

CHID 496 F + WINTER 2012

VIDEO + GAMES + OTHER + MEDIA

EDMOND + CHANG + SARAH + KREMEN-HICKS

IN 1982, Walt Disney Pictures released *Tron*, one of the first movies to feature computer animation, to visualize cyberspace, and to be released with a video game product tie-in. Roger Ebert's *Chicago Sun-Times* review of the movie that year said, "The movie addresses itself without apology to the computer generation, embracing the imagery of those arcade video games that parents fear are rotting the minds of their children. If you've never played *Pac-Man* or *Space Invaders* or the *Tron* game itself, you probably are not quite ready to see this movie..." Ironically, years later, Ebert would claim that video games, unlike films, could never be art. Regardless, video games have left their marks on the culture and found their way into other media—film, television, literature, fashion, performance, even real world places and spaces. As Henry Jenkins wrote in 2000, "The time has come to take games seriously as an important new popular art shaping the aesthetic sensibility of the 21st century."

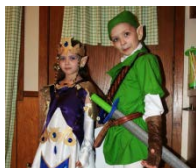
OUR FOCUS GROUP, as part of a continuing series on video games generated by the Critical Gaming Project at UW, will explore the influences, intersections, and tensions between video games and other media—thinking through what Bolter and Grusin call *remediation*: "Digital visual media can be best understood through the ways in which they honor, rival, and revise linear-perspective painting, photography, film, television, and print. No medium today...seems to do its cultural work in isolation from other media" (15). Central to the class are the following questions: How and why are video games important? How are video games and video game players represented, stereotyped, or vindicated by other media? How are video games remediate and get remediated by other media? What are the possibilities and consequences of adapting or reimagining video games in other forms, mediums, and spaces? To do this, we will read stories by Vernor Vinge, Orson Scott Card, Julian Dibbell, and Cory Doctorow. We will watch movies like *Tron* and *Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World*. And we will engage video game representations on the Internet, in gaming communities, and other technologies.

THE COURSE will meet once a week for 2 hours to engage reading, guided discussion, analytical and reflective writing, and some game play. Students will be asked to participate in discussions both in class and online, write a review of a video game artifact of their choice, and make a short in-class presentation.

Requirements & Grading

What is a focus group? Focus groups provide a unique opportunity for undergraduate students to design and lead a class. Focus groups allow students with common interests to create a space to discuss topics which may not be covered elsewhere in the UW undergraduate curricula. As with all CHID courses, all students participating in focus groups are expected to

CHID 496
Section F
Thursday
1:30-3:20 PM
PAR 106
Winter 2012
Ed Chang &
Sarah Kremen-
Hicks
University of
Washington



"Prose is an art form, movies and acting in general are art forms, so is music, painting, graphics, sculpture, and so on. Some might even consider classic games like chess to be an art form. Video games use elements of all of these to create something new. Why wouldn't video games be an art form?"
—Sam Lake, writer, *Max Payne* series

"Video games have an unmet potential to create complexity by letting people experience the world from different perspectives."
—James Paul Gee

"Video games render social realities into playable form."
—Alexander Galloway

"Video games are bad for you? That's what they said about rock and roll."
—Shigeru Miyamoto



Required Course Texts & Materials

- CHID 496 F course readings are available via e-reserve
- R.A. Montgomery, *Journey Under the Sea* (Choose Your Own Adventure #2)
- Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*
- Games are available online or for free download
- Web access and an active UW email account



Course Requirements

Play Logs and Remediation Presentation (50%)
Class Participation (50%)

"Video games are an expressive medium. They represent how real and imagined systems work. They invite players to interact with those systems and form judgments about them. As part of the ongoing process of understanding this medium...we must strive to understand how to construct and critique the representations of our world in videogame form."
—Ian Bogost

"...that video games could be used as tools for better understanding reality and raising critical awareness among players"
—Gonzalo Frasca, "Videogames of the Oppressed"

engage topics critically, respectfully, and from varying perspectives. What are they not? Focus groups are not spaces for students to promote one particular point of view. While students can take on one idea or concept, this topic should be explored from multiple vantage points. Focus groups should not depart from CHID's guiding philosophy that "the questions are the content." Focus groups are about critical scrutiny, not about ideological imposition.

This class is graded on a credit/no credit basis. All assignments must be satisfactorily completed, and you may not have more than two un-excused absences in order to get credit for this class.

Blog Responses and Remediation Presentation (50%)

The majority of the writing you will do for this class is in the form of weekly short, critical, analytical response entries to the class blog. These single-spaced, 500 or so word writings serve as reactions to, close readings of, and analyses of the texts, games, and the connections you see, read, and talk about in class. These blog responses are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, coherence, critique, and how well you concisely formulate arguments.

By the end of the quarter, you will have practiced and performed what it means to think critically about different video game and *remediated* texts. You will be required to present on (most likely as a team) a video game-influenced text or artifact of your choosing. These presentations will demonstrate what you have learned from and experienced in the class. Presentations will be 5 minutes and can include in-class game play.

Participation and Preparedness (50%)

Preparedness and participation forms a large component of your final grade. It is essential that you prepare for class, attend class, and participate. Missing class may seriously compromise your ability to do well in this class. Again, negative participation will hurt your participation grade. Participation is determined by

1. your respectful presence in class,
2. your willingness to discuss, comment, and ask questions,
3. your preparation for class, which includes bringing required materials to class and doing all of the assigned reading for class,
4. your engagement in group work and play,
5. your contribution to the CGP blog (as directed):
<https://depts.washington.edu/critgame/wordpress/>
6. and your interactions with us and other students.

Finally, failure to turn in homework, incomplete assignments, or late papers will negatively impact your participation grade.

Attendance

Attendance is strongly recommended. If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, the discussion of a reading, the chance to play and participate, and overall, the class as a community of learning. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. Class will start immediately at the appointed time. In the first minutes of class we may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the class meeting, begin immediately with an important lesson, or field questions. If you come in after we start class, even by only a few minutes, you are late and we will mark you as such. Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your credit for the class. If you know you are going to miss

Assignment Format

Treat all writing as formal, academic writing, even on the class blog. All hardcopy assignments must be typed. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format; if you do not have access to Word, then save your documents in RTF or Rich Text Format.

All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. All formal papers must use MLA citation and documentation conventions. All papers must be neatly printed (in black), stapled in the top, left-hand corner if necessary, and not be three-hole punched. Papers that do not follow these format guidelines will not be accepted. They will be returned unread to you. Papers will be regarded as late until they are resubmitted in the proper format.



class, please let us know ahead of time (via email), if you can, and we will make any necessary arrangements. And when you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes and see us in order to make up missed work in a timely manner.

Finding Help

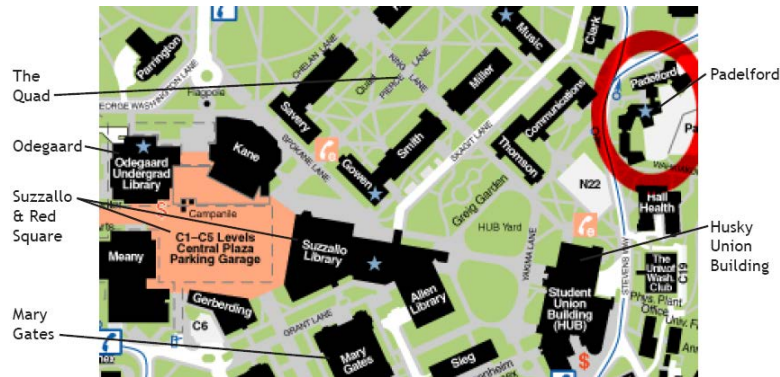
Contact Ed

Office:
B33 Padelford
Office Hours:
Th 10 AM-12 PM
or by appointment
E-mail:
changed@uw.edu
AIM & Google Talk:
EDagogy

Contact Sarah

Office:
A11B Padelford
Office Hours:
TuTh 12:30-1:30 PM
by appointment
E-mail:
sarahkh@uw.edu

We are available during office hours and by appointment to help you. We encourage you to come see us early in the quarter even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. We may ask you to meet with us when we think a conference would be useful. Our offices are located on the ground floor of Padelford Hall (northeast of the HUB). Ed's office is in B-33. Sarah's office is in A11B. See map below.



We are also available electronically by email and the course blog. Email and the blog are the best means of contacting us. We will do our best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually within twenty-four hours. If there is an emergency and you need to reach us, please contact the CHID office in B-102 Padelford.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing — as long as you cite them. Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, so feel free to ask questions about these matters at any time. Plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to site sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's work as his or her own
- a student submitting his or her own work produced for another class

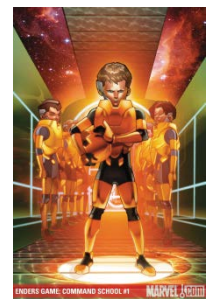
If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please talk to me. It is always better to be safe than sorry. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review. For further information, please refer to UW's Student Conduct Code at <http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>. Play it smart, don't plagiarize!

Accommodations

If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see us immediately. We will gladly do my best to provide appropriate

"...it's time to take a closer look at the game culture we've built. Games have show us our own potential for happiness, change, and success. But they haven't helped us achieve that potential in our real lives. I see an increasing number of gamers who think they can only be their best selves, and do their best work, in game worlds. For them, the real world is broken."

—Jane McGonigal, "Growing Up Gamer"



"The idea that kids can play video games like *Grand Theft Auto* or any video game is amazing. The video games are one step before a whole other virtual universe."

—Vin Diesel

accommodation you require. If you have a disability and have not yet registered it with Disability Resources for Students in 448 Schmitz Hall, you should do so immediately. Please contact DRS at 206-543-8924 (Voice) or 206-543-8925 (V/TTY) or 206-616-8379 (FAX) or via their website at <<http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/>>.

UW SafeCampus

Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone. For more information visit the SafeCampus website at <<http://www.washington.edu/safecampus>> and keep the following in mind:

- Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
- Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources. TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
- Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk 206-685-WALK (9255).
- Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging. Sign up online at <<http://www.washington.edu/alert>>.

**syl-la-bus: n 1: a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements
2: subject to change**

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Mon 1/3
First Day of Classes

Week 1: January 2-6

Thurs 1/5 REMEDIATION
Introduction to the Course
Course Policies, Course Goals
Bolter + Grusin's *Remediation* (Introduction + Ch.1)

There may be readings for each week. Be sure to read, make notes, and come to class prepared with comments and questions.

Week 2: January 9-13

Thurs 1/12 HYPER+TEXT
Vernor Vinge, "True Names"
R.A. Montgomery's *Journey Under the Sea* (CYOA #2)
Shelley Jackson's "My Body"
http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/jackson_my_body_a_wunderkammer/index.html
ADVENTURE
<http://www.ifiction.org/games/playz.php?cat=&game=1&mode=html>

You may be assigned to respond to a CGP blog post.

Otherwise, make sure to check the CGP blog regularly and contribute on your own when appropriate.

Week 3: January 16-20

Thurs 1/19 GAMING+FICTIONS
Tron, Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*

*Attend and complete the readings for the Keywords for Video Game Studies "ALTPLAY/FANDOM" Session

Week 4: January 23-27

Thurs 1/26 GAMING+FICTIONS
Tron, Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Mon 1/16
MLK, Jr.'s Birthday
Holiday

Week 5: January 30-February 3

Thurs 2/2 JOY+STICK

Jane McGonigal's "Growing Up Gamer"

http://www.avantgame.com/growing_up_gamer_mcgonigal_sept2008.pdf

Bogost + Montfort's *Racing the Beam*

King of Kong

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

Week 6: February 6-10

Thurs 2/9 CYBER+SPACE+COMMUNITIES

LambdaMoo

<http://www.lambdamoo.info/>

Julian Dibbell's "A Rape in Cyberspace"

Barlow's "A Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace"

"Hacker Manifesto"

<http://www.mithral.com/~beberg/manifesto.html>

Week 7: February 13-17

Thurs 2/16 GAMES+RACE

Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World

*Attend the Keywords for Video Game Studies "GOLD FARMING" Session

Mon 2/20
Presidents' Day
Holiday

Week 8: February 20-24

Thurs 2/23 MASSIVELY+MULTIPLAYER

Cory Doctorow's "Anda's Game"

The Guild

Week 9: February 27-March 2

Thurs 3/1 SOCIAL+GAMES

Jesper Juul's *Casual Revolution*

Gonzalo Frasca's "Press Left Button to Dissent" &

"Video Games of the Oppressed"

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Week 10: March 5-9

Thurs 3/8 GAME+IFICATION

Jane McGonigal's *Reality is Broken* (Introduction)

Edward Castronova's *Exodus to the Virtual World* (Preface & Ch.1)

Ian Bogost, "Exploitationware" &

http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/6366/persuasive_games_exploitationware.php

"Gamification is Bullshit"

http://www.bogost.com/blog/gamification_is_bullshit.shtml

Remediation Presentations

Fri 3/9
Last Day of Classes

Week 11: March 12-16

Mon 3/12 - Finals Begin

Week 12:

Mon 3/21 - Grades Due