GAME 600—Research Methodologies
FALL 2016
Professor Hudson
Computer Game Design Program
College of Visual and Performing Arts

Instructor: Seth Hudson
Contact: shudson3@gmu.edu / 703-993-6037
Department Contact 703-993-5734
Office Hours: MW 12:00-1:30 / AB 2024
Lecture: W 1:30 -4:10 / AB 2001

Prerequisite: Admittance to the MA Game Design Program or permission of instructor

Required Texts:

Recommended Texts:


Texts of Interest:


***Other readings available online as ebooks or pdf***

Course Description:
This graduate seminar focuses on development of independent research projects in game design, theory, philosophy, criticism and production. Explores principal methods of researching, exploring, and documenting game design and contemporary and historic
practice. Along with traditional methods of library research, this course emphasizes new processes of examination and investigation through the use of computer-aided research systems and techniques. Students will research and write a publishable paper following best practices in their chosen field. Assigned readings in the class will be augmented and supported by visual presentations, game play, guest lecturers and field trips.

**Objectives:**
To build student awareness about the contemporary research tools and technique available to pursue academic research, as well as about current and historical trends in ‘serious’ and entertainment game theory, philosophy, and criticism.

**Requirements and Evaluation:**
At each class meeting, students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Additional out-of-class viewings and game play will be assigned. The assigned readings, visual materials, and games will be either reserved at the Johnson Center Library, or in the Game Program Library.

**MAJOR PROJECT (60% of Total Grade)**
Further details will be provided on Bb, but the project will include:
- Idea Memo (5%)
- Researcher Identity and Relationship Memo (5%)
- Abstract, Outline, and Literature Review (20%)
- Final Paper or Presentation (30%)
All papers submitted and presented must be in APA format (unless specific submission specifications dictate otherwise) and executed in near-flawless standard written English.

By the end of the semester, all students are required to further their research via a 20-page paper addressing the theories, issues and ideas presented in the reading assignments and other course materials from the semester. In the final two classes, students will give a 20-minute presentation and discuss the methodological, political, cultural, art historical, and/or theoretical content of their paper. The instructor will provide extensive guidance and advice for each student throughout his or her research and presentation. Students should also find a relevant publication for their paper, preparing submission materials for the actual journal/publication.

**JOURNAL REFLECTIONS (10%)**
Students are required to submit a total of TWO journal entries to the professor. These journal entries should be two pages in length, addressing the specific prompt of the assignment while showing engagement with course texts in addition to personal reflection.

**CLASS LECTURE / LESSON (10%)**
All GAME 600 students will plan and lead a lecture during the semester. Lecture leaders are required to provide an outline of the discussion points, with sample discussion questions, in addition to any standard presentation materials (PDF, video clips, etc.). All materials are due to the instructor no later than 24 hours before the planned session.
Lectures will be assessed through instructor and participant feedback. Post lecture, students should schedule a consultation with the instructor.

**ARTICLE CRITIQUES (20%)**

Students will complete TWO article critiques, reviewing one qualitative and one quantitative study related to their research topic. A suggested format will be provided. Students will critique an article of their choosing, relevant to their final research topic, according to provided guidelines. The critique requires students to identify specific aspects of research goals, design, and procedures, while presenting an argument as to the strengths and weaknesses of the study. Details available on Bb Course Content.

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* Although a B- is a satisfactory grade for a course, students must maintain a 3.00 average in their degree program and present a 3.00 GPA on the courses listed on the graduation application.

**POLICIES & IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Formatting/Professionalism**

All projects must be submitted in the format dictated by the assignment. Generally, this means papers to be produced in the APA style (with title page) and delivered as instructed (a stapled hard copy will sometimes be requested; all electronic submissions must be in the form of student/assignment-specific PDF).

**Professionalism**

Many of the policies below relate to professionalism. Being courteous to the professor and other students is mandatory. All guidelines for assignments must be followed. If unsure about a policy, contact the professor immediately. This is the same for late work, absences, etc. Sending notice after the fact just doesn’t look good; unless, of course, your absence is due to illness or other factors beyond your immediate control. Be professional.

All work should be cleanly edited: free of careless mistakes. Any questions you have regarding the use of the English language or other conventions should be researched thoroughly before taking them to the instructor—we will follow MLA format in the headings of assignments and with citation unless noted otherwise.

**Assumptions**

It is assumed that students have regular access to email and the Internet, so they will be able to receive updates and participate electronically when necessary. It is also assumed that students will diligently back up their work, rendering technical difficulties harmless. Failure to turn work in on time due to this type of issue will be treated like all other late work. When hard copies are required, they are **required**.
Late Work
Late work will only be accepted without penalty in the case of a documented medical illness or another situation that is out of your control. Late work will be reduced by a letter grade for each class period it is late. WHEN IN DOUBT notify the instructor if the situation is tenuous.

Writing Center
The Writing Center is available for writers of all levels. Tutors in the Writing Center (Robinson A114, Enterprise 076, Johnson Center 136) will talk with you about how you can improve your revision and editing strategies; they will not, however, edit or proofread your work—professionalism, once again. You can make an appointment online: http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/

Writing Assignments
Due dates and revision guidelines will be clearly outlined at the outset of each assignment. Digital copies of assignments will be available on Bb. Some writing assignments will be assigned in class and completed in our time together, calculated into your grade via class participation.

Class Participation
Many of our sessions will operate like a traditional writing workshop. You will be expected to read others’ work aloud and give thoughtful input to aid their revision process. The best way to get a good mark for class participation is to participate meaningfully every day. Respecting each other’s opinions and work is crucial.

Online Participation
Blackboard (Bb) will be your friend in exchanging ideas and communicating with one another during the term, as will individual student websites. Student may be randomly assigned to Bb Groups. These groups will be responsible for peer review and weekly discussion periodically throughout the semester. The frequency and depth of online participation will factor into your grade.

Email Policy
Students must use their MasonLIVE or gmu.edu email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.

Mason Emergency Information
You may want to sign up for emergency alert messages. If so, go to https://alert.gmu.edu. You'll also find information about emergency procedures at http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert.

Students With Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, http://ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Honor Code
George Mason University has an Honor Code that requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

University Catalog
Students are to be aware of the policies listed in the University Catalog: http://catalog.gmu.edu/. University dates concerning withdrawal are not negotiable by
the professor. Other questions regarding university and program policies can be directed towards the Assistant Director outside of class time.

**Additional Texts of Note:**

- Note: When possible we will utilize ebooks from university libraries. Some other readings may be distributed as PDF files on Bb.


