

Games We Play: Games, Performance, and Play

Culture, Art and Technology 3D, Spring 2018, UC San Diego
M + W 5:00-6:20PM, Ledden Auditorium

Professor: Ash Eliza Smith, aes002@ucsd.edu

Office Hours: TH 12:00-2:00 PM Pepper Canyon Hall Rm# 248

Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description:

What is a game? What is play? How does technology influence play? Are there limits to games and play? In this course, we will study the theory of play in everyday life and develop a critical gaming literacy. We will examine the **Culture** of play and games, the **Art** of designing play and games and the **Technology** mediating play and games. We will think about the intersection of pervasive play with ubiquitous computing and engage with live action role-playing, experimental game design, video games, art games, mixed reality, pervasive games, street games, location-based games, tabletop games, interactive storytelling, and worldbuilding.

You will learn how to talk, write, design and play—critically. You will be asked to play-test games, write game reviews, and design games. Your sections will double as a game lab where you will conduct collaborative research, workshop, and eventually design a game for your final project.

Play is an important component in this course as is the flexibility and willingness to try out new platforms and to work inter-disciplinarily in-between science, art and design where creativity and collaborative innovation will be our driving force.

This course might be a game. :)

Learning Objectives:

- Introduction to Art Practice as Research, Collaborative Research and Methods.
- Develop skills for analyzing and thinking critically about games and play.
- Use world building and storytelling to build games to think critically about the present.
- Develop skills for analyzing underlying arguments in games.

(L01: Technical, L02: Critical, L03: Rhetorical, L04: Research Practice)

Course Website: Important information for the class can be found on the course website at <http://ted.ucsd.edu/>. Your user name and password is the same used to login to Tritonlink. A copy of this syllabus, assignment details, video links, and important reminders will be posted to the site.

******The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus during the course of the quarter. Any changes made will be posted to an updated syllabus on the TED website.******

Course Readings: Almost all course readings, listening materials and videos will be posted on our class web site <http://ted.ucsd.edu> as indicated in the schedule of readings. Complete readings **before** the class for which they are assigned. In many cases you will need to complete them in order to your Blog Assignment.

Proxy Server: Please note: Some articles linked via TED and reserves websites may only be accessed through UCSD IP addresses. To access the reserves materials off campus you must use UCSD's "proxy server." Alternatively, you may login from off-campus using the Virtual Private Network.

Materials Needed: *They Say, I Say* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein,

- Part 6 ("Doing Research"); Part 7 ("Genres"); Part 8 ("Media & Design"); and Part 9 ("Portfolios").

Suggested if you are serious about wanting to pursue making Games: *Game Design Workshop (3rd Edition)* by Tracy Fullerton -- (2nd Edition is available [here](#))

Apps & Accounts:

- ✓ Install the [CiteThisForMe Web Citer](#) (or equivalent) use Chicago style
- ✓ Indie Games: <https://itch.io/>
- ✓ Steam Game Platform: <http://store.steampowered.com/>
- ✓ Live Streaming Video Platform: <https://www.twitch.tv/>
- ✓ Google Drive or Dropbox Account

Assessment: Assignments + Grade Breakdown (Please link to Prompts below for specifics regarding each assignment):

Grade Breakdown:

Participation, Contribution + Playtesting: 15%

Attend three [Art + Tech Events](#) + write-ups: 5 %

[Blog Writing + Responding](#): 25%

Critical Game Design Research Project + Paper: 55%

-Game Project Design: 25%

-Research Paper + Project Portfolio (*includes smaller research assignments that are turned in as Blog assignments*): 30%

Refer to the linked prompts and rubrics within this syllabus for more specific details regarding each assignment.

Participation + Contribution: Both lecture and section attendance is mandatory as well as playtesting inside and outside of section. Any absences must be cleared with the instructor or TA in advance, or justified with written documentation (e.g. letter from team, etc.). I do not differentiate between mental and physical health and in either case please be in communication with your TA and me. Absences may affect your overall course grade. More than 3 absences may be grounds for failure in the course. Attendance may be taken in lecture or you may be given a brief assignment as part of class participation. (See participation grading criteria at bottom of syllabus for more info).

Laptops: If you need to use a laptop in lecture please sit in the first three rows of the lecture hall.

3 Art + Tech + write-ups: You will attend three Art + Tech events or exhibitions throughout the quarter from [this list](#). After attending you will respond to the prompt below. For more detailed instructions on the deliverables (what, when, how) please go [here](#) .

Answer the following prompt in @ 250 words:

In what ways did you experience or think about Culture, Art, and Technology intersecting in the event or exhibition that you attended? **Tie your experience back to a reading or topic from this course on play + games.** In your writing use concrete details from what you saw or heard. Remember that technology can be language, paper, money, bread as well as a 3D printer, smartphone et al.

After you complete your 3 required Art + Tech Events then you can attend up to 2 Extra Credits which will be added to your final course grade.

Media Lab Workshops for Credit

You are *highly* encouraged to attend the [Augmented Reality workshop](#) as well as the [Getting Started in the Game and Animation Industries](#) at the Media Lab. These will count as Art + Tech Events. Those of you interested in animation will also benefit from the After Effects and Stop Motion Animation Workshops.

Blog Writing: There will be weekly or bi-weekly [prompts](#) that engage with the course material as well as offer an opportunity to practice game design, game review and writing for your research paper. Even though you should embrace this space with the spirit of the [‘Shitty First Drafts’](#) – take the writing that you do here as an opportunity to practice and draft for your research paper. In this space you will work on synthesizing passages of reading from the course with your own writing as well as leaning into the topics that spark an interest in you that you want to pursue further. Smaller parts of your research paper will also be turned in as Blog posts.

In many cases you will have the ability to choose to work alone or with a team. You should establish temporary teams in section that assures that everyone who does not have a smart phone is on a team with people who have smart phones that has the capability to download apps.

Because this course is adaptive to your needs and wants—prompts will be updated/added weekly with specific details. All posts will be due by **Sunday at 6PM**. You must also read the posts of everyone else in your section and respond to the post of at least one other person in your discussion section by the following day. *Your sections and blogs will serve as a location to discuss experiences and brainstorm ideas. The blogs are a means of fostering group accountability and conversation. It’s also a great place to figure out collaborators.

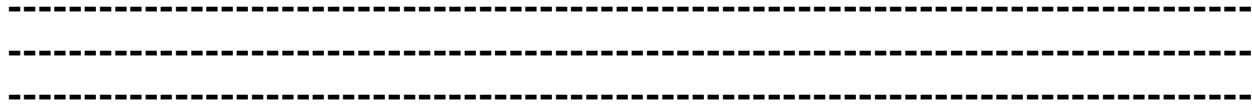
Game-Play Design Research Project + Paper:

- **Game Design:** You will research and design a critical game that is location based (location will be assigned by sections) with the other members of your team. During weeks 9 + 10 you will playtest your game during lecture with your classmates. Game Time!

- Research Paper: You will complete a 4-6 pg. research paper on the games + play subject of your choice. You can write about any topic although you must use a critical lens and must be making an argument. Go really deep and thoroughly on one point. This is a short paper! Although not imperative—it is wonderful if this paper theorizes and analyzes an aspect or theme that connects to the game that your group is designing as this may streamline your research process overall. Within the topics of play and games, consider: various *Cultures* and subcultures, the *Art* of designing and disrupting, and new kinds of *Technology* that mediates and influences. You will begin with a broad topic area of your own choosing and repeatedly refine and revise over the course until you are ready to make a persuasive argument about, and focused analysis of, some more specific aspect of your topic. Whatever starting topic you choose, we will work together to figure out the right scope, angle and resources you will need to turn your initial idea into a feasible, original and interesting research question. You will be asked to complete smaller research assignments along the way that will be a part of the overall grade of this assignment.
- Research Portfolio and Reflection - You will turn in a portfolio that includes the documentation and components of the game, with a collaborative critical reflection during week 11. Think about connections between the research paper and your game—even if seems far field—how does it connect to the game that you created? (@ 500 words)

Week	Game Design	Research Paper
3		3 Topics (Ideas Draft)
4	Decide on a Team and give yourselves a Name :)	Refine Topic Statement and proof of working bibliography
5	Brainstorming + Playing	Annotated Bibliography
6	Pitch projects + meet w/ TA's	Paper Outline + meet w/ TA's
7	Prototypes + Feedback	Rough Draft Paper Due on Wed in Section
8	Prototypes + Feedback	Papers returned with feedback
9	Showcase // Playtest	Do more research, refine, go to writing hub
10	Showcase // Playtest	Final Revision of paper Due on Friday by

		11:59 PM
11	Design Research Portfolio in Portfolium	Design Research Reflection due in Portfolium + Extra Credit to turn it in early



Course Outline—**Tentative Schedule:** (Subject to Change-Always check back for most up to date information)

Week 1 – HELLO!! Game Design as Writing

M 4/2		Play: 200 Word RPG in Section
W 4/4	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Definition of Play & - The Classification of Games by Roger Caillois 	Do: Blog #1

Week 2 – What is a Game?

M 4/9	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Pleasure of Limits by Ian Bogost (begin on page 7: “Limits Create Possibility Spaces”) - We Asked Game Designers If the CIA's El Chapo Board Game Is Any Good 	Do: Blog #1 & #2 + Responses
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W 4/11	Presentation by: Jasper Sussman - Music Games and Play Therapy in Lecture	
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Week 3 – What is Play?

M 4/16	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 2 (Play) from Performance Studies - Pick one article from ADA issue #2 to analyze (do not pick the Introduction by Huntemann) <p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slides from Theory of Fun: 10 years later - Play and Ambiguity by Brian Sutton Smith - Meaningful Play by Salen & Zimmerman - “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” by Clifford Geertz 	<p>Do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blog #3 + Responses - 3 Topics (Ideas Draft)
W 4/18	Presentation by: The Embodied Storytelling Collective - Games-As-Interventions	

Week 4 – Formal Elements of a Game

M 4/23	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Game Design Workshop Ch. 3 by Tracy Fullerton - Blast Theory Case Study 	<p>Do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blog #4 + Responses - Refine Topic Statement and show proof of your working bibliography - Decide on a Team and give yourselves a Name :)
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W 4/25	Watch: <i>Nerve</i> What are the mechanics of the game. How can we think critically about this game? Sascha (Games and Speculative Design)	Go to Library in Section

Week 5 – Radical Play + Critical Games

M 4/30	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical Play by Mary Flanagan - Empathy, Reverence from How to do things with Videogames 	Do: Blog #5 + Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annotated Bibliography - Brainstorming + Playing in Sections
W 5/2	Presentation by: Christina + Yelena: Research Paper Performance	

Week 6 – Locative Play + LARPing + Ubiquitous Computing

M 5/7	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Open House” by Mark Weiser, computer scientist 	Do: Blog #6 + Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paper Outline - Pitch Game projects + meet w/ TA’s
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	- Beyond Dungeons and Dragons: can role play save the world?	
W 5/9		

Week 7 – How to do things with Video Games - Rhetoric + Persuasion

M 5/14	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Complete freedom of movement”: video games as gendered play spaces by Henry Jenkins - EXCERPTS FROM MY UPCOMING NOVEL, <i>READY PLAYER TWO: GIRL STUFF</i> 	Do: Blog #7 + Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prototypes + Feedback in Section
W 5/16		Do: Rough Draft Paper Due Wed in Section

Week 8 – What is the Future of Play and Gamification?

M 5/21	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Future of Context-Aware Gaming” a report by the Institute for the Future - AI Is Dreaming Up New Kinds of Video Games 	Do: Blog #8 + Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prototypes + Feedback in Section
W 5/23		Do: Prototypes + Feedback in Section

Week 9 – Showcase/Playtest

M 5/28	MEMORIAL DAY - NO LECTURE, NO SECTION	
W 5/30	Lecture: Showcase + Playtest	

Week 10 – Showcase/Playtest

M 6/4	Lecture: Showcase + Playtest	
W 6/6	Lecture: Showcase + Playtest	
F 6/8	Research Paper Revision Due online by 11:59 PM Friday	

Week 11 – FINALS WEEK

Friday 6/15	Design Research Portfolio + Reflection due online in Portfolium by 7 PM (Extra Credit will be given if you turn it in early) HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!
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POLICIES:

1. ATTENDANCE

On-time attendance in lecture and section is required. Please notify your TA if you must be absent for illness or family emergency. Excessive absence (more than three class sessions, either lectures or sections) may

be grounds for failing the course. Excessive tardiness will also impact your grade and may be grounds for failure.

2. CLASS PARTICIPATION

Contributions to class discussions and active participation in small group work are essential to both the momentum of the course and the development of your ideas. This requires that you come to class prepared (having completed assigned reading and writing) and ready to participate in class activities. Because CAT 3 is based on collaborative, project-based learning, you are also expected to contribute as a responsible member of a group. See the participation evaluation rubric below for more information.

3. ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

A. Due Dates

An assignment may receive an F if a student does not participate in every phase of the development of the project and meet all deadlines for preliminary materials (proposals, drafts, etc.). Failure to submit any of the graded course assignments is grounds for failure in the course. If a final draft, plus required addenda, is not submitted in class on the date due, it will be considered late and will lose one letter grade for each day or part of a day past due (A to B, etc.). Assignments are due in hard copy and or via email/link (online assignment). You must submit your assignments directly to your TA; you will not be able to leave papers for your TA at the Sixth College Offices. Any late submissions must be approved by your TA and/or faculty instructor well in advance of the due date.

4. CAT GRADING CRITERIA – PARTICIPATION

Here is a description of the kind of participation in the course that would earn you an A, B, C, etc. Your TA may use pluses and minuses to reflect your participation more fairly, but this is a general description for each letter grade.

A – Excellent

Excellent participation is marked by near-perfect attendance and rigorous preparation for discussion in lecture and section. You respond to questions and activities with enthusiasm and insight and you listen and respond thoughtfully to your peers. You submit rough drafts on time, and these drafts demonstrate a thorough engagement with the assignment. You respond creatively to the feedback you receive (from both your peers and TA) on drafts, making significant changes to your writing between the first and final drafts that demonstrate ownership of your own writing process. Finally, you are an active contributor to the peer-review and collaborative writing processes.

B – Good

Good participation is marked by near-perfect attendance and thorough preparation for discussion in lecture and section. You respond to questions with specificity and make active contributions to creating a safe space for the exchange of ideas. You submit rough drafts on time, and these drafts demonstrate thorough engagement with the assignment. You respond effectively to the feedback you receive (from both your peers and TA) on drafts, making changes to your writing between the first and final drafts. You are a regular and reliable contributor to the peer-review and collaborative writing processes.

C – Satisfactory

Satisfactory participation is marked by regular attendance and preparation for discussion in lecture and section. You respond to questions when prompted and participate in classroom activities, though you may sometimes be distracted. You are present in lecture and section, with few absences, and have done some of the reading some of the time. You submit rough drafts on time and make some efforts toward revision between the first and final drafts of an assignment. You are involved in peer-review activities, but you offer minimal feedback and you may not always contribute fully to the collaborative writing process.

D – Unsatisfactory

Unsatisfactory participation is marked by multiple absences from section and a consistent lack of preparation. You may regularly be distracted by materials/technology not directly related to class. You submit late or

incomplete drafts and revise minimally or only at a surface level between drafts. You are absent for peer-review activities, offer unproductive feedback, or do not work cooperatively in collaborative environments.

F—Failing

Failing participation is marked by excessive absences, a habitual lack of preparation, and failure to engage in the drafting, revision, and collaborative writing processes.

5. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

UCSD has a university-wide Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, published annually in the

General Catalog, and online at

<http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academicintegrity/policy.html>. All students must read and be familiar with this Policy. All suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to UCSD's Academic Integrity Coordinator. Students found to have violated UCSD's standards for academic integrity may receive both administrative and academic sanctions. Administrative sanctions may extend up to and include suspension or dismissal, and academic sanctions may include failure of the assignment or failure of the course. Specific examples of prohibited violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following:

Academic stealing refers to the theft of exams or exam answers, of papers or take-home exams composed by others, and of research notes, computer files, or data collected by others.

Academic cheating, collusion, and fraud refer to having others do your schoolwork or allowing them to present your work as their own; using unauthorized materials during exams; inventing data or bibliography to support a paper, project, or exam; purchasing tests, answers, or papers from any source whatsoever; submitting (nearly) identical papers to two classes.

Misrepresenting personal or family emergencies or health problems in order to extend deadlines and alter due dates or requirements is another form of academic fraud.

Claiming you have been ill when you were not, claiming that a family member has been ill or has died when that is untrue are some examples of unacceptable ways of trying to gain more time than your fellow students have been allowed in which to complete assigned work.

Plagiarism refers to the use of another's work without full acknowledgment, whether by suppressing the reference, neglecting to identify direct quotations, paraphrasing closely or at length without citing sources, spuriously identifying quotations or data, or cutting and pasting the work of several (usually unidentified) authors into a single undifferentiated whole.

**Receipt of this syllabus constitutes an acknowledgment that you are responsible for understanding and acting in accordance with UCSD guidelines on academic integrity.

6. UCSD's PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY

The CAT program affirms UCSD's Principles of Community, and expects all students to understand and uphold these principles, both in their daily interactions and in their spoken, written and creative work produced for CAT classes:

The University of California, San Diego is dedicated to learning, teaching, and serving society through education, research, and public service. Our international reputation for excellence is due in large part to the cooperative and entrepreneurial nature of the UCSD community. UCSD faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to be creative and are rewarded for individual as well as collaborative achievements.

To foster the best possible working and learning environment, UCSD strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism. These principles of community are vital to the success of the University and the well being of its constituents. UCSD faculty, staff, and students are expected to practice these basic principles as individuals and in groups.

- We value each member of the UCSD community for his or her individual and unique talents, and applaud all efforts to enhance the quality of campus life. We recognize that each individual's effort is vital to achieving the goals of the University.
- We affirm each individual's right to dignity and strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by mutual respect for each other.
- We value the cultural diversity of UCSD because it enriches our lives and the University. We celebrate this diversity and support respect for all cultures, by both individuals and the University as a whole.
- We are a university that adapts responsibly to cultural differences among the faculty, staff, students, and community.
- We acknowledge that our society carries historical and divisive biases based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs. Therefore, we seek to foster understanding and tolerance among individuals and groups, and we promote awareness through education and constructive strategies for resolving conflict.
- We reject acts of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and political beliefs, and, we will confront and appropriately respond to such acts.
- We affirm the right to freedom of expression at UCSD. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity, confidentiality, and respect.
- We are committed to the highest standards of civility and decency toward all. We are committed to promoting and supporting a community where all people can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of abusive or demeaning treatment.
- We are committed to the enforcement of policies that promote the fulfillment of these principles.
- We represent diverse races, creeds, cultures, and social affiliations coming together for the good of the University and those communities we serve. By working together as members of the UCSD community, we can enhance the excellence of our institution.

**Receipt of this syllabus constitutes an acknowledgment that you are responsible for understanding and acting in accordance with UCSD guidelines on academic integrity and the Principles of Community.

