

Game 230: History of Computer Games

3 Credit Hours
Fall 2015
Online
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Office Hours: By Appointment
Office: None (Remote Adjunct)

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive survey of the history of video games. The class begins by exploring ancient games, early mechanical novelty machines, pinball and computers. The bulk of the class examines arcade games, modern console games, and game hardware. This class will detail the people, the technology, and the companies that have made video games the multi-billion dollar industry that it is today. Hands-on study and analysis will include writing about, discussing, and playing games past and present.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will:

- [A] Have a broad understanding of the significant early video games
- [B] Be able to identify the advances in the technologies that shaped the games industry
- [C] Be able to write effectively about the history of computer games/video games
- [D] Be able to identify and discuss key persons in computer gaming history
- [E] Understand the lineage of notable companies and games in the game industry

Requirements and Evaluation

Due to its online nature, participation is a major part of this class. We will play, analyze, and discuss video games, hardware, and peripherals. Students should be prepared to discuss the games and assigned readings on a weekly basis. In order to have a successful class experience, we must maintain a non-competitive environment. Posting in the forums, posting videos of your responses to questions, screen captures of your gameplay, writing chapter summaries, and papers will be the bulk of your experience.

Each student is required to write a research paper about a topic of their choosing. Students are encouraged to consider two important notes on their research papers:

1. Choose a topic in which there is ample information.
2. Choose a topic that is interesting to you and would like to learn more about.

The course work will help guide you through the research paper process.

Required Texts and Materials

Tristan Donovan. (2010). *Replay: The history of video games*. Yellow Ant.

Grading

Grading will be based upon a combination of activities. The bulk of your grade will be your Final Research Paper, which you will work on throughout the course. Participation in the weekly course discussions and class activities online are also a big aspect of your grade followed closely by the mid-term examination and quizzes.

Final Research Paper	35%
Participation	30%
Midterm Examination	20%
Quizzes:	15%

GMU Add/Drop Policy

The last day to drop this class with no tuition liability is [insert date here]. It is the student's responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled as no credit will be awarded to students who are not.

Honor Code, Copyright, & Computing Policies

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

You are expected to adhere to all University policies and guidelines during your participation in this course. All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of others is a George Mason University Honor Code violation. Please review the University's website for information on following: Honor Code and Judicial Procedures; Copyright/Fair Use; and Responsible Use of Computing.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, and the specific accommodation will be arranged through the Disability Resource Center.

You are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu> . An emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises and that further information about emergency procedures exists on <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert> .

University Libraries

University Libraries provides resources for distance students. Please see <http://library.gmu.edu/distance> and http://infoguides.gmu.edu/distance_students.

Writing Center

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services

The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (Visit: <http://caps.gmu.edu>).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. For more information, please visit <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>.

Course Outline and Class Schedule

The outline and schedule are subject to change. All students will be notified when changes are to be made.

Discussions: Every week we will have discussion topics in the forums. Discussions may involve playing a game, quick topic research, or video analysis. It is expected that students make initial responses by Wednesday evenings at 11:59pm EST. You have until the end of the week to make two *substantial* responses to your fellow classmates' posts. Failure to post your initial response in time will result in half credit for participation that week.

Session # and Dates	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 Aug 31 - Sept 5	Ancient Games and Pinball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 1-2 ● Watch: Rise of the Video Game: Level 1
Week 2 Sept 7 - 12	Bringing Games Into the Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 3-5 ● Research Paper: Submit your research topic (<i>due September 12</i>)
Week 3 Sept 14 - 19	Console Gaming Boom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 6-7 ● Watch: Rise of the Video Game: Level 2 ● Quiz 1 (<i>covering Weeks 1-3</i>)
Week 4 Sept 21 - 26	Controversy in Gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapter 8 ● Research Paper: Submit your outline (<i>due September 26</i>)
Week 5 Sept 28 - Oct 3	Video Games on the World Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 9-10 ● Watch: Rise of the Video Game: Level 3 ● Quiz 2 (<i>covering Weeks 4-5</i>)
Week 6 Oct 5 - Oct 10	Enter the Macintosh and Nintendo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 11-14
Week 7 Oct 12 - Oct 17	From Sims to Tetris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 15-16 ● Midterm Examination (<i>covers topics from Weeks 1 through 6</i>)
Week 8 Oct 19 - Oct 24	Sonic Enters the Arena & Additional Controversy in USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 17-18 ● Watch: Rise of the Video Game: Level 4
Week 9 Oct 26 - Oct 31	CD-ROMS (<i>those things you had before Steam</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapter 19 ● Research Paper: Rough Draft (<i>due October 31</i>)

Week 10 Nov 2 - Nov 7	3D Games, PlayStation, and Music Games OH MY!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 20-22 ● Quiz 3 (covering Weeks 8-10)
Week 11 Nov 9 - Nov 14	Virtual Worlds and Virtual Lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 23-24 ● Review research paper rough draft feedback ● Watch: Rise of the Video Game: Level 5
Week 12 Nov 16 - Nov 21	Online Gaming Advances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 25-26 ● Quiz 4 (covering Weeks 11-12)
Week 13 Nov 23 - Nov 28	<i>!!! Thanksgiving Recess !!!</i>	There will be no work required this week. Please continue to work on your research paper as-needed and enjoy your recess!
Week 14 Nov 30 - Dec 5	The Rise of Indie Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: Replay Chapters 27-28 ● Continue working on your final research paper
Week 15 Dec 7 - Dec 12	<i>!!! Review Week !!!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading: None ● Final Research Paper (due December 12)

Research Paper Guidelines

Your paper topic must be related to the history of video games. As stated in the syllabus, it is important that you select a topic that (a) has ample content available to support your thesis statement and (b) is something interesting to you that allows you to grow your knowledge in that subject. Some example, suggested topics may be:

- How one particular game or genre of games changed the direction of the industry
- Researching a new technology and presenting potential uses for it
- Researching a particular company in the industry
- Controversial topics in video games (Mortal Kombat, ESRB, etc.)

As a general guideline, it is good to have at least one reference for at least every other page of your document. For this paper I would expect students to have solid research from at least 5 references. Academic journals, texts (you may use Replay!), and game journalism websites are all acceptable forms of research. Wikipedia is ***not*** acceptable.

Grading Rubric:

Grading for the research paper will be heavily placed on the final result; however, you are still responsible for turning in the intermediate steps. These assignments are meant to guide you through the research paper writing process and should not be skipped.

Paper Topic: 10%

Paper Outline: 10%

Rough Draft: 20%

Final Research Paper: 60%

Requirements of your research paper:

- Must use APA formatting
 - (Note: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/> is an excellent guide!)
- Must be double-spaced
- Must use Times New Roman, 12pt in size
- Must be **10** pages in length (including diagrams and tables, but don't be excessive!)