GAME 635: Issues in Interactive Media
Instructor: Professor Boris Willis
Office: Art and Design2014
Office Hours: M/W 3-4, T 12-1
Email: bwillis3@gmu.edu

3 Credit Hours
Lectures: M/W 12:00-1:15 PM
Room: Art and Design, Room 2002
Term: Spring Semester 2015
Phone: (703) 993-3163

Course description:
This course will study trends in culture and society as they relate to gaming. Topics covered will include issues related to culture and society such as violence in games, health and addiction, cultural stereotypes and literacy. We will also look at how both games and society shift in response to these issues. Additionally students will look at timelines for cultural shifts in technology with such interactive technologies as motion controllers, voice recognition and gesture.

Objectives:
Students who complete this course will:
A. Apply existing theories and frameworks in Game Studies to the analysis of computer games.
B. Evaluate current academic debates within game studies.
C. Evaluate the design of games intended for both entertainment and social change.
D. Identify and evaluate the impact of video games on society.
E. Write effectively on topics related to games and game studies.

Requirements and Evaluation:
1. At the beginning of each class meeting, students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, topic assignments, and game examples.

2. At mid-term, each student is required to submit and present a professional 5-7 minute presentation on a topic we discuss in class. A 7 to 10 page paper shall contain original concept ideas developed by the students that draw from a variety of sources both in and outside of the gaming field.

3. Student will write several essays on the topics covered in class and be prepared to discuss their findings with the class.

4. A series of readings will be assigned to complement most lectures.

5. For the final, each student is required to submit and present a professional 5-7 minute presentation on a topic we discuss in class. A 7 to 10 page paper shall contain original concept ideas developed by the students that draw from a variety of sources both in and outside of the game design field.
## Grading:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>XP</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Choreographer</td>
<td>1860-2000</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Dragon</td>
<td>1740</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Unicorn</td>
<td>1660</td>
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<td>Shape Shifter</td>
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### Experience Points: Total: 2000XP available for the class.

You will begin as a level one with 0 XP. The highest level you can reach is level 25. Levels are determined by XP. Leveling up at the beginning is harder than at the end which is the opposite from a typical MMO leveling curve.

**Participation/Attendance- 420 XP (15 XP per class) 195-Mid-Term/225-Final**

+1’s May be given for awesomeness.

**Mid-Term 300XP**

Paper and presentation

**Class Projects 700XP**

Student Led Discussions and debates. Presentations and essays

**Expansion Packs 100XP**

Extra work/ Extra Credit- Students may propose an extra project

**Final presentation and project 480XP**

Presentation and Paper on topics related to class.
To receive a grade of "A" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 90% on the course work requirements.
To receive a grade of "B" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 80% on the course work requirements.
To receive a grade of "C" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 70% on the course work requirements.
To receive a grade of "D" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 60% on the course work requirements.
Failure to receive a "D" grade will result in a grade of "F".

**GMU Add/Drop Policy:** The last day to drop this class with no tuition liability is Jan 27th. Last day to drop is Feb 20. 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: 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.*

**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.

**Sign up for the Mason Alert System** by visiting the website [https://alert.gmu.edu](https://alert.gmu.edu), and an emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises; emergency procedures exists on [http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert](http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert).
**Class Outline**

Week 1 - Jan 21
Are games art?

Week 2 - Jan 26 and 28
Looking at issues of gender in games
#1ReasonWhy and #gamergate

Week 3 - Feb 2 and 4
How race is used in games?

Week 4 - Feb 9 and 11
Violence in games. Student Led Discussion

Week 5 - Feb 16 and 18
Blaming Youth Culture- Coffee Houses to comic books, rock and roll to hip-hop, D&D to Death Race 2000

Week 6 - Feb 23 and 25
Queer in games.

Week 7 - March 2 and 4
Alternate Reality
Student Presentations

Week 8 - March 9 and 11
Spring Break

Week 9 - March 16 and 18
March 16 and 18
Designing Games for Social Change

Week 10 - March 23 and 25
March 23 and 25
Augmented Reality Games

Week 11 - March 30 and April 1
Designing games for disabilities

Week 12 - April 6 and 8
Hardware- games for fitness trackers and smart watches- Student Led Discussion

Week 13 - April 13 and 15
The Future of Gaming Hardware- Student Debate
Week 14 - April 20 and 22
Games for Education- Student Debate

Week 15- April 27 and 29
Semester recap
Final Presentations and Project