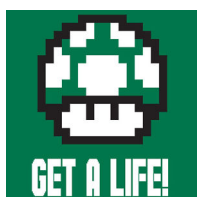




ENG 3850
Section 100
CN 6204
MWF 10:45-
11:40 AM
Tupper 005
Autumn 2018
Ohio University
Dr. Edmond Y.
Chang
change@ohio.edu



"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 (borrowing from the formal English junior composition outcomes, which are in bold):

- **We will write for specific purposes, audiences and situations.** To that end, 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 read a variety of texts and genres.** We will identify and articulate different ways to explore, close read, analyze, and critique literature, film, video games, and other digital media.
- **We will research a variety of academic databases using appropriate and effective strategies.** We will explore of a range of research tools and resources, and we will find and evaluate sources appropriate to our reading, writing, and study.

"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

- Gibson, *Neuromancer*.
- Cline, *Ready Player One*.
- Selected games.
- Shorter readings will be available via Blackboard.
- Web access and an active Ohio University email account.



Course Requirements

Presentation	(10%)
Plog, or, Play Log	(10%)
Response Papers	(20%)
Research Proposal	(10%)
Final Project	(20%)
Class Participation	(30%)

- We will consider questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- We will use video games and popular culture as vernacular theory to think, talk, write, and interrogate the world around us.

WE WILL spend the semester 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 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 ENG 3850 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-page handout copied for the whole class is required, 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%)

You will be required to keep a weekly (or so) "plog" or "play log" about the games that you play and the texts that you read. Plog entries will be short analytical responses, meditations, and provocations that engage the game and your play on a critical, analytical, or theoretical level. Plogs will be posted each week (or so) to the class blog. These plogs will be evaluated on completion and your critical, analytical engagement with the prompt.

Critical Response Papers (20%)

Over the course of the semester, you will complete a number short, critical, analytical response papers. These single-spaced, one-page writings serve as close readings of, analyses of, and articulations of the texts and connections you see, read, and talk about in class. These responses are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, focus, coherence, critique, and your ability to concisely formulate arguments. You will be required to generate a response paper approximately every other week for a total of 5. See the response paper prompt for more details.

Research Proposal Memo & Bibliography (10%)

As part of your Final Project research and writing process, you must generate a 1-page research proposal in business memo format and a working bibliography.

"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

You will also arrange for a conference with me to go over your proposal. The proposal and bibliography will be graded for clarity, detail, completion, and manuscript format. Your proposal and conference must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the end of the semester.

Final Project (20%)

At the end of the semester, you will complete a Final Project that integrates what you have read, explored, and written about in your Response Papers, that draws on specific terms, concepts, or issues from the class, and that articulates the critical value of virtual worlds and video games. The project asks you to make connections and to create an argument across different kinds of evidence and added research. Your final project can be a traditional research paper, a media production (which includes a substantive analytical component), or a hybrid of the two.

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** and **collaboration** in group work, presentations, office hours, and course events, and 5) your care and use of the class *Blackboard*—henceforth called the “class blog”—bookmark the address, check and comment regularly, once or twice a week, and think of the blog as an extension of class: https://blackboard.ohio.edu/webapps/blackboard/execute/modulepage/view?course_id=486541_1&cmp_tab_id=533520_1&editMode=true&mode=cpview

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 22 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),



Response Paper Formatting

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

2) Single-spaced block header with your name, date, course, my name. For example:

Student Name
ENG 3850
August 27, 2018
Chang

3) Response (week) number and title (e.g. Week #2: Race in *The Great Gatsby*).

4) Response papers are single-spaced, standard indented paragraphing, no page numbers.

5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.

6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. Bibliography if necessary.



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.

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 during the drafting process and certainly before you exit the document and leave the computer. Or you may want to invest in cloud-based file storage like OneDrive (which all OU students have already have access) or DropBox.

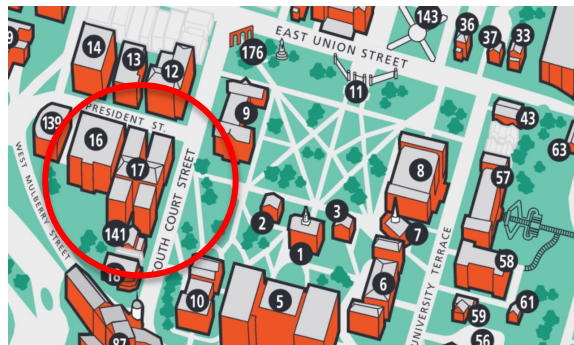
Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the quarter, 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) associate 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 second floor, south wing of Lindley Hall (west of College Green), south elevator stop 2R, Room S205. See <<https://www.ohio.edu/athens/ioumap.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.



Contact Ed

Office:
S205 Lindley Hall
(South Wing)
Office Hours:
MW 1-2:30 PM
or by appointment
E-mail:
change@ohio.edu
Google Talk:
EDagogy

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 English office in N196 Lindley Hall. Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via 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, use a greeting, please identify yourself to me, and be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can find additional writing and academic help at the Student Writing Center (SWC) on campus, a good resource for this class and other classes. The SWC is located in the Academic Advancement Center (AAC) on the first floor of Alden Library and offers a variety of services including help with reading, papers, brainstorming ideas, and research. See <<https://www.ohio.edu/uc/aac/swc.cfm>> 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.com/courses/2010/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 an assignment or of this course. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Please review the Ohio University's Academic Misconduct page at <<https://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm>>.

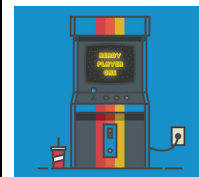
Accommodations

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should see me or contact me **in the first week of class** to discuss their specific needs and provide written documentation from Student Accessibility Services. If you are not yet registered as a student with a disability, please contact Student Accessibility Services at 740-593-2620 or visit the SAS office in 348 Baker University Center. The SAS website is: <<https://www.ohio.edu/uc/sas/index.cfm>>.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

Ohio University and this course are committed to a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Title IX makes clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, and so on. As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter and am required by law to share with the University any information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a

"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

crime that may have occurred on campus. For more information about policies and resources or confidential reporting options, see the Office of University Equity and Civil Rights Compliance: <<https://www.ohio.edu/equity-civil-rights/>> or the Division of Student Affairs page on Student Conduct & Community Standards: <<https://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/process/sexualassault.cfm>>.

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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Week 1: August 27-31: CLOSE PLAYING

Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

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

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

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

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/>

Play:

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

Week 2: September 3-7*: IMMERSION/INTERACTIVITY

Digital Nation (2010, film)

Barlow, "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace"

Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants"

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

Chen, "Flow in Games"

Play:

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

Week 3: September 10-14: GENDER & BODIES

Tiptree, *The Girl Who Was Plugged In* (1973)

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

Bierre, Chetwynd, Ellis, et al., "Game Not Over: Accessibility Issues in Video Games"

Halberstam, "Gender," *Keywords*

Week 4: September 17-21: GENDER (cont.)

Vinge, *True Names* (1981)

Dibbell, "A Rape in Cyberspace"

Play:

LambdaMOO (1991):

http://www.cc.gatech.edu/classes/cs8113e_99_winter/lambda.html

Week 5: September 24-28*: TEXT GAMES

Frasca, "Ludologists Love Stories, Too"

Parker, "Zoe Quinn's *Depression Quest*"

<https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/zoe-quinns-depression-quest>
Orland, "What *Depression Quest* Taught Me About Dealing with Mental Illness" <http://arstechnica.com/gaming/2014/08/what-depression-quest-taught-me-about-dealing-with-mental-illness/>

8/27
First Day of Classes

August						
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 1 or 2 CR is recommended.

Mon 9/3 Labor Day

September						
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						

Week 5 or 6 CR is recommended.

Fri 10/5
Fall Semester
Reading Day

October						
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 5: September 24-28* (cont.)

Play:

Adventure (1976):

<https://www.amc.com/shows/halt-and-catch-fire/exclusives/colossal-cave-adventure>

"My Body—a Wunderkammer" (1997):

http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/jackson_my_body_a_wunderkammer.html

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

Week 6: October 1-5: GENDER

Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1982)

Fernbach, "The Fetishization of Masculinity in Science Fiction: The Cyborg and the Console Cowboy"

Week 7: October 8-12: GENDER (cont.)

Gibson, *Neuromancer* (cont.)

Week 8: October 15-19*: RACE

Higgin, "How I Use Leeroy Jenkins"

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

Sisler, "Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games"

Narcisse, "The Natural: The Trouble Portraying Blackness in Video Games"

<http://kotaku.com/the-natural-the-trouble-portraying-blackness-in-video-1736504384>

Cole and DePass, "Black Skin Is Still A Radical Concept in Video Games"

https://waypoint.vice.com/en_us/article/78qpxd/black-skin-is-still-a-radical-concept-in-video-games

Akil, "Warning: Pokemon GO is a Death Sentence If You Are a Black Man"

<https://medium.com/mobile-lifestyle/warning-pokemon-go-is-a-death-sentence-if-you-are-a-black-man-acacb4bdae7f>

Ferguson, "Race," *Keywords*

Play:

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

Unmanned (2012): <http://unmanned.molleindustria.org/>

Pokemon Go (2016): <http://www.pokemongo.com/>

Leeroy Jenkins: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hookVstzbz0>

WoW Dances: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCCZo5FmD6A>

Week 9: October 22-27: LARP

Darkon (2006, film)

Stark, "Race in Larp: Some Initial Musings"

<http://leavingmundania.com/2014/01/30/race-in-larp-initial-musings/>

Upkins, "Going Medieval"

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

Worley, "Vikings were not Nazis"

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vikings-neo-nazis-anti-racists-swedish-nordic-resistance-movement-larp-a7987716.html>

Week 10: October 29-November 2: GENDER (cont.)

Cline, *Ready Player One* (2011)

Condis, "Playing the Game of Literature"

Week 10 or 11 CR is recommended.

November						
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	

Week 11: November 5-9*: RACE (cont.)

Cline, *Ready Player One* (2011)

Nakamura, “‘It’s a Nigger in Here! Kill the Nigger!’ *User-Generated Media Campaigns Against Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia in Digital Games*”

Play:

Border Crossing (2006):

<http://www.flashrolls.com/shooting-games/Border-Patrol-Flash-Game.htm>

Week 12: November 12-16: QUEER

Shaw, “Circles, Charmed and Magic: Queering Game Studies”

Clark, “What *Is* Queerness in Games, Anyway?”

Chang, “Queergaming”

Somerville, “Queer,” *Keywords*

Play:

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

Coming Out Simulator (2014): <http://ncase.itich.io/coming-out-simulator-2014>

Dys4ia (2012): <https://jayisgames.com/games/dys4ia/>

Week 13: November 19-23: QUEER (cont.)

Ready Player One (2018, film)

Chang, “Love is in the Air: Queer (Im)Possibility and Straightwashing in *FrontierVille* and *World of Warcraft*”

Play:

World of Warcraft (2004)

Week 14: November 26-30*: GOLD FARMING

Second Skin (2008, film)

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”

Play:

World of Warcraft (2004)

“Ni Hao”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dkkf5NEIo0>

Week 15: December 3-7: FUN

Consalvo, “There is No Magic Circle”

Ruberg, “No Fun: The Queer Potential of Video Games that Annoy, Anger, Disappoint, Sadden, and Hurt”

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>

Play:

World of Warcraft (2004)

Week 16: Final Exams

11/21-11/25
Thanksgiving Recess

Final Project Due

December						
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					