ENG-2770: RHETORICS OF GAMING: INTRODUCTION TO VIDEO GAME ANALYSIS

Cuyahoga Community College

Viewing: ENG-2770 : Rhetorics of Gaming: Introduction to Video Game Analysis

Board of Trustees:
March 2025

Academic Term:
Fall 2025

Subject Code
ENG - English

Course Number:
2770

Title:
Rhetorics of Gaming: Introduction to Video Game Analysis

Catalog Description:
An introduction to video game analysis, this course offers critical ways to understand games as complex narrative and cultural texts. The course explores theories of play, the history of gaming industries and game studies as an academic field, and a variety of analytical lenses through which to study this influential cultural form. Emphasizes playing, researching, and writing about video games and gaming culture in theoretically, rhetorically, and methodologically sound ways.

Credit Hour(s):
3

Lecture Hour(s):
3

Requisites

Prerequisite and Corequisite
ENG-1020 College Composition II, ENG-102H Honors College Composition II, or ENG-2151 Technical Writing; or departmental approval.

Outcomes
Course Outcome(s):
Recall and identify key concepts, terms, histories, and theories related to game studies as a field of critical inquiry.

Objective(s):
1. Define key terms used in the field of game studies.
2. Identify and examine key concepts and theories in the field of game studies.
3. Examine relevant histories of the development of video games as a significant cultural form.

Course Outcome(s):
Analyze video games as cultural, social, political, historical, creative, and industrial texts in light of their rhetorical contexts.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:
Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Objective(s):
1. Apply diverse interpretive lenses to video games as texts, particularly in the context of the humanities.
2. Analyze video game-related content such as walkthroughs, livestreams, adaptations, and gaming forums.

3. Investigate major controversies related to video games inside academia and within the gaming industry.
4. Describe how gaming cultures, game development, and games are shaped by the intersections of a variety of factors such as race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, ethnicity, nationality, and/or other socially-constructed categories of difference.
5. Identify and empathize with diverse communities of players and their specific cultural worldviews.

Course Outcome(s):

Research video games in keeping with current critical practices in the field.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Information Literacy: Demonstrate contextual awareness of the research process through the reflective discovery of the production and value of information, the use of information in the creation of new knowledge and ethical participation in the use of information in communities of learning.

Objective(s):

1. Apply a humanities-appropriate research method for a focused research project in game studies.
2. Find, evaluate, and use peer-reviewed and other reputable sources appropriate to the fields of game studies and English studies.
3. Gather appropriate evidence to support analyses and arguments related to video games.
4. Use research strategies appropriate to game studies to stay organized such as play logs, electronic recordings, and research journals.

Course Outcome(s):

Write about video games from a critical and historically relevant perspective.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Information Literacy: Demonstrate contextual awareness of the research process through the reflective discovery of the production and value of information, the use of information in the creation of new knowledge and ethical participation in the use of information in communities of learning.
Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

Objective(s):

1. Write and develop a thesis in order to engage in focused research and writing based on research.
2. Find, evaluate, and use appropriate electronic and print sources for research based on historical and critical developments in the field, industry, and culture(s) of gaming.
3. Utilize textual evidence as support for analyses and arguments related to video games.
4. Use the MLA system of documentation to deal ethically with primary and secondary sources.

Methods of Evaluation:

1. Analytical/argumentative essays
2. Response papers
3. Reports: oral and written
4. Quizzes or tests
5. Abstracts
6. Play logs and research journals
7. Research projects
8. Annotated bibliographies
9. Wikis, websites, or other social media
10. Capstone projects

Course Content Outline:

1. Histories of Video Games, Industry, and Scholarship
   a. Evolution of video games from 1962 (*Spacewar!*) through the present.
   b. Major debates in game studies, including the narratology vs. ludology debate.
   c. Evolution of the video game industry from arcade games through VR/AR developments, including major crises and synergies with related industries.

2. Theories and Practice of Play and the Nature of Video Games
    a. Major theories of play.
    b. The experience of play through gaming.
3. Ludology and Procedural Rhetoric Approaches
    a. Ludological approaches to games.
    b. Procedural rhetoric approaches.
    c. Major concepts may include simulation, design, rhetoric, temporality, spatiality, proceduralism, feedback loop, mechanics, and interface.
4. Narrative Approaches
    a. Narrative approaches or ways of reading narratives in video games.
    b. Major concepts may include narrative, story, place, genre, atmosphere, characterization, archetypes, adaptations, and the chronotope.
5. Cultural Studies Approaches
    a. Research-driven approaches to class, gender, race, dis/ability, religion, and/or identity.
    b. Major concepts may include society, labor, the culture industry, commodification, and otherness.
6. Rhetorical Approaches
    a. Educational approaches of using games for learning.
    b. Rhetorical approaches of thinking about games as persuasive texts.
    c. Major concepts may include gamification, technical communication, fandom, and game communities.

Resources

José P. Zagal and Sebastian Deterding. *The Routledge Handbook of Role-Playing Game Studies*. London: Routledge, 2024.

Kishonna L. Gray. *Intersectional Tech: Black Users in Digital Gaming*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2020.

Shira Chess. *Play Like a Feminist*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020.

Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw, eds. *Queer Game Studies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al, eds. *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*. 3rd. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Video Game Studies*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Robin J.S. Sloan. *Virtual Character Design for Games and Interactive Media*. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2015.

Jennifer DeWinter and Ryan M. Moeller, eds. *Computer Games and Technical Communication: Critical Methods & Applications at the Intersection*. Dorchester: Dorset Press, 2014.

Jason C. Thompson and Marc A. Ouellette, eds. *The Game Culture Reader*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.

Judd Ruggill and Ken McAllister. *Gaming Matters: Art, Science, Magic, and the Computer Game Medium*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2011.

Frans Mäyrä. *An Introduction to Game Studies: Games in Culture*. London: Sage Publications, 2008.

Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron, eds. *The Video Game Theory Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Resources Other

1. Tri-C Library Research Guide for ENG 2770 -
   https://libguides.tri-c.edu/gaming (https://libguides.tri-c.edu/gaming/)
2. *Eludamos: Journal for Computer Game Culture* - http://www.eludamos.org/index.php/eludamos (http://www.eludamos.org/index.php/eludamos/)
3. *Game Studies* (peer-reviewed journal) - http://gamestudies.org/
4. *Games and Culture* (peer-reviewed journal) - http://journals.sagepub.com/home/gac (http://journals.sagepub.com/home/gac/)
5. Leveling Up Game Studies - https://www.zotero.org/groups/494532/leveling_up_games_studies (https://www.zotero.org/groups/494532/leveling_up_games_studies/)
6. LGIRA - Learning Games Initiative Research Archive - https://lgira.mesmernet.org/
7. The Rhetoric of Games - https://www.zotero.org/groups/509172/rhetoric_and_games (https://www.zotero.org/groups/509172/rhetoric_and_games/)

Instructional Services

OAN Number:

Ohio Transfer 36 TMAH

Top of page
Key: 4574