

COURSE NAME: Video Games: Culture, Theory and Criticism	COURSE NO: CMNS 322	SECTION NO:
TERM: Summer 2016	COURSE CREDITS:	
INSTRUCTOR: E-mail: Phone: Office: Office Hours:	INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS PER WEEK: 4 hours per week over 15 weeks	

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

30 credits of 100-level or higher coursework.

REQUIRED TEXT and OTHER RESOURCES:

Vouchers can be purchased at the library and all readings will be given to the students in class.

COURSE FORMAT:

*1.5 X twice a week
4th hour activity will focus on content analysis of games
All assignments will be posted to moodle*

General Outcomes:

The pixelated blips on the screen seen in early games such as Spacewars (1958) or Pong (1964) cannot match the immersive technologies showcased at this year's E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo), however, the cultural practices of innovation, design and usage remain quite similar. The story of the emerging interactive play and the rise of a global digital gaming industry is complex and riddled with debates often seen in other forms of mass media like radio and TV, however, because of the interactivity and divergent nature of video games a multi-dimensional theoretical and methodological perspective is possible. Using the video games industry and culture as the focus, the course will weave together three fields; media theory, political economy and cultural studies.

This course is a comparative introduction to the history and theory of video games as cultural artifacts, from Pong to Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG) to a growing e-sport industry. The premise of the course is to develop a deeper understanding of the complexity of video game culture via a survey of major debates over the meaning and value of video games. Students will be asked to study some of the major theoretical terms and perspectives developed to elaborate the cultural and communication value of video games and incorporate their own research into games, gaming culture and the industry. The course aims to introduce students to academic discussions on and creative work in new digital forms, including: gamification; narratology and ludology; fandom; game law and the industry; the new gaming economy and game journalism and criticism.

Specific Student Outcomes:

CMNS 322 builds on the students’ previous understanding of mass media culture from 100- level courses such as 112 and 132, but also builds on more specific understanding of communication culture from courses such as Cmns 231 Cultural Industries in Canada and Cmns 222 Communication and Ideology. It is designed to apply communication theory and practices to a specific global, communication industry. Because of the popularity of video games the course will take a hands-on approach asking students to complete a content analysis of a game they are unfamiliar with and aim to expand the students understanding of video games beyond a love or hate for them. Examples from popular news sources and popular understandings of video game culture will provide the fodder for a deeper understanding of the historical, political, cultural factors that come into play in the complexity of a seemingly simple activity of game playing.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate competence in the following abilities and skills:

ABILITIES		LEVELS*
COMMUNICATIONS	C1. Identify and describe major <i>structures</i> of mass media including: regulatory supports & constraints, the economic structures of the video game industry	3-6
	C2. Identify and describe major <i>theoretical</i> approaches in the study of video games, including critical interpretations of the industry, representation and regulations.	3-6
	C3. Write and speak about the <i>complexity</i> of video game culture with awareness of relevant historical and contemporary examples, stakeholders, major players and key events.	4-6
ANALYSIS AND DECISION-MAKING	A1. Identify, describe and employ <i>basic research methods</i> for media studies; specifically, but not exclusively, video game studies	4-6
	A2. Analyze video game cultural phenomenon with awareness of different <i>theoretical avenues</i> to such analysis	3-6
	A3. Apply <i>critical thinking</i> to the study of historical and contemporary video game culture	4-6
SOCIAL INTERACTION	S1. Participate in <i>discussion</i> related to the field of video games research and media studies theory and practice.	3-6
	S2. Recognize and define <i>applicable theoretical frameworks</i> for understanding and conducting video game research and discussion	4-6
CITIZENSHIP, SUSTAINABILITY AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE	G1. Recognize the impact of political, cultural, historical and geographical factors in the role of video games in various nations	3-6
	G2. Recognize and define research and theory on the role and impact of video games in various cultural environments	4-6

*See Faculty of Business & Professional Studies – Our Commitment to Assessment and Constructive Feedback for description of the six “Levels” of Comprehension.

EVALUATION PROFILE

Assessment	% of Final Grade	Individual/ Group	CAPabilities Assessed			
			Communications	Analysis & Decision Making	Social Interaction	Citizenship & Global Perspectives
Reading summaries	15%	I	10% (writing quality; presentation of argument)	5% (understanding, application and assessment of theory)		
Final Exam	30%	I	5% (writing quality; presentation of argument)	20% (understanding, application and assessment of theory)		5% (self-reflection; understanding of wider significance of theory)
Final paper	30%	I	5% (writing quality; presentation of argument)	20% (understanding, application and assessment of theory)		5% (self-reflection; understanding of wider significance of theory)
Game analysis roundtable	5%	I		3% (understanding, application and assessment of theory)	2% (listening & speaking skills)	
Game Analysis Document	10%		7% (writing quality; presentation of argument)	3% (understanding, application and assessment of theory)		
Participation (<i>engaging in class activities and have readings completed before class</i>) & Professionalism (<i>respect for peers and does not engage in disruptive media use during class</i>)	10%	I & G	5% (presentation of argument)	3% (understanding, application and assessment of theory)	2% (listening & speaking skills)	
Total	100%					

COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE:

Weeks	Topic	Key questions	readings
1	Introduction to video games & Video game history	<p>How were video games created? Where were the first video games invented? How do early games differ from contemporary games? What game elements have changed over time, and what elements have remained constant?</p> <p>What are some of your favorite video games, and why do you enjoy playing them?</p> <p>Why should we study video games? How can we approach video games critically?</p> <p>What role do video games play in popular culture? In what ways do video games relate to other media?</p>	<p>The Dot Eaters. "The Dot Eaters: Videogame History 101."</p> <p>Herz, (1997). <i>Joystick Nation: How Videogames Ate Our Quarters, Won Our Hearts, and Rewired Our Minds</i></p> <p>Shaw, (2010). <i>What Is Video Game Culture? Cultural Studies and Game Studies</i></p>
2	Gamification and Narratology /ludology	<p>What is ludology? How and why do video game theorists see ludology as fundamental to understanding how games function? In what ways do narratology and ludology relate to, and function with, one another?</p>	<p>Wolf. (2002). <i>Genre and the Video Game</i>.</p> <p>Frasca. (2003). <i>Simulation Versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology</i>.</p> <p>Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke (2011). <i>From game design elements to gamefulness: Defining "Gamification</i>.</p>
3	Places and Spaces of Gaming	<p>What are LAN cafes, LAN parties, PC-Bangs, Cyber Championships</p> <p>Can gaming be a Third Space?</p> <p>Aside from the obvious, how are eSports different from traditional sports and sports games? How are they the same? Can professional gamers be classified as athletes?</p> <p>Do the formal elements of digital games previously discussed apply to sports games and eSports?</p>	<p>Wolf, (2002). <i>Space in the Video Game</i></p> <p>Stewart, (2004). (<i>selective readings Informatization of a Nation; a Case Study of South Korea's gaming environment</i>)</p> <p>Stein, (2012). <i>Indie Sports Games: Performance and Performativity</i></p>
4	Early Gaming	<p>What methods were employed to look at</p>	TBA

	Studies (1970-1990)	<p>early games? What was the focus of the research.</p> <p>Issues of <i>violence, displacement, addiction, desensitization, obesity</i></p> <p>In what way have digital game controversies affected the public perception of digital games? Are digital games a ‘grown up’ medium?</p>	
5	Current Gaming Studies (1990 – present)	<p>How have more recent game studies changed in terms of methodology?</p> <p>How do video games function within popular culture? In what ways do video games represent culture and society? How do video games represent history, and how do these representations differ by genre? How do war games, both simulations and first-person shooters, actively represent and work to produce both culture and history?</p> <p>Issues of <i>race, gender, sexuality</i></p>	<p>Jenkins, (2006). <i>Complete Freedom of Movement’: Video Games as Gendered Play Spaces.</i></p> <p>Ratan, Taylor, Hogan, Kennedy, and Williams (2015) <i>Stand by Your Man: An Examination of Gender Disparity in League of Legends,</i></p> <p>Shaw, A. (2009) <i>Putting the Gay in Games Cultural Production and GLBT Content in Video Games</i></p>
6	MODS, makers and movies	<p>Discussing fandom and modding. Looking at video games as a participatory medium. What is the role of the player and how does the community play a role in the popularity of video games</p> <p>How has fan culture impacted the gaming industry?</p> <p>How has participatory culture influenced gaming culture?</p> <p>Issues of community, fandom, participatory culture</p>	<p>Sotamaa, (2003). <i>Computer Game Modding, Intermediality and Participatory Culture.</i></p> <p>Jenson, & de Castell, (June, 2005). <i>Her Own Boss: Gender and the Pursuit of Incompetent Play</i></p>
7		<i>Student-lead roundtables: content analysis of games</i>	Student-selected readings
8	Game Law, regulations and codes	<p>How are games regulated and rated? What board conducts these reviews? What are some of the most recent legal issues associated with gaming/industry/players?</p> <p>Copyright, EA takes Right-of-publicity case to supreme court, consumer rights acts, ratings system</p>	<p>Selective readings from Lastowka, (2010). <i>Virtual Justice: The New Laws of Online Worlds</i></p>

9	Gaming Industry- the Making of games <i>Guest speaker: Conan Reis specializes in the gameplay aspect of game development including artificial intelligence and making the tools and guts used to make games including 3D world editors and game programming languages.</i>	<p>How have working conditions in the games development industry influenced the contemporary conception of game development? What effect have publically available tools had on the games development industry? How has our understanding of game design improved? How does the concept of ideology apply to games development?</p>	<p>Williams, (2015). <i>Crunched: Has the games industry really stopped exploiting its workforce?</i></p> <p>Parker, (2011). <i>The rise of the indie developer</i></p>
10	Games journalism and criticism; new modes of game critique	<p>What is games journalism? What values have been expressed by the various styles of games journalism from the earliest print magazines to today's non-traditional, new media journalism?</p> <p>What is games criticism? What should the role of games criticism be in the game development industry?</p>	<p>Rignall, (2015). <i>A brief history of games journalism</i></p> <p>Gillen, (2005). <i>The new games journalism</i></p>
11		<p><i>Field Trip to Game Development Site And working day final paper</i></p>	
12	Gaming culture and political environment	<p>How do political and economic factors play into game development and play? To what degree can we say that all games are 'political'? Are political or ethical messages strengthened by gameplay? Why or why not? What are the ethical responsibilities of games developers?</p> <p>Issues: ethics and gaming, Indigenization of games</p>	<p>Hitchins, (2014). <i>Reality and Terror the First Person Shooter in Current day Reality and Terror, the First-Person Shooter in Current Day Settings</i></p> <p>LaPensee, (2014). Excerpts from <i>Survivance: An Indigenous Social Impact Game</i></p>
13	Future of gaming	<p>How has the rise of casual and mobile and casual gaming benefited the games development industry? Has it harmed the industry?</p>	<p>Juul, (2010). <i>A Casual Revolution: Reinventing Video Games and Their Players</i> (Ch. 1)</p>

		<p>What are the ethical implications of the free to play economic model?</p> <p>Do the formal elements of digital games previously discussed apply in virtual worlds?</p>	
14-15	Finals week		Final exam

UNIVERSITY POLICIES & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grades), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. Copies of these and other policies are available on the University website.

Emergency Procedures are posted in every classroom. Please familiarize yourself with these procedures.

In addition to the policies of the university, the School of Communication has the following policies governing the management of our classes and curriculum.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION POLICIES

Examination and Pivotal Presentation Exemption Policy

All students are required to appear and write their scheduled Mid-Term and Final examinations, and to produce, by the assigned date, all pivotal presentations, individual and/or group, unless they meet one of the following criteria:

“Medical Exemption” will be considered, if:

Within the ten calendar days prior to a mid-term or final examination, or within ten days of a pivotal presentation, a student falls ill or is injured.

“Falling ill” is defined as being formally advised by a physician of the need to isolate oneself for the purpose of preventing communication of disease or infection to others; being advised by a physician of compromised immunity that requires isolating oneself from contact with others to prevent communication of disease or infection to themselves, or; being in a physical state of health which so compromises a student’s ability to function, physically or cogitatively, during the ten days prior to the examination or presentation date.

“Injury”, for the purpose of Exemption, is defined as sudden, unanticipated physical harm that renders the applicant physically incapable of attending campus or, in such physical distress that the student is specifically advised by their physician to abstain from appearing at their examination or presentation. Students who are prescribed medication(s) to treat their injury and who believe that the medication(s) may be impairing their ability to successfully prepare for or write their examination or presentation may provide written evidence of their concerns as verified by their physician.

“Catastrophic Personal Loss Exemption” will be considered, if:

Events occur in the student’s life that are of such scope as to sufficiently distract a student from the examination or presentation preparation period, or from appearing at or adequately focusing on, the scheduled examination or presentation itself. This could include; loss of housing due to eviction, flood or fire; or death of an *immediate* family member*. (Defined as a sibling, parent or grandparent, child, partner or spouse, parent or step-parent, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew and first cousins.) Immediate family member *does not include* general acquaintances. Circumstances that may qualify as a personal loss could also include an immediate family member being diagnosed with a significantly life-altering or life-threatening illness or injury.

In *all* of the above scenarios, a physician’s letter or other specifically requested documentation must be provided to satisfy the Instructor as to the validity of the claim, and must be provided within ten calendar days prior to the date of the exam or presentation. If an instructor agrees with the request for Exemption, the request for *must* be presented by the instructor to the Chair of the School of Communication for consideration and his/her approval. No request for Exemption will be considered approved by virtue of submission, and will remain as merely “under consideration” until approved or rejected by the Chair.

Any student who applies for and receives an Exemption will be assigned a Future Examination or Presentation Date: this date is non-negotiable. Failure to appear on/at the single date and time assigned by the instructor will result in an automatic "0" grade for that exam or assignment. This "0" grade may not be appealed or contested, and will not be changed.

Attendance:

Regular attendance and punctuality are both essential and expected due to the nature and format of the course materials.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Cheating is an act of deceit, fraud, distortion of the truth, or improper use of another person's effort to obtain an academic advantage. Cheating includes permitting another person to use one's work as their own. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work or ideas as if they were one's own. Plagiarism is both dishonest and a rejection of the principles of scholarship. Information about how to avoid plagiarism by proper documentation of sources is available in the Writing Centre and is published on the University website in the University Policies page.

Penalties for Cheating and Plagiarism:

A grade of '0' for an examination, quiz or assignment or 'F' for the course may be assigned if cheating or plagiarism has taken place. First incidents deemed by the instructor to be particularly serious or second or subsequent incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with under the provisions of the University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (See the University website). All students should familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism as such behaviour can result in suspension from the University.

Incomplete Grades:

Incomplete grades will not be given unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the date set by University Administration.

Professional Behaviour:

Students must demonstrate a professional attitude and behaviour toward work, fellow students and their instructors. Each student should demonstrate reliability, respect for and co-operation with colleagues. A willingness to work calmly and courteously under difficult conditions as well as a determination to achieve first-class work while meeting deadlines is necessary in the School of Communication. Students should have respect for equipment and systems. Students should display a constructive response to criticism.

Copyright Policy:

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and abide by the University's Copyright Policy. The University's Copyright Policy is published on the University website.

Missed Exams and Quizzes:

Missed exams or quizzes will receive a grade of "0" unless PRIOR arrangements (wherever possible) are made with the instructor. Permission to make up an exam will only be given in extraordinary situations such as illness of the student or the death of a close family member. In the School of Communication Policies section of this outline, see "Examination & Pivotal Presentation Exemption Policy". A doctor's certificate, or other proof supporting the reason for the absence, will be required.

English Usage:

All assignments are marked for correct English usage, proofreading and formatting.

Grading Profile:

A+	90-100%	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D	50-59
A	85-89	B	73-76	C	63-66	F	Below 50%
A-	80-84	B-	70-72	C-	60-62		

COURSE LEVEL POLICIES

In addition to Capilano University and Capilano School of Communication policies, the following policies govern the management of this class and its curriculum.

Assignments:

Homework assignments are due **on moodle** on the due date unless otherwise advised by your instructor. Late assignments will only be accepted if prior approval for a late submission date has been given by the instructor. Late assignments will be deducted 5% a day up to one week after which the assignment will not be accepted unless the instructor has given prior approval.

Programmable Tools:

Please note the use of programmable items such as calculators, dictionaries etc. is forbidden during tests, quizzes, and exams. Cell phones are not to be brought to any test, quiz, or exam.



CAPILANO UNIVERSITY VISION, MISSION and GOALS

UNIVERSITY VISION

Students are drawn to our dynamic and unique programs, passionate faculty, welcoming staff, and close-knit learning environment; graduates are independent learners, thinkers, and doers actively contributing to their communities.

UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

We are a teaching-focused university offering a wide range of programs and services that enable students to succeed in their current studies, in their ongoing education, in their chosen careers, in their lifelong pursuit of knowledge, and in their contribution as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

UNIVERSITY GOALS

Arising from the Mission statement, the Institutional Goals are broadly defined as the general areas of success that are desired for all students. From the Mission, the Institutional Goals are:

- Student success in ongoing education
- Student success in chosen career

- Student success in lifelong pursuit of knowledge
- Student success in contributing as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community

In order to support student success in these areas, the institution has identified seven broad learning outcomes for students in all programs.

These **institutional student learning outcomes** are:

1. Self-directed learning, awareness, and responsibility
2. Up-to-date information gathering and research skills
3. Communication skills
4. Quantitative reasoning ability
5. Group and social interaction skills
6. Creative, critical, and analytical thinking skills
7. Community/global consciousness and responsibility

FACULTY OF BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide students with the necessary skills and abilities to be immediately effective in their employment or further studies, and to possess a sound basis for future progression in their chosen career, in the lifelong pursuit of knowledge, and in their contribution as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SKILLS AND ABILITIES

The Faculty of Business & Professional Studies, through the delivery of this course, is committed to the development of skills so that students can perform the tasks of this discipline in an efficient and effective way. In addition, through the delivery of all courses, the Faculty is committed to the development of core ‘abilities’ that will prepare students for future career progression in a chosen field. A well-rounded graduate, in addition to being able to perform certain tasks, will have the following CAPabilities;

CAPability	Description
Communication	Selects, uses and integrates communication skills to develop informative, explanatory and persuasive presentations to a variety of audiences using oral and written communication and language, quantitative and technological literacy.
Analysis and Decision-Making	Brings a unique perspective to the analysis of organizational issues through systematic thinking and the application and adaptation of frameworks and tools that assist decision-making
Social Interaction	Uses appropriate interpersonal and group theory to deal with inter-personal, team, stakeholder and professional situations to inform, persuade and influence.
Citizenship, Sustainability and Global Perspective	Understands corporate social responsibility within organizational contexts and the social role and impacts of organizations. Understands sustainability within organizational contexts, decisions and business practices. Assesses the interrelationships between business models and decisions and the social and natural environments in which they operate. Integrates personal, professional and community values in a decision-making context as a member of an organization. Works effectively with interdependence and diversity by framing issues in the broader global context, understanding the social and cultural roots of business, governments and other organizations and by providing managerial support as part of a global strategy.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ASSESSMENT AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

The Faculty of Business & Professional Studies is committed to providing feedback that rewards excellence and motivates personal development. We use a mixture of personal, peer and professional assessment so that students have a diverse view of their progress in skills and abilities development. It is important to use feedback to enhance the quality of learning. The assessment model is designed to give a fair reflection of the letter grade earned, as well as a road map for personal skill and ability development. For each skill and ability in the course students will be assessed as to the level of comprehension demonstrated. Grades are a function of how students have met course expectations as to those levels of comprehension.

SIX "LEVELS" of Comprehension

KNOWLEDGE	
1. Recognize	Be able to identify the components of a framework or tool.
2. Define	Be able to describe the aspects of the components of the framework or tool.
APPLICATION	
3. Use	Be able to manipulate the framework or tool to cause a result.
4. Interpret Results	To understand the result of the manipulation in a meaningful way.
JUDGMENT	
5. Situational Use	To be able to identify situations where the framework or tool should be applied, and then apply the framework or tool, including using the results effectively.
6. Adaptation	To be able to creatively adapt the framework or tool such that its use will maximized in a given situation.



SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the School of Communication is to train students in applied communications that develop writing and speaking skills in preparation for employment and for further study. This mission supports the mission of the University to enable student success in applied studies and chosen careers.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Knowledge To develop students' understanding that jobs in the communications industry demand professional standards, from concept to drafting, organization, layout and editing. To provide an overview of the range of skills and strategies required for working in corporate, community, and government communications fields.

Skill To provide opportunities for students to write to professional standards and to develop pose as a speaker in a variety of contexts

Value This program values opportunities for students to recognize that writers with general skills must adapt quickly to changing requirements.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Demonstrate competence in editing for spelling, grammar, format and style.

1. Write to professional standards by composing research reports, proposals, general business correspondence, media releases, brochures, and advertisements.
2. Demonstrate competence in researching primary and secondary sources to compose research reports.
3. Apply APA style to research reports.

Revised October 2015