



WGS 199
CRN 36785
Thu 2-4:50 PM
GER 301
Spring 2016
University of
Oregon
Dr. Edmond Y.
Chang



"Games give you a chance to excel, and if you're playing in good company you don't even mind if you lose because you had the enjoyment of the company during the course of the game."
—Gary Gyax

"I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living, it's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope and that enables you to laugh at life's realities."
—Dr. Seuss

WHAT DOES IT MEAN to dress up? We dress up to go to work, to go on a date, to work out, to impress, but what about dressing up to play? This class will take up the ways we "present the self in everyday life" (to borrow Erving Goffman's phrase) that reveal, challenge, and complicate norms about fashion, costume, and the roles we play. In particular, we will look at the pop cultural treatment of subcultures of fashion, cosplay, drag, and live-action role-playing games to think about how "dressing up" intersects with race, gender, class, ability, space, and time. How might dressing up help us theorize bodies, identities, performativities to critique and *queer* norms, ideals, and other ideologies? In other words, how might dressing up be critical play? Part of the course will focus on scholarship, film and other media, and everyday practices. Part of the course will engage in observation, reflective writing, experiential learning, and actual live-action game play from basic mechanics to character creation to role-playing and adventuring.

A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity and a willingness to explore and interrogate interdisciplinary lines of inquiry. Our class will be organized around a survey of texts engaging scholarship, media, and popular culture. This class will take up everyday culture as critical practice, explore what it means to close read and think critically, and how popular culture can be deployed as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience. This class will spend the semester reading, thinking, watching, discussing, researching, playing, and writing about various narratives and how and what these texts argue, reveal, narrate, hide, perpetuate, and complicate the world we live in.

SPECIFICALLY, our course goals include:

- We will develop and demonstrate a familiarity with a range of texts, terms, and theories of the study of fashion, role-playing, fandom, and popular culture.
- We will identify and articulate different ways to explore, close read, analyze, and critique fashion, role-playing, fandom, and popular culture.
- We will consider questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- We will use experiential play and popular culture as vernacular theory to think, talk, write, and interrogate the world around us.

THE GAME SYSTEM we will play is *Archaea*, an independent, high-fantasy live-action role-playing and wargaming system by Edmond Y. Chang. Everyone is required to play and participate in the experiential learning process of the course, but the game and our definition of play are mindful and inclusive of a wide range of roles, styles, abilities, and possibilities.

WE WILL spend the quarter asking and addressing difficult, challenging, and sometimes discomforting ideas, questions, and topics, focusing on different

"If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities."
—Maya Angelou

"I think it's always important for academics to study popular culture, even if the thing they are studying is idiotic. If it's successful or made a dent in culture, then it is worthy of study to find out why."
—Joss Whedon



Required Course Texts & Materials

- Short readings will be available via Canvas.
- Chang, Edmond Y. *Archaea Live-Action Role-Playing and Wargaming*.
- Web access and an active University of Oregon email account.



identities, bodies, histories, desires, experiences, and even struggles and violences. Whether on the page, screen, on campus, or in the community, we will explore and engage multiple perspectives, levels of familiarity with the material, and heady and heartfelt responses. In other words, our class will be a safe, respectful, but not necessarily comfortable space. While pushing boundaries and comfort zones are essential to critical thinking, making connections, and intellectual and personal freedom, see me with concerns and queries, for reasonable accommodations, and for further resources on campus.

Requirements & Grading

Course Requirements

- Role Play
- Autobiography (10%)
- Character History (10%)
- Play Logs (20%)
- Project Proposal (10%)
- Final Project (20%)
- Class Participation (30%)

Your grade should not be the sole exigence or motivation for this class. It is the hope of the course that you walk away from WGS 199 with something more. Find some pleasure and some edification and some knowledge from this class (or any class really) and success is usually not far behind. With that in mind, your grade will be a reflection of engagement, effort, close reading, critical thinking, writing, and participation.

Role Play Autobiography (10%)

The first assignment asks you to write a short autobiography detailing and defining one way or one role that you play in your life. Using a photo of yourself as inspiration, the essay asks you to analyze what does photo tell us about you, what it does not tell us, what assumptions can be made, and why the pictured role is important to consider.

Character History (10%)

Before you begin larping, you will write a short history of the character you have created for *Archaea Live-Action Role-Playing and Wargaming*. Using the game's rulebook and world, the character history will detail your character's name, background, personality, and other details that will help bring your role play to life.

Play Logs, or, Plogs (20%)

Each week you will engage various readings, media texts, theoretical perspectives, and of course, actual live-action role-playing play. You will be required to keep a weekly "plog" or "play log" about the texts that you see and read and your larping experience. Plog entries will be short reactions, responses, meditations, and provocations that engage your dressing up and play on a critical, analytical, or theoretical level. Plogs will be posted each week to the class blog. These weekly logs will be evaluated on completion and your critical, analytical engagement with the prompt.

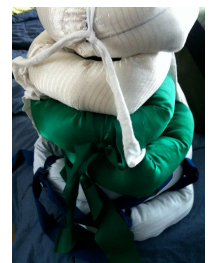
Project Proposal (10%)

As part of your Final Project research and writing process, you will be required to generate a 1-page research proposal in business memo format. You will also arrange for a conference with me to go over your proposal. Proposals will be graded for clarity, detail, completion, and manuscript format. Your proposal and conference must be completed at least two weeks prior to the end of the quarter. See the research proposal paper prompt for more information.

Final Project (20%)

At the end of the quarter, you will complete a final project integrating what you have explored and experienced with additional research, that draws on specific terms, concepts, or issues from the class, and that articulates the critical value of dressing up, cosplay, drag, LARP, or performance. The project

"When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking."
—Albert Einstein



"I've overheard your theory 'nostalgia's for geeks' / I guess sir, if you say so, some of us just like to read / One second I'm a Koons, then suddenly the Koons is me / Pop culture was in art, now art's in pop culture in me."
—Lady Gaga

"Without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable."
—Carl Jung

asks you to make connections and to create an argument across different kinds of evidence. Your final project can be a traditional research paper, a media production (which includes a substantive analytical component), or a hybrid of the two. See the final project prompt for more details and explanations.

Participation and Preparedness (30%)

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. Moreover, negative participation will hurt your participation grade. Participation is determined by 1) your **respectful** presence in class and interactions with me and others, 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 collaborative play, presentations, and group work, and 5) your care and use of the class *Canvas*—henceforth called the “class blog”—bookmark the address, check and comment regularly, think of the blog as an extension of class: <https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/61322>.

Attendance

Attendance is required. If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, the discussion of a reading, the chance to 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 I may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the day, 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 will be mark as such. Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your overall participation grade for the class. **Moreover, absences for more than 4 class sessions (50% of class time or more) will result in a failing grade regardless of reason. There are no excused or unexcused absences.** If you know you are going to or must miss class, please let me know (via email) as soon as possible and make any necessary arrangements. When you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes or see me during office hours in order to make up missed work in a timely manner. You are always responsible for all material covered during your absence.

Assignment Format

All papers must be typed or produced on a word processor. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format (or if necessary Rich Text Format).

All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. Unless instructed otherwise, **all 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 should 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.

Always make a backup copy of every paper you turn in, lest you be one of the unhappy people whose paper is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment at least a couple of times during the drafting process and certainly **BEFORE** you exit the document for the last time and leave the computer. This way, even if you lose your flash drive or your paper gets mysteriously erased, you still have a copy in your e-mail files.



MLA Paper Formatting

1) 1" margins top, bottom, left, and right on each page.

2) Single-spaced block header on the first page only with your name, date, course, my name:

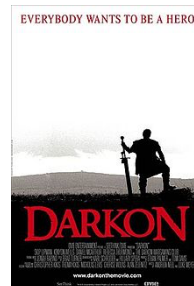
Student Name
WGS 199
March 28, 2016
Chang

3) Appropriate title.

4) Print single-sided. Papers are double-spaced with paper page numbers in the upper right hand corner; no extra space between paragraphs.

5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.

6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. A paper turned in without a bibliography automatically fails and will be returned with no comments.



Late Assignments

All assignments must be done completely and turned in on time. Late assignments will be penalized half a grade for every day that they are late. So, if your essay is late by one day and you received a B- for your work, then your final grade would be a C+. Moreover, I will not comment on late work. However, you still need to complete late work or you will receive a zero. If you miss class on the due date of a paper, you must notify me and make arrangements to get the paper to me as soon as possible. **Unless previously arranged, I DO NOT accept assignments via email.** Remember that a paper has not been officially handed in until it is in my hands. Never turning anything in late is always the best policy.

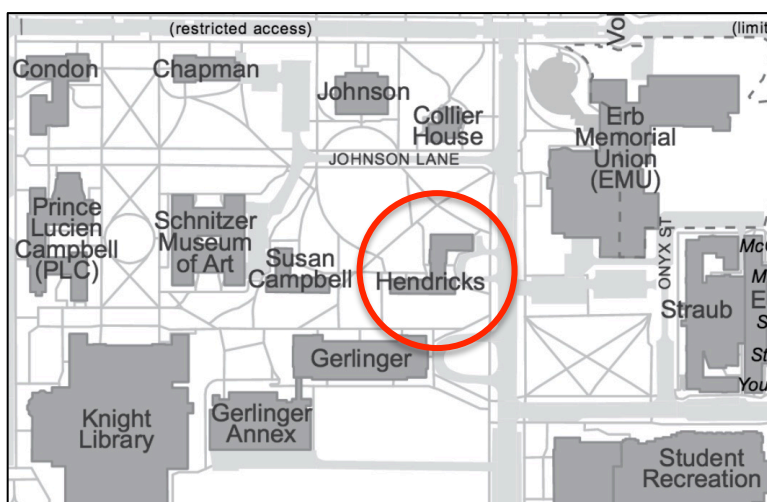
Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the semester, your assignments will receive feedback and comments that will identify what you are doing well and what still needs improvement. Your grades assess your fulfillment of the assignment, the quality of work, detail, analysis, and argumentation, overall effort, and finally, style, polish, and risk taking. Consider the following evaluation rubric as signposts or a kind of legend to your progress and evaluation:

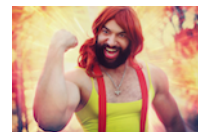
- **Outstanding (A/A+):** Offers a very highly proficient, even memorable demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), including some appropriate risk-taking and/or creativity.
- **Strong (B+/A-):** Offers a proficient demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), which could be further enhanced with revision, additional support, and creativity.
- **Good (B-/B):** Effectively demonstrates the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), but less proficiently; could use revision to demonstrate more skillful and nuanced command of trait(s).
- **Acceptable (C/C+):** Minimally meets the basic course or assignment requirement, but the demonstrated trait(s) are not fully realized or well-controlled and would benefit from significant revision.
- **Inadequate (D/D+):** Does not meet the course or assignment requirement; the trait(s) are not adequately demonstrated and require substantial revision on multiple levels.

Finding Help

My office and office hours are listed in the left sidebar. I am available during that time and by appointment to help you. I encourage you to come see me early in the quarter even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. I may ask you to meet with me when I think a conference would be useful. My office is located on the third floor of Hendricks Hall (southeast of the EMU), Room 322. See <<http://map.uoregon.edu/>>.



I am also available electronically by email and the course blog. Email and the blog are the best means of contacting me. I will do my best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**. If there is an emergency and you need to reach me, please contact the main WGS office in 315 Hendricks Hall. Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via AOL Instant Messenger or Google Talk (**nickname: EDagogy**); if I am logged in, during reasonable hours, you are more



Learning (With) Technology

Unless you have an official accommodation, the use of technology in our classroom is a privilege, not a right. Mobile devices like phones, media players, and cameras should be off and put away. Computers and tablets should be used for note-taking, in-class work, and readings only. Print is generally preferred for course texts and readings, but full-size e-versions are acceptable provided the student is able to readily highlight, annotate, and index. Finally, be conscientious and respectful in the use of the course website and social media and post no material from class to the internet or non-class sites without explicit permission from the instructor and the class. Keep in mind these three rules:

- 1) Use the Right Tool for the situation and the task—keep it simple and elegant,
- 2) Practice Best Practices—it must improve or enhance your learning,
- 3) Be a Good Neighbor—it cannot distract or detract from others' learning.

Inappropriate use and abuse of technology in class will result in the taking away of technology privileges for the offending student and/or class as a whole.



Contact Ed

Office:
322 Hendricks
Office Hours:
TuTh 10-11:30 AM
or by appointment
E-mail:
echang@uoregon.edu
AIM or Google Talk:
EDagogy

than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate an IM conversation for the first time, please identify yourself to me; also, be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can find additional writing and academic help at the Teaching and Learning Center on campus, a good resource for this class and other classes. The TLC is located in 68 Prince Lucien Campbell (PLC) Hall and offers a variety of services including help with reading, papers, brainstorming ideas, and research. See <<http://tlc.uoregon.edu/>> to make an appointment and for more information. Further resources, both on- and off-campus can be found on the Links page of the course website: <<http://www.edmondchang/courses/199/links.html>>.

Academic Integrity

All students are required to uphold the highest academic standards. 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 at any time. For our class, 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. Any plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in failure of this course. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Please review the University of Oregon's Guidelines for Plagiarism at <<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>>.

Accommodations

Please let me know in the first week of class if you require academic accommodations based on a disability registered with Accessible Education Services. The University of Oregon is an inclusive learning environment. For more information, contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or <<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>>.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The University of Oregon is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a quality learning experience and the opportunity to pursue their academic goals in a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and gender-based stalking and bullying is contrary to the community values of the institution. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, and so on. As your instructor, I have a mandatory reporting responsibility and am required by law to share with the University any information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on campus. For more information about policies and resources or confidential reporting options, see the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity: <<http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/sexual-harassment-assault>> or the Dean of Students' page on Student Conduct & Community Standards: <<https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards.aspx>>.

"First sentences are doors to worlds."
—Ursula K. Le Guin



"We live in a fantasy world, a world of illusion. The great task in life is to find reality."
—Iris Murdoch



"Now go, and make interesting mistakes, make amazing mistakes, make glorious and fantastic mistakes. Break rules. Leave the world more interesting for your being here. Make good art."
—Neil Gaiman

**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 3/28
First Day of Classes

March						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		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 1: March 28-April 1

Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony (2012)

Goffman, "The Presentation of Self"

Hebdige, "Introduction: Subculture and Style"

Lunning, "Cosplay and the Performance of Identity"

<http://www.quodlibetica.com/cosplay-and-the-performance-of-identity/>

"PBS Showcases Queer Aspects of Cosplay"

<http://www.advocate.com/geek/2014/04/18/watch-pbs-showcases-queer-aspects-cosplay>

Cumberbatch, "I'm a Black Female Cosplayer And Some People Hate It"

<http://www.xojane.com/issues/mad-back-cosplayer-chaka-cumberbatch>

Week 2: April 4-8

Paris is Burning (1990)

Halberstam, "Gender" & Somerville, "Queer" & Gerdes, "Performativity"

Butler, "Critically Queer"

Halberstam, "Mackdaddy, Superfly, Rapper: Gender, Race, and

Masculinity in the Drag King Scene"

Chang, *Archaea*, Ch. 1, 7

Week 3: April 11-15

Monster Camp (2007)

Aultmann, "Cisgender" & Williams, "Transgender"

Munoz, "Performing Disidentifications"

Chang, *Archaea*, Ch. 2-3

Week 4: April 18-22

Darkon (2006)

Fine, "Introduction," *Shared Fantasy*

Chang, *Archaea*, Ch. 4, 5, 6

Week 5: April 25-29

Play *Archaea*

Stark, "Dilemmas of the Lady Game Designer"

<http://leavingmundania.com/2013/02/25/dilemmas-of-the-lady-game-designer/>

Brown, "The Trouble with Gender in Larp"

<http://analoggamestudies.org/2015/09/the-trouble-with-gender-in-larp/>

Melody, "Trans Bodies Are Not a Halloween Costume"

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/delia-melody/trans-bodies-are-not-a-ha_b_8423568.html

Week 6: May 2-6

Play *Archaea*

Stark, "Race in Larp Checklist: What to Think About"

<http://leavingmundania.com/2014/03/24/race-in-larp-what-to-think-about/>

Upkins, "Going Medieval"

<http://thenerdsofcolor.org/2016/02/11/going-medieval/>

Rivas, "Ohio Univ. Students to Classmates: 'We're a Culture, Not a Costume'"

<http://www.colorlines.com/articles/ohio-univ-students-classmates-were-culture-not-costume>

Due: Plogs are assigned each week.

Due: Role Play Autobiography

April						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					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

Fri 4/29 Event:
Bechdel Test
Burlesque, 8 PM, GSH
123

Due: Project Proposal Memo & Conference

Due: Character History & Character Sheet

May						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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 7: May 9-13

Play *Archaea*

Bowman, "Bleed: The Spillover Between Player and Character"

<http://nordiclarp.org/2015/03/02/bleed-the-spillover-between-player-and-character/>

Week 8: May 16-20

Play *Archaea*

Graham, "Finding Your Way as a Queer LARPer"

<https://killscreen.com/articles/finding-your-way-queer-larper/>

Jones, "Sex and Play-Doh: Exploring Women's Sexuality Through Larp"

<http://analoggamestudies.org/2014/09/sex-and-play-doh/>

Brown, "Towards a Taxonomy of Sexy Analog Play"

<http://analoggamestudies.org/2015/07/towards-a-taxonomy-of-sexy-analog-play/>

Week 9: May 23-27

Play *Archaea*

Stark, "A Wheelchair Ramp for Larp"

<http://leavingmundania.com/2014/09/29/wheelchair-ramp-larp/>

Henry, "Reimagining Disability in Role-Playing Games"

<http://analoggamestudies.org/2015/02/reimagining-disability-in-role-playing-games/>

Week 10: May 30-June 3

Play *Archaea*

Stark, "Social Justice in Larp: A Practical Approach"

<http://leavingmundania.com/2014/12/01/social-justice-in-larp-a-practical-approach/>

Stark, "'Larp and Activism: A Match Made in Heaven?"

<http://leavingmundania.com/2014/11/25/larp-activism-match-made-heaven/>

Stark, "Larp's Physicality Raises Social Justice Questions"

<http://leavingmundania.com/2014/11/26/larps-physicality-raises-social-justice-questions/>

Week 11: June 6-10

Last Day of Instruction 6/3

Final Exams Begin 6/6

Grades Due 6/13

Mon 5/30
Memorial Day
Holiday

June

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			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		

Due: Final Project