MMC6936-06A2 (19600)
Digital Game Studies

Course Info

When: Monday 12:50 PM - 3:50 PM

Where: TBD

Instructor: Dr. Yu-Hao Lee

E-mail: leeyuhao@jou.ufl.edu (my preferred method of communication)

Phone: (352) 392-3951

Office hours: right after class and by email appointment

Office: 3051 Weimer Hall

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. 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 relatively new technology, it has only recently become a field of serious study.

This class will focus on the theories about the experience of playing digital games and their effects. We will also discuss games for behavior change, also known as serious games or persuasive games. The focus is on understanding questions such as: Why do people play digital games? What makes games so engaging? What do people experience when playing games? and how do games affect people and society?

In this class, students will:

- Play several 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 have been applied to studying digital games.
- 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 do 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 Sep. 19th 11:59pm): 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 how these theoretical approaches inform your research questions. The purpose of the mini prospectus is help you identify key research questions or constructs that can be developed into a research project.

Proposal v1. (Due Nov. 14th 11:59pm): focus on the game-related phenomenon that was presented (or revised) in the mini-prospectus. Provide a review of research on the issue by focusing on the key theoretical approaches that have been applied to study 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. Identify what the critical arguments and differential explanations are that remain contested. Propose a set of testable research questions or hypotheses.

Final proposal (Due Dec. 7th 11:59pm): Revise and extend your proposal by specifying a research design that is needed to extend or resolve the critical issues derived from existing work on the topic. The goal is to provide a rigorous study design that allows you to collect data which can address these issues. The paper should be adequately formed to launch an independent effort or provide the kernel of a thesis/dissertation prospectus. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that you understand how to apply theory to problems and come up with original, testable research questions that can be addressed through a research design.

All papers must include a comprehensive list of references. The first and final proposals will be roughly 15-20 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point type, 1-inch margins), including abstract, tables/figures, and references (or roughly 5000 - 6000 words). The proposals must be carefully edited into clear, concise, and grammatically correct English language prose. Follow APA style guide (7th edition) for referencing and citations.

Final presentation: at the end of the semester, you will have 15 minutes to present your paper (not including Q&A) in which we will discuss your topic of research and provide feedback.

This course is advanced-eligible You can also choose to complete a full study with data collection, analysis, and write a publishable full research 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%

A-	90% - 93.99%	A	94%-100%
B-	80%-84.99%	B	85%-89.99%
C-	70%-74.99%	C	75%-79.99%
D-	60%-64.99%	D	65%-69.99%
E	Under 60%		

Class Policy

Attendance: Seriously, graduate students do not skip classes. The class will start promptly. If you come in late or must leave early, please do so quietly without disturbing others.

Electronic devices: You are allowed to use laptops or tablets for notetaking. Please turn your phone off or to silent mode during class and keep it tucked away unless we are using it to examine mobile games.

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 <u>plagiarism, cheating, misrepresenting sources, the unauthorized use of others' work, etc</u>. 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 Aug. 29	**Welcome & Introduction** **Why study digital games?**	
Week 2 Sep. 5	**Labor Day (NO CLASS)**	
Week 3 Sep. 12	**Overview** **Why do we play games?**	1. Homo Ludens-Huizinga, 1955 2. Rule of Play Ch.7: Defining Games 3. The rhetoric of video games-Bogost, 2008 4. More than stories with buttons: Narrative, mechanics, and context as determinants of player experience in digital games-Elson et al. 2014 *Play some "games" and try to see if they fit or do not fit into these descriptions. Analyze the games using the frameworks in the readings. This about everyday activities that you might consider a "game," explain why?
Week 5 Sep. 19	**Motivation and engagement**	1. The concept of flow-Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002 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. Effectance, self-efficacy and the motivation to play video games-Klimmt & Hartmann, 2006
		*Play a game that you think is bad, think about your motivation for playing the game, and how the game design promotes flow and intrinsic motivations, or why it does not.
Week 6 Sep. 26	**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. The video game experience as "true" identification: A theory of enjoyable alterations of players' self-perception—Klimmt, Hefner, & Vorderer, 2009
		*Play an online game. Think about the space, your identity, and your relationship with the space and others.
Week 7 Oct. 3	**Avatars and presence**	1. The effect of the agency and anthropomorphism on users' sense of telepresence, copresence, and social presence in virtual environments-Nowak & Biocca, 2003
		2. The role of presence in the experience of electronic games-Tamborini & Skalski, 2006
		3. The Proteus effect—Yee & Bailenson, 2007
		4. The sense of embodiment in virtual reality-Kilteni, K., Groten, R., & Slater, M. (2012).

		*Design an avatar or take a screenshot of your avatar in a game that you play. Bring it to class and we'll discuss how the avatar was created and how it affected your game experience.
Week 8 Oct. 10	**Video game and violence**	1. The effect of video game violence on physiological desensitization to real-life violence—Carnagey, Anderson, & Bushman, 2007 2. Screen Violence and Youth Behavior – Anderson et al. 2017 3. Does media violence predict societal violence? It depends on what you look at and when—Ferguson, 2014 4. Twenty-five years of research on video game violence and aggression - *Play a violent video game, document your reactions throughout the gameplay.
Week 9 Oct. 17	**Digital game and morality**	1. Moral intuition and media entertainment. Tamborini, 2011 2. Gut or game? The influence of moral intuitions on decisions in video games. Joeckel, Bowman, & Dogruel, 2012 3. Moral foundations theory and moral reasoning in video game play: using real-life morality in a game context - Krcmar & Cingel, 2016 4. How players manage moral concerns to make video game violence enjoyable – Klimmt et al. 2006
Week 10 Oct. 24	**Advergame and Gamification**	1. The effects of playing an Advergame on young children's perceptions, preferences, and requests—Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2013 2. 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 3. From game design elements to gamefulness: defining "gamification"—Deterding et al., 2011

		4. Why I love bees: A case study in collective intelligence gaming—McGonigal, 2007
		5. Watch: Extra credit: Achievements
Week 11 Nov. 31	**Digital game culture**	1. What is video game culture - Shaw
		2. Do you identify as a gamer - Shaw
		3. Gaining Advantage: How Videogame Players Define and Negotiate Cheating - Consalvo 2005
		4. Don't hate the player, hate the game- the racialization of labor- Nakamura 2009
		5. Twitch and the work of play – Taylor 2018
Week 12 Nov. 7	**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 13 Nov. 14	**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

		*Conceptually tweak a game to make it educational using the principles mentioned in the readings.
Week 14 Nov. 21	**TBD**	
Week 15 Nov. 28	**TBD**	
Week 16 Dec. 5	**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