MMC 6936-1E88
Digital Game Studies

Course Info

When: Monday 9:35am-12:35pm

Where: Weimer Hall 3020

Instructor: Dr. Yu-Hao Lee

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Phone: (352)392-3951

Office hours: Monday 1:00pm-3:00pm or by appointment

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Course Objectives

Games and play are fundamental to humans and many animal species. Through play, we learn to think, to solve problems, and to socialize with others. Digital games harness the affordances of human play and the computational capabilities of modern technology, to create designed experiences that motivate and engage players.

Today, digital gaming is one of the fastest growing communication industries, surpassing the movie and music industry in terms of annual sales. Over 59% of American households play digital games. However, as a young technology, it has only recently became a field of serious study.

This class will focus on the theories and applications of digital games for behavior change, also known as serious games or persuasive games. The focus is in understanding questions such as: Why do people play digital games? How can we make games more engaging? What are the theories that can be applied to designing and using games for behavior change?

In this class, students will:

- Play a number of digital games that are designed for behavior change in the fields of education, health, corporate training, etc.
- Understand the principles of digital game motivations and engagement.
- Understand the theories that has been applied to digital games for behavior change.
- Analyze digital games using scientific methods.

Readings

There are no required textbooks for this class, all the readings will be posted on the Canvas course site (https://lss.at.ufl.edu) select "e-Learning in Canvas," and log in using your Gatorlink ID

Requirements

Moderate discussions: You will work in groups to present the key concepts of each reading, background/theory, research questions/hypotheses, methods, results, conclusions.

IMPORTANT: You should assume that the class has already read the readings, your role is not to give a detailed presentation of the readings, but to come up with thought-provoking question that helps the class compare and integrate the theories and applications. You can send me the discussion questions on the weekend before class if you want me to look over them.

Based on your understanding of the readings, share a game that you think fits the week's topic. Share the example with the class and discuss how it relates to the topic, how does theories apply to the game, and how might we improve it by incorporating other mechanics discussed in class.

You may prepare slides or handouts to stimulate class discussion but do not do excessive stylistic work on your slides.

Mini-prospectus (Due Feb. 23rd): You will identify a specific game-related phenomenon, indicates why it is of interest to you, identify at least two theoretical approaches that have been applied to the phenomenon, and provides an annotated bibliography of five outside readings on the topic that substantiate your assertions. The purpose of the mini prospectus is help you identify key research questions or constructs that can be developed into a research project.

The second paper (Due Apr. 6th): focus on the specific construct/phenomenon that was presented (or revised) in the mini-prospectus. Provide a history of research on the issue by focusing on various theoretical approaches that have been applied to the phenomenon. The paper may discuss this in an evolutionary manner, i.e., detailing how theories have developed and replaced one another. Identify competing theories and perspectives and how they have been applied to related phenomena, highlight the disagreements that need to be resolved conceptually and empirically. Conclude the paper by identifying what the critical arguments and differential explanations are that remain contested or conflicted which need resolution in order for a more sophisticated understanding of the phenomenon to be reached.

The term paper (Due May 4th): extends the second paper by specifying a research design that is needed in order to extend or resolve the critical issues emanating from existing work on the topic, and by proposing a set of testable research questions or hypotheses. The goal is to provide do-able research designs and methods that may evince data with which to settle the score. The paper should be adequately formed to launch an independent effort or provide the kernel of a prelim or dissertation prospectus. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that you understand how formally to apply theory to problems and deduce original, testable research questions.

All papers include a comprehensive list of references. The second and third papers will be 20-25 pages in length (double spaced, 12 point type, 1 inch margins), including abstract and title page but exclusive of the references, and will be carefully edited into clear, concise, and grammatically correct English language prose.

Final presentation: at the end of the semester, you will have 20 minutes to present your paper (not including Q&A) in which we will discuss your topic of research and provide feedback.

You can also choose to complete a full study with data collection, analysis, and write a "publishable" paper for this course. Please talk to me early in the semester and I will work with you to plan your timeline and facilitate your study

Grading

Moderate discussions	30%
Mini prospectus	10%
Second paper	30%
Final paper	20%
Final presentation	5%
Class participation	5%

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below 60%	E

Note: I do not use plus or minuses for graduate courses

Class Policy

Attendance: Seriously, graduate students do not skip classes. The class will start promptly at AM9:35, if you come in late or have to leave early, please do so quietly without disturbing others in the class.

Electronic devices: You are allowed to bring laptops or tablets for note-taking. But uses of other electronic devices are strictly prohibited during class, ESPECIALLY cellphones. Please turn your phone off or to silent mode during class and keep it tucked away.

Honor Code: As a student at this university, you have accepted a commitment to the Honor Code, and the principles of academic integrity, personal honesty, and responsible citizenship on which it was founded. As an instructor at this university, I am also charged with its enforcement and take that responsibility very seriously.

You can find the complete honor code via this link:
https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/

Among the activities that could result in Honor Code violations are plagiarism, cheating, misrepresenting sources, the unauthorized use of others' work, etc. Consult the APA manual for definitions of plagiarism. Consult me if you are uncertain about your Honor Code responsibilities within this course.

Special Needs: According to University policy, students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide appropriate documentation to you and you should provide this documentation to me when requesting specific accommodation. It is your responsibility to initiate this conversation early in the semester and you should plan to meet with me during office hours to discuss this.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1 Jan. 12	**Welcome & Introduction** **Why study digital games?**	1. Why game studies now-Williams, 2006 2. Watch: Jane McGonigal's TED talk 3. The games generation-Prensky, 2001
Week 2 Jan. 19	**Martin Luther King Day (NO CLASS)**	
Week 3 Jan. 26	**Overview** **Why do we play games?**	1. Homo Ludens-Huizinga, 1955 2. The game, the player, the world-Juul, 2003 3. The benefits of playing video games—Granic et al., 2013 4. Effectance, self-efficacy and the motivation to play video games-Klimmt & Hartmann, 2006 5. The rhetoric of video games-Bogost, 2008 *Play games: September 12th Hush
Week 4 Feb. 2	**Designing serious games** Guest talk by Marko Suvajdzic (Digital Worlds Institute/ game designer)	
Week 5 Feb. 9		1. The concept of flow-Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002

	Motivation and engagement	2. Video game uses and gratifications as predictors of use and game preference-Sherry et al., 2006 3. The motivational pull of video games: a self-determination theory approach—Ryan, Rigby, & Przybylski, 2006 4. A motivational model of video game engagement—Przybylski, Rigby, & Ryan, 2010 *Play any game that you enjoy or one that's bad, think about your motivation for playing the game, and how the game design promote flow and intrinsic motivations
Week 6 Feb. 16	**Identity and space**	1. Where everybody knows your (screen) name: Online games as "third places"—Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006 2. Semiotic Social Spaces and Affinity Spaces—Gee, 2005 3. Doors to another me: Identity construction through digital game play—Konijn & Bijvank, 2009 4. Impression management and identity online—Chester et al., 2007 5. The video game experience as "true" identification: A theory of enjoyable alterations of players' self-perception—Klimmt, Hefner, & Vorderer, 2009
Week 7 Feb. 23	**Video game and violence**	1. Video game violence-Dill & Dill, 1999 2. The effect of video game violence on physiological desensitization to real-life violence—Carnagey, Anderson, & Bushman, 2007 3. It's okay to shoot a character: Moral disengagement in violent video games—Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010

		4. The effects of violent video games on aggression—Sherry, 2001
		5. Does media violence predict societal violence? It depends on what you look at and when—Ferguson, 2014
Week 8 Mar. 2	**Spring break (NO CLASS)**	
Week 9 Mar. 9	**Digital games and education**	1. Digital game based learning-Van Eck, 2006 2. Good video games and good learning—Gee, 2005 3. Making learning fun: Quest Atlantis, a game without guns—Barab et al, 2005 4. From content to context: videogames as designed experience—Squire, 2006 5. Digital game-based learning: Towards an experiential gaming model—Killi, 2005
Week 10 Mar. 16	**Digital games and training**	1. The impact of a simulation game on operations management education—Pasin & Giroux, 2011 2. Systematic Video Game Training in Surgical Novices Improves Performance in Virtual Reality Endoscopic Surgical Simulators—Schlickum et al., 2009 3. Efficient Development of Large-Scale Military Training Environments using a Multi-Player Game—Hussain & Ferguson, 2005
Week 11 Mar. 23	**Digital games and physical health**	1. A video game improves behavioral outcomes in adolescents and young adults with cancer: a randomized trial—Kato et al., 2008 2. Serious video games for health: How behavioral science guided the development of a serious video game—Thompson et al., 2010

		3. Promoting exercise self-efficacy with an Exergame—Song, Peng, & Lee, 2011
		4. Avatars Mirroring the Actual Self versus Projecting the Ideal Self: The Effects of Self-Priming on Interactivity and Immersion in an Exergame, Wii Fit—Jin, 2009
Week 12 Mar. 30	**Digital games and cognitive abilities**	1. Action video game modifies visual selective attention—Green & Bevelier, 2003
		2. Perceptual Learning During Action Video Game Playing—Green, Li, & Bavelier, 2009
		3. The effects of video game playing on attention, memory, and executive control—Boot et al., 2008
		4. Can training in a real-time strategy video game attenuate cognitive decline in older adults?—Basak et al., 2008
		5. Video game training enhances cognitive control in older adults—Anguera et al., 2013
Week 13 Apr. 6	**Advergames**	1. The effects of playing an advergame on young children's perceptions, preferences, and requests—Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007
		2. The effects of playing an Advergame on young children's perceptions, preferences, and requests—Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2013
		3. Who Is the Loser When I Lose the Game? Does Losing an Advergame Have a Negative Impact on the Perception of the Brand?—Steffen, Mau, & Schramm-Klein, 2013
		4. Advergames and the effects of game-product congruity—Gross, 2010
Week 14 Apr. 13	**Digital games and social change**	1. The Effects of a Serious Game on Role-Taking and Willingness to Help—Peng, Lee, & Heeter, 2010
		2. PeaceMaker: Changing Students' Attitudes Toward Palestinians and Israelis Through Video Game Play—Alhabash & Wise, 2012

		3. Leveraging the engagement of games to change energy behavior—Byron et al, 2012
		4. When people get in the way—Bagley & Shaffer, 2008
		5. Feeling Right About How You Play The Effects of Regulatory Fit in Games for Learning—Lee et al., 2013
Week 15 Apr. 20	**Gamification**	1. From game design elements to gamefulness: defining "gamification"—Deterding et al., 2011
		2. Why I love bees: A case study in collective intelligence gaming—McGonigal, 2007
		3. Urban Sprawl: Using a Game to Sensitize Stakeholders to the Interdependencies Among Actors' Preferences—Reckien & Eisenack, 2010
		4. Watch: Extra credit: Achievements
		5. Watch: Gabe Zichermann's TED talk
Week 16 Apr. 27	**Final presentation**	

Resources:

Games for health, http://www.gamesforhealth.org

Games for change, http://www.gamesforchange.org

Gamification: http://www.gamification.co/blog/

Health Games Research, http://www.healthgamesresearch.org/database

Lumosity (brain games): http://www.lumosity.com/

Newsgaming: http://www.newsgaming.com/

Persuasive games, http://www.persuasivegames.com

Persuasive Technology Lab, http://captology.stanford.edu

Serious game initiative, http://www.seriousgames.org/index2.html

Serious games summit, http://www.seriousgamessummit.com/

Water cooler games, http://www.watercoolergames.org