

Course: FYS: Video Game Theory and Research

Semester: Fall 2009

Professor: Marina Krcmar

Course Overview: The last decade has seen a tremendous increase in research and theory relating to video game play. Because the average American child plays video games at least 3 times a week and because the largest growth in the market is among players 34 and older, video games have become an important part of American entertainment for most age groups. Despite their seemingly frivolous nature, research and theory has focused on many important factors including aggressive outcomes, enjoyment, arousal, and learning. This class will review the latest in research and theory relating to video game play.

I will not take attendance although attendance is highly recommended. Those who miss class will have points deducted from their participation grade. Assignments are due on the date they appear on the syllabus. Late assignments will result in one lost letter grade *every day* that it is late regardless of the reason for lateness. Therefore, do not leave assignments until the last minute; you never know when you will be sick or when some other incident will prevent you from being able to do the work the night before.

That said, I am more than happy to talk about the class, your assignments, papers and tests, class material etc. during my office hours. If you can't make it then, email me and we may be able to set up a different time.

Books: Nielsen, S.E., Smith, J.H., & Tosca, S.P. (2008). *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*. Routledge.

Vorderer, P. & Bryant, J. (2006). *Playing Video Games: Motives, Responses, and Consequences*. Laurence Earlbaum Associates.

Readings: There will also be readings posted on blackboard. Some of these will be listed on this syllabus. Others will be assigned during the semester. Each reading that does NOT appear on this syllabus will be assigned and posted at least one week before it is due. You are to have read all of the assigned material **before** class. The purposes of reading are many; one purpose is to be able to participate in class discussion. Unless you participate, I have no way of knowing if you are reading. Therefore, please read and come to class **prepared** to discuss the material.

Assignments/ Evaluations

Research Paper (25%)* May be an extension of your presentation or may focus on an entirely new topic to be derived in consultation with me.

Class presentation, preparation of discussion questions, handouts for class (20%)

You will work in pairs to prepare and present to the class for 20 minutes one day during the semester. The class presentation will be related to the topic you have selected (see attached list). First, you may create a power point presentation (although you do not have to). Second, you are to conduct a literature search on the topic and hand in the reference list to me (Please consult a reference librarian to help you with this process.) The references (at least 4) may come from journals but can also come from the popular press such as newspapers and magazines. Third, you may assign a reading to the class to help them in preparation for your presentation (although this is also not a requirement). Lastly, you will provide an outline and notes to the class (one copy for each student) so they have a record of your work.

Midterm Exam (20%)

Final Exam (20% of total grade)

Participation (15% of total grade)

Class participation is important. Participation will be based on class attendance, participation in class discussions, preparation for lectures, and attitude toward your peers and the class in general.

Class Schedule

Topic	Date	Readings	Assignments
<i>PART 1: OVERVIEW</i>			
Introduction to class, review of syllabus, how to read a research paper, assigning topics	8/27		
Game Industry	9/1	NST: Chs 2, 3	
Game Industry	9/3	VB: Ch. 3	
Game Industry	9/8	NST: Ch. 4	
Aesthetics and Player Culture	9/10	NST: Chs. 5, 7	T1
Game Play Experience	9/15	VB, Chs. 1, 2	
Types of Games	9/17	VB, Chs. 3,4,6	
Game Content	9/22	VB, Ch. 5 Haninger & Thompson (2004)	

<i>Part 2: Motives and Selection</i>			
Who Plays and why?	9/24	VB, Chs 7,8	
Who Plays and why?	9/29	VB, Chs. 9,10	
Who Plays and why?	9/1	VB, Ch. 11, 12	T2
Who Plays and why?	9/6	VB, Ch. 13	T3
Paper meetings	9/8		
Paper meetings	9/13		
EXAM 1	9/15		
<i>Part 3: Playing Games- Reactions</i>			
Uses and gratifications	9/20	VB, Ch. 14,15	
Presence	9/22	VB, Ch. 16 Ivory & Kalyanamaran (blackboard)	
Narrative	9/27	VB, Ch 18	
Realism	9/29	VB Ch. 19 Krcmar & Farrar (2009) Blackboard	
<i>Part 4: Effects</i>			
Social and psychological effects	11/5	VB, Ch. 22	

AGGRESSION, Ch. 23	11/10	VB, Ch. 23	
Aggression	11/12	Farrar, Krcmar & Nowak Guimetti & Markey	
Aggression	11/17	Sherry Chapter	
Theories of Effects	11/19	VB, Ch. 24	
Learning	11/24	VB, Ch. 25	
Learning	12/1	VB, Ch. 26	
Games in the real world	12/3	Sward, Richardson, et al.	T4, T5
	12/8		

Some topic ideas:

1. Players for hire: the subculture of paid game players and paying for game commodities
2. Parents and children's attitudes towards game play
3. ESRB
4. How are video games used in medicine?
5. How are video games used in the military (other than for entertainment?)
6. Video game play in Asia
7. Video games designed for and targeted to infants and preschoolers
8. Game platforms: past, present and future
9. Video games as prosocial media: saving the environment
10. Video games as prosocial media: teaching safe sex
11. Topic proposed by student(s)
Additional Readings

Farrar, K.M, Krcmar, M. & Nowak, K.L. (2006). BLACKBOARD

Haninger, K. & Thompson, K.M (2004).

<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=101&sid=d7ff9d18-cb6c-4f9a-80ee-738118e3fd0a%40sessionmgr110>

Guimetti, G.W. & Markey, P.M. (2007).

<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=9&hid=101&sid=aef1d6e1-e484-4a65-9df7-16e63d169418%40sessionmgr102>

Jana, R. (2008).

<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=20&did=1436324301&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1247678019&clientId=15023>

Krcmar & Farrar (2009). BLACKBOARD

Sward, K.A., Richardson, S., Kendrickson, J., & Maloney, C. (2008).
BLACKBOARD

GREAT AMERICAN SPEECHES/20TH CENTURY

FYS 100 J SPRING 2009

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Office Hours: 11-12 MTW and by previously scheduled
appointment

FYS 100 J is a first year seminar that investigates the greatest American speeches of the 20th century. Speeches are the footprints of historical trends and social movements. This seminar will allow you to learn a great deal about history and rhetoric. The seminar is also designed to introduce students to the discussion and exchange of the seminar format and critical thinking and writing skills.

The objectives of FYS 100 J are to critically examine a wide selection of these great speeches from an historical and rhetorical perspective, to learn to knowledgeably participate in the give-and-take of intellectual discourse, and to sharpen skills in the oral and written presentation of ideas.

Texts

There are two primary texts for the course: The Dream: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Speech that Inspired a Nation by Drew Hansen and My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student by Rebekah Nathan. Both these volumes should be available in the bookstore. There are several web sites that list the top 100 American speeches of the 20th century. I suggest book marking "American Rhetoric: The Power of Oratory in the United States." You will be using it a great deal this term.

There may also be article, speech and chapter handouts from time to time. The effectiveness of the class greatly depends on the well-informed and thoughtful participation of the class members. Reading and digesting the assignments will be very important in grasping the substance of the course. In dealing with speeches it is important to read each one several times. On the first reading you miss much of the rhetorical art. Plan to read each speech four or five times in order to get a solid grasp of it.

Grading

Grades in the course will be based on these projects. A ten-point scale is standard plus/minus intervals. Do not assume rounding.

First reaction paper.....	10%	September 25
Second reaction paper.....	20%	November 6
Spelling/grammar test.....	10%	October 26
Third/final reaction paper.....	30%	November 30
Consistent evidence of quality preparation & thoughtful participation.....	20%	
Third paper presentation.....	10%	11/20-12/4; dates assigned

Reaction papers

The purpose of a first year seminar is more process oriented than content focused. The idea is to help you learn to read, think, analyze, write, discuss and even argue in scholarly ways. At three junctures in the course you will write a reaction paper based on some aspect of the materials covered in the class to that point. We will then take a week's classes to read and discuss those papers. In this way we deal both with the specific ideas in a paper and learn from each other about writing and analysis.

Paper procedures

Whenever there are written assignments due in this class--the three reaction papers--I would like them turned in via one of two specific routes and in one of two specified forms. These are the only ways I want to receive work. The reason for this process is that it allows me to track and respond to your work in the most efficient way. I know for certain when materials have been turned in (or when they have not) and I can make comments directly on your work and return it promptly so you can review the feedback. The two forms in which you may turn in written work are as a word document or as a PDF. These items may be sent to my email address as an attachment or uploaded to the digital drop box for the course. Be certain to double check these processes to see that you have succeeded. My view is that if I do not find it in one of those two places, it was not turned in. I am not obligated to check back with you to see if there has been some error or oversight.

Presentation

The third paper will be the basis for a formal presentation of your thesis to your classmates. Skill in clear and effective presentation of ideas is an essential part of a college education. This assignment is a chance to begin that process of development.

Your presentation should be formal, articulate, and well planned. You are in charge of the class and its learning for this 10 minute period. I may join in during the discussion and question and answer sessions but it is your forum.

Writing

All writing assignments should be error-free. Work should be prepared to the standards of either MLA or APA style manuals. I usually deduct one point for each error. There will be a handout listing the most common student problems. That handout will be the basis for the grammar test. Mastering these items would be a great starting point for improving your writing.

Attendance policy

I hope the readings and discussion will inspire you to be here whenever the class meets. You may miss three sessions without penalty; grade reductions may begin after three absences. Attendance is kept through a sheet circulated at the start of each class. It is your responsibility to find the sheet and sign it. Do not come late to class. Contact me in the case of special circumstances such as family emergencies. Absence from performance days (when one is scheduled to give a report or turn in a paper) should be supported with a medical verification. In keeping with the university catalog, decisions about excusing such absences remain the professor's prerogative.

Honor Code

All work done in this class is covered by the University's policies. You should be familiar with these guidelines for ethical behavior. No work done for another class may be used in this one without my specific permission obtained in advance.

Assignments and grading

All students are expected to make a substantial commitment of time and effort to this course. An "A" is uncommon and is awarded for work that is truly outstanding due to its completeness, accuracy, intelligence and originality. A "B" represents superior achievement when measured against standards of acceptable work and may include some elements of "A" performance. Average, acceptable efforts in time and attention to the information content of the course, written work, and class participation will earn a "C." Below this level, you do not want to know. Just recall that it is there when circumstances warrant.

ADDENDUM

Here are three important procedural elements I want you to understand. Please raise any questions that occur to you. ||||| For **each day** that the class reads speeches I want you to complete and bring to class a typed double-spaced sheet that includes your answers to the questions #4 and #8 given on the speech evaluation form in the assignments section on Blackboard. Turn in the sheets when class ends. The quality of this work is accounted for in the participation grade. Provide written answers to questions 4 & 8 above for each speech. In addition, do think through all ten questions carefully as you prepare for class. This approach is central to the seminar process; the assumption is that everyone is competent and prepared. Turn in the sheets each day when class ends. The quality of this work is accounted for in the participation grade. |||||It is a great idea to read a newspaper and/or watch a

serious television news show on a daily basis. When you see or hear topics related to the substance of this course, please bring in clips or in some other way raise the subject for discussion.

||||| Do not use a computer or cell phone in the classroom before or during the class meeting. If you have special needs regarding learning and test taking, come to discuss those with me.

||||| Do not wear hats in the classroom and do not eat in class. Drinks are allowed if, and only if, you open it before class starts, you do not eat ice, and you clean up any spills without having to be prompted to do so.

