



WGS 361  
CRN 27189  
TuTh 2-3:20 PM  
WIL 110  
Winter 2016  
University of  
Oregon  
Dr. Edmond Y.  
Chang



"You are in a maze of  
twisty passages, all  
alike."  
—ZORK

"There's a toxicity  
within gaming  
culture, and also in  
tech culture, that  
drives this misogynist  
hatred, this  
reactionary backlash  
against women who  
have anything to say,  
especially those who  
have critiques or who  
are feminists.  
There's this huge  
drive to silence us,  
and if they can't  
silence us, they try  
to discredit us in an  
effort to push us  
out."  
--Anita Sarkeesian

ALEXANDER GALLOWAY in *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* argues that play "is a symbolic action for larger issues in culture" (16) and that video games "render social realities into playable form" (17). Using a broad archive of "imagined worlds"—drawing on literature, digital games, film, scholarship, and popular culture—this course will consider the questions: Why study these "imagined worlds," how are they important, and what values do they have? In this course, we will look at and analyze media texts old and new through the interdisciplinary lenses of feminist, queer, and cultural studies, and we deploy virtual worlds and video games as theories about and dramatizations of different social relationships and realities, to unpack and analyze the intersections of cultural formations like race, gender, class, nation, and sexuality, particularly in response to the recent and ongoing racist, sexist, and phobic backlashes in game cultures and gamer communities. We will look at how virtual worlds and video games can be rhetorical, political, and popular challenges to the problems above, and in the words of Gonzalo Frasca, how "they can be used for conveying passionate ideas...to deliver an ideological message."

A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity about the world, about the culture we live in, and about the cultural productions we imagine, produce, and consume. In other words, this class is about reading, critiquing, and analyzing our culture through different literatures and games. We will engage the techniques and practices of reading and enjoying literature and playing games. We will identify and develop different ways to read different kinds of texts and understand and develop strategies, habits, and perspectives of reading, thinking, and writing. Foremost, we will read and play with pleasure and for pleasure. We will also close read and close play for analysis. And lastly, we will read, play, and deploy literature and games as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience.

SPECIFICALLY, our course goals include:

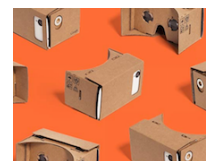
- We will develop and demonstrate a familiarity with a range of texts, terms, and theories of the study of virtual worlds and video games.
- We will identify and articulate different ways to explore, close read, analyze, and critique literature, film, television, and digital media.
- We will consider questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- We will use popular culture as vernacular theory to think, talk, write, and interrogate the world around us.

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

"The future is  
already here — it's  
just not very evenly  
distributed."  
—William Gibson

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

"Most people are  
awaiting Virtual  
Reality; I'm awaiting  
virtuous reality."  
—Eli Khamarov



#### Required Course Texts & Materials

- WGS 361 Course Reader (available via Campus Copy)
- Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*.
- Web access and an active University of Oregon email account.



Course Requirements	
Presentation	(10%)
Plog, or, Play Log	(10%)
Exams	(40%)
Critical Review	(10%)
Class Participation	(30%)

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

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 361 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.

### Game Play Presentation (10%)

For your presentation, you will play a game for that day, you will read the texts assigned for that week, and then generate a brief close playing demonstration and a critical and analytical question to get class discussion started for the day. A 1/2- to 1-page handout copied for the whole class is suggested, which may include: a brief biography of game developer(s), a brief synopsis of the game, your critical question, and any other information you feel is useful or relevant. Presentations are no more than 10 minutes, should include a demonstration of play, and each group member must have a speaking role.

### Plog, or, Play Log (10%)

Each week you will be introduced to one or more games, virtual worlds, stories, or theoretical texts. You will be required to keep a weekly “plog” or “play log” about the games that you play and the texts that you read. Plog entries will be short reactions, responses, meditations, and provocations that engage the game and your 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.

### Exams (40%)

You will have three take-home exam opportunities, which will consist of short answer and essay questions. Exams will be due at the end of Week 4, Week 8, and Week 11. You must complete two of the three exams. Exams will be cumulative and based on the class readings, video games and other media, and class discussions.

### Critical Review (10%)

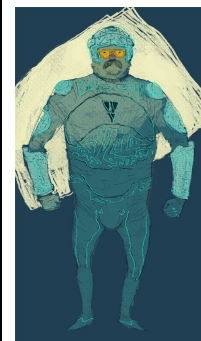
You will be required to write a short, 500-750 word, single-spaced critical review of a text not covered by the course that you believe fits the critical, theoretical, and intellectual stakes of this class. You will locate a text, close read the text, and generate an academic critique and assessment of the text’s value for study. In other words, what text might you include in a class like ours? You **must** have your text **approved** by the instructor. The critical review will be turned in and published on the course blog.

### 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

“I’m a games and theory kind of guy. I love puzzles, so it was fun dissecting Shakespeare’s prose.”

—Neil Patrick Harris



“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

“Our approach to making games is to find the fun first and then use the technology to enhance the fun.”

—Sid Meier

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 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/54424>.

## 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 9 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.



## 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 361  
January 4, 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.

## 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.

## 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.



## 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.





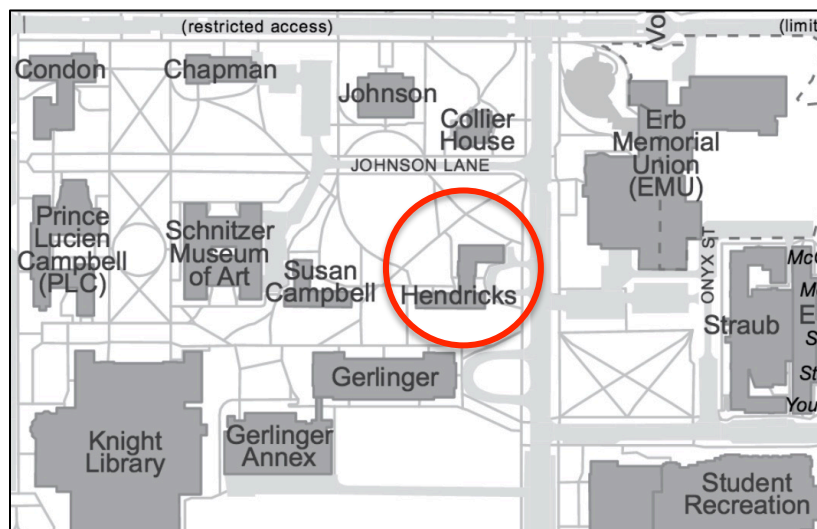
## Contact Ed

Office:  
322 Hendricks  
Office Hours:  
TuTh 12-1:30 PM  
or by appointment  
E-mail:  
[echang@uoregon.edu](mailto:echang@uoregon.edu)  
AIM or Google Talk:  
EDagogy

- **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 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/361/links.html>.

## 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.

## 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>.

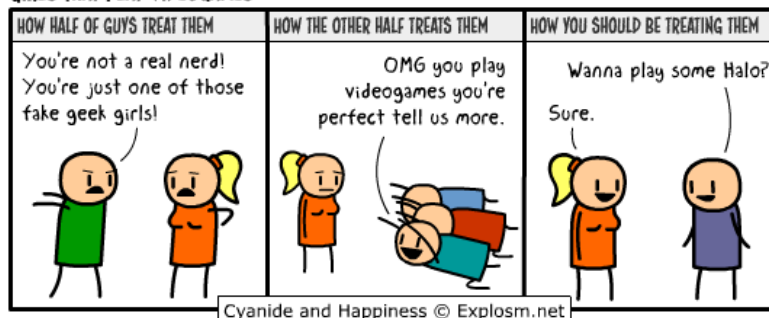
"If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities."  
—Maya Angelou



"My imagination makes me human and makes me a fool; it gives me all the world and exiles me from it."  
—Ursula K. Le Guin

"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

### GIRLS THAT PLAY VIDEOGAMES



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

Chang / WGS 361 / Winter 2016 / University of Oregon

Mon 1/4  
First Day of Classes

January						
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: January 4-8

Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

Bogost, "Introduction," *How to Do Things with Videogames*

Chang, "Close Playing, a Meditation on Teaching (with) Video Games"

<http://www.edmondchang.com/2010/11/11/close-playing-a-meditation/>

Losh, "#gamergate101"

<http://virtualpolitik.blogspot.com/2014/10/gamergate-101.html>

Dewey, "The Only Guide to Gamergate You Will Ever Need to Read"

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/>

Wagner, "The Future of the Cultural Wars is Here, And It's Gamergate"

<http://deadspin.com/the-future-of-the-culture-wars-is-here-and-its-gamergate-1646145844>

ImmorTall (2010): <http://pgstudios.org/games.php?g=2>

fIOW (2006): <http://interactive.usc.edu/projects/cloud/flowing/>

### Week 2: January 11-15

Barlow, "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace"

Salen and Zimmerman, "The Immersive Fallacy," *Rules of Play*

Chen, "Flow in Games"

Dibbell, "A Rape in Cyberspace"

Halberstam, "Gender," *Keywords*

*LambdaMOO* (1991):

[http://www.cc.gatech.edu/classes/cs8113e\\_99\\_winter/lambda.html](http://www.cc.gatech.edu/classes/cs8113e_99_winter/lambda.html)

Jackson, "My Body—a Wunderkammer" (1997):

[http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/jackson\\_my\\_body\\_a\\_wunderkammer.html](http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/jackson_my_body_a_wunderkammer.html)

### Week 3: January 18-22

Shaw, "Introduction," *Gaming at the Margins*

Nardi, "Gender," *My Life as a Night Elf Priest*

Shaw, "Circles, Charmed and Magic: Queering Game Studies"

*Depression Quest* (2013): <http://www.depressionquest.com/>

*Gone Home* (2013): <http://www.gonehomegame.com/>

*Gravitation* (2008):

<http://hcsoftware.sourceforge.net/gravitation/index.html>

### Week 4: January 25-29

*Second Skin* (2008)

Exam #1 Week

### Week 5: February 1-5

Ferguson, "Race," *Keywords*

Higgin, "How I Use Leeroy Jenkins"

<http://www.tannerhiggin.com/how-i-use-leeroy-jenkins-to-teach-race-in-videogames/>

Higgin, "Blackless Fantasy: The Disappearance of Race in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games"

Sisler, "Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games"

Card, *Ender's Game*

*QWOP* (2008): <https://www.foddy.net/Athletics.html>

Leeroy Jenkins: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hooKVstzbz0>

World of Warcraft Dances:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DF7C9utC5r4>

February						
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					

**Week 6: February 8-12**

Steinkuehler, "The Mangle of Play"  
Nakamura, "Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game: The Racialization of Labor in *World of Warcraft*"  
Dibbell, "The Life of the Chinese Gold Farmer"  
Card, *Ender's Game* (cont.)  
*Papers, Please* (2013): <http://papersplea.se/>  
*Border Crossing* (2006):  
<http://www.flashrolls.com/shooting-games/Border-Patrol-Flash-Game.htm>  
*Ethnic Cleansing*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdLX4GuySwQ>

**Week 7: February 15-19**

Ruberg, "No Fun: The Queer Potential of Video Games that Annoy, Anger, Disappoint, Sadden, and Hurt"  
Consalvo, "There is No Magic Circle"  
Card, *Ender's Game* (cont.)  
*America's Army* (2002): <https://www.americasarmy.com/>  
*Unmanned* (2012): <http://unmanned.molleindustria.org/>  
*SuperColumbineMassacre RPG* (2005): <http://www.columbinegame.com/>

**Week 8: February 22-26**

*Darkon* (2006)

Exam #2 Week

**Week 9: February 29-March 4**

Somerville, "Queer," *Keywords*  
Chang, "Love is in the Air: Queer (Im)Possibility and Straightwashing in *FrontierVille* and *World of Warcraft*"  
Nakamura, "'It's a Nigger in Here! Kill the Nigger!' *User-Generated Media Campaigns Against Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia in Digital Games*"  
Stabile, "'I Will Own You': Accountability in Massively Multiplayer Online Games"  
*Dys4ia* (2012): <http://jayisgames.com/games/dys4ia/>  
*Queer Power* (2004): <http://www.molleindustria.org/en/queer-power/>  
*Coming Out Simulator* (2014): <http://ncase.itch.io/coming-out-simulator-2014>  
*World of Warcraft* (2004)

**Week 10: March 7-11**

Clark and Kopas, "Queering Human-Game Relations"  
<http://www.firstpersonscholar.com/queering-human-game-relations/>  
Evans and Janish, "#INeedDiverseGames: How the Queer Backlash to GamerGate Enables Nonbinary Coalition"  
Collins, "Anita Sarkeesian on GamerGate: 'We Have a Problem and We're Going to Fix This'"  
<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/anita-sarkeesian-gamergate-interview-20141017>  
McGonigal, "Introduction: Reality is Broken"  
Gonzalo Frasca, "Ideological Video Games"  
*World of Warcraft* (2004)

**Week 11: March 14-18**

Last Day of Instruction 3/11  
Final Exams Begin 3/14  
Grades Due 3/21

Exam #3 Week  
Critical Review Due

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		