proposal, annotated bibliography, and final term paper in addition to a conference-style presentation as part of a class symposium.

Learning Outcomes Students will:

- Understand a range of theories and frameworks for investigating collective worldmaking and community formation
- Become familiar with work in both queer theory as well as play and game studies
- Integrate existing scholarship into their own original research with awareness of the concerns of academic publishing

Required Texts & Materials

Stephen Duncombe, *Dream: Re-imagining Progressive Politics in the Age of Fantasy* (ISBN: 9781595580498), [stephenduncombe.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Dream_final.pdf]

Gary Alan Fine, *Shared Fantasy: Role-Playing Games as Social Worlds* (ISBN: 9780226249445)

Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (ISBN: 9780822335139)

Alexis Lothian, *Old Futures: Speculative Fiction and Queer Possibility* (ISBN: 9781479825851)

José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (ISBN: 9780814757284)

Bonnie Ruberg, *Video Games Have Always Been Queer* (ISBN: 9781479843749)

micha cárdenas, *Dilating Destiny* [micharoja.itch.io/dilating-destiny]

All other readings, games, and other materials will be available free online through this link: [<https://utdallas.app.box.com/v/atcm6357>]

Course Policies

Grading Criteria

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Class Participation and Discussion | 25% |
| Midterm Synthesis Assignment | 25% |
| Final Research Paper and Presentation | 50% |
| -Abstract (5%) | |
| -Annotated Bibliography (5%) | |
| -Symposium Presentation (10%) | |
| -Final Paper (30%) | |

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 [\[utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/gspolDishonesty.htm\]](http://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 tasks, 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 [\[utdallas.edu/campuscarry/\]](http://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 [\[go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies\]](http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies) for these policies.*

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1: Wednesday, 16 January 2019

Virtuality / Emergence Gilles Deleuze, "The Actual and the Virtual," in *Dialogues* (ed. Claire Parinet)
---, "Immanence: A Life," in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*
Raymond Williams, "Dominant, Residual, and Emergent" and "Structure of Feeling," in *Marxism and Literature*
Shaka McGlotten, "Introduction" and "Intimacies in the Multi(player)verse," in *Virtual Intimacies: Media, Affect, and Queer Sociality*

OPTIONAL READING: Aubrey Anable, "Introduction: Video Games as Structures of Feeling," in *Playing with Feelings: Video Games and Affect*

Week 2: Wednesday, 23 January 2019

Utopia / Escape Bernard Suits, "Resolution," in *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia*
Yi-Fu Tuan, "Hell" and "Heaven," in *Escapism*
Ed Chang, "Cards against Humanity Is ___: Playing with and Playing up Difference in Games," [firstpersonscholar.com/cards-against-humanity-is/]
Sawyer Kemp, "Escape Rooms and the Seductive Ubiquity of Capture," [analoggamestudies.org/2017/11/escape-rooms-and-the-seductive-ubiquity-of-capture/]
Tanner Higgin, "Blackless Fantasy: The Disappearance of Race in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games"

OPTIONAL READING: Frederic Jameson, "Varieties of the Utopian," in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*

Week 3: Wednesday, 30 January 2019

Case Study in Fantasy / Reality Gary Alan Fine, *Shared Fantasy: Role-Playing Games as Social Worlds*
micha cárdenas, *Dilating Destiny*, [micharoja.itch.io/dilating-destiny]

Week 4: Wednesday, 6 February 2019

Queer / Sex Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *Culture, Society, and Sexuality* (eds. Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton)
Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic; The Erotic as Power," in *Sexualities and Communication in Everyday Life* (eds. Karen E. Lovaas, Mercilee M. Jenkins)
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Epistemology of the Closet," in *Epistemology of the Closet*
Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public"
Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw, "Introduction: Imagining Queer Game Studies," in *Queer Game Studies* (eds. Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw)

OPTIONAL READING: Lee Edelman, "The Future Is Kid Stuff," in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*

Week 5: Wednesday, 13 February 2019

Case Study in History / Future José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*
Robert Yang, *The Tea Room*, [radiatoryang.itch.io/the-tearoom]

Week 6: Wednesday, 20 February 2019

Community / Public Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*
Benedict Anderson, "Cultural Roots" and "The Origins of National Consciousness," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*
Nancy Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World," in *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere* (ed. Kate Nash)
Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics (Abbreviated Version)"
Alexandrina Agloro, "An Alternate Reality Game, Participatory Politics, and the Color of Civic Engagement,"
[public.imaginingamerica.org/blog/article/an-alternate-reality-game-participatory-politics-and-the-color-of-civic-engagement/]

OPTIONAL READING: Chris Kelty, "Geeks and Recursive Publics," in *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software*

Week 7: Wednesday, 27 February 2019

Case Study in Personal / Political Stephen Duncombe, *Dream: Re-imagining Progressive Politics in the Age of Fantasy*, [stephenduncombe.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Dream_final.pdf]
Porpentine, *Cry\$tal Warrior Ke\$ha*,
[aliendovecote.com/uploads/twine/kesha.html]

Week 8: Wednesday, 6 March 2019

Worldmaking / Mimesis Erich Auerbach, "Odysseus' Scar," in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*
Seo-Young Chu, "Introduction: Lyric Mimesis," in *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep? A Science-fictional Theory of Representation*
Thomas Kuhn, "Introduction: A Role for History," "The Route to Normal Science," "The Nature of Normal Science," "Normal Science as Puzzle-solving," "The Priority of Paradigms," and "Anomaly and the Emergence of Scientific Discoveries," in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*
Brian Moeran, "Magical System," in *The Magic of Fashion: Ritual, Commodity, Glamour*
Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*

OPTIONAL READING: Mikhail Bakhtin, "Introduction," in *Rabelais and His World*

Week 9: Wednesday, 13 March 2019
NO CLASS MEETING Midterm Synthesis Assignment Due Online by 7:00PM

NO CLASS MEETING **18-24 March 2019**
Spring Break

Week 10: Wednesday, 27 March 2019
Research Proposals Abstracts Due Online and in Class

Week 11: Wednesday, 3 April 2019
Case Study in Past / Possible Alexis Lothian, *Old Futures: Speculative Fiction and Queer Possibility*
Anna Anthropy, *Queers in Love at the End of the World*, [w.itch.io/end-of-the-world]

Week 12: Wednesday, 10 April 2019
Case Study in Kinship / Diaspora Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*
micha cárdenas, *Redshift & Portalmetal*, [micharoja.itch.io/redshift-and-portalmetal]

Week 13: Wednesday, 17 April 2019
NO CLASS MEETING Annotated Bibliography Due Online by 7:00PM

Week 14: Wednesday, 24 April 2019
Case Study in Play / Power Bo Ruberg, *Video Games Have Always Been Queer*
Mattie Brice, *Mainichi*, [mattiebrice.com/mainichi]

Week 15: Wednesday, 1 May 2019
Course Symposium Paper Presentation Due

Finals Week **Saturday, 11 May 2019**
Final Research Paper Due Online by 5:00PM

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