SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In the wake of the video game explosion in the early 1990s, scholars began to investigate the pedagogical, epistemological, and even cultural implications of "games." Not surprisingly, games have been exceedingly fruitful for these discussions: from understanding how games offer immersive learning models (cf., James Paul Gee) to how games, based in critical theories of play, have proliferated the histories of humanity (cf., Johan Huizinga). Beyond those considerations, games offer access to a wide range of conversations, from narrative theory (narratology) to attention economies (as Richard Lanham has constructed them). Add to this the fact that the gaming industry had greater sales last year than the cinema industry, and we see not only a cultural shift occurring but also a need for us to critically and creatively consider the rhetorical possibilities emerging with games.

> **Instructor: Justin Hodgson, Ph.D.**
> **Assistant Professor**
>
> **Course: RHE 330c | Summer II**
> **Course ID: 87650**
> **Dates: 7/12/10 – 8/16/10**
> **Days: M – F**
> **Time: 10:00 – 11:30am**
> **Room: Parlin Hall 104**
>
> **Office Hours:**
> **9 – 10am & 11:30 – 12:30pm**
> **(Hours to be held in PAR 104 or PAR 19)**
>
> **Contact: 512.471.9957**
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As such, this course will focus on gaming rhetorics: from rhetorical considerations of ludology (theories of play), which have grounds in classical rhetoric, to conversations on social media, games, and gaming communities, to serious games (games designed to make critical/cultural commentary or to engage in civic/social issues). Along the way, students will be ask not only to read works on games, but to *play* games—specifically, to play and engage the Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) *World of Warcraft* by Blizzard Entertainment. And students will be asked to use their gaming experiences as bases for research (i.e., as evidence and support for ideas and work developed in the course).

Additionally, given the "new media" realm in which video games finds themselves, the work in this course will engage "writing" formats beyond traditional, print writing. We will use a three-headed approach—*knowing* (theoretical knowledge), *doing* (practical knowledge), and *making* (productive knowledge)—with emphasis placed on *making* for it is *making*, not *knowing*, that takes center stage in digital culture. Thus, students will be asked to make projects that use game artifacts (i.e., *machinima*) and/or to make projects applying gaming theories/concepts introduced in the course.

COURSE GOALS
By the end of this course students will have learned:
- to navigate, identify, and critically engage norms, rules, guides for a social media gaming environment or gaming community;
- to extend theories of play to include rhetorical and cultural considerations;
- to analyze, articulate, and critically respond to issues related to game content, game experiences, game communities;
- to develop rhetorical discourse through multiple methods/modes of communication: oral, textual, visual, and multimedia;
- to work collaboratively to solve problems in gaming environments;
- to engage qualitative research methodologies.

OFFICE HOURS

Aside from reaching me during scheduled hours, I can be reached via email (hodgson@mail.utexas.edu). I check my email multiple times a day and am usually fairly efficient in response time. Additionally, I can be reached in my office via phone (512.471.9957).

ATTENDENCE POLICY

Attendance is required and will be taken daily. The Department of Rhetoric & Writing has established the following attendance policy for all RHE courses. Any questions or appeals concerning this policy must be made directly to the Department's Associate Chair.

You are expected to attend class, to arrive on time, to have prepared assigned reading and writing, and to participate in all in-class editing, revising, and discussion sessions. **Should you miss the equivalent of six classes this**

semester, excused or not, you will fail the course. (This takes effect **on your sixth absence**). If you find that an unavoidable problem prevents you from attending class, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible, preferably ahead of time, to let him or her know.

You will not be penalized for missing class on religious holy days. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor, in writing, well in advance of the absence, so that alternative arrangements can be made to complete work. If you know you will have to miss class(es) for this reason, provide your instructor with the date(s) as early as possible. Please note that the University specifies very few other excused absences (e.g., jury duty).

When you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate.

TARDINESS & WAITING POLICY

Tardiness: Class activities will begin promptly at 10am. Often, our "daily quests"—as indicated in the QUESTS PACKET—will occur within the first 5-10 minutes of class. Anyone coming into class after we have begun a "daily quest" will not be permitted to complete that "daily quest." Additionally, arriving to class after 10:15am will count as one-fourth of an absence. Thus, please note that **excessive tardiness may negatively impact your course grade.**

Waiting: In cases where I may be delayed or absent, please wait 15 minutes or until department notification of class cancellation (whichever is shorter) before leaving. An email will be sent following my absence to cover your responsibilities for our next class.

EMAIL POLICY

Email is an official means of communication at UT-Austin, and your instructor will use this medium to communicate class information. You are therefore required to obtain and maintain a UT email account and to check it daily. All students may claim an email address at no cost by going to http://www.utexas.edu/computer/email/.

REQUIRED COURSE "TEXTS"
James Paul Gee's *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*
Ian Bogost's *Persuasive Games*
Noah Wardrip-Fruin & Pat Harrigan's *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, & Games*
World of Warcraft by Blizzard Entertainment (computer game, played online)

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS
In addition to supplemental print articles designed to add depth & layers to course content and discussions, students will also engage a multitude of digital creations. Thus, you may be asked to view various YouTube videos, peruse Websites, read blogs, contribute to wikis, and engage a number of other visual and/or digital rhetoric creations.

TEACHING METHODS
I believe in the integration and interaction of *knowing*, *doing*, and *making* as an active and experience-oriented learning method. Additionally, I believe in empowering students to take ownership over their own learning and to apply, critically and creatively, those abilities. As such, this course will include a variety of methods (ranging from traditional lecture to seminar, from student-led discussions to studio and/or production-oriented formats) in order to provide the best learning experience possible.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
We all have the legal and ethical responsibility not to engage in any form of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) the following:
   • Academic dishonesty includes giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid on any academic work, which includes downloading work from the Internet.
   • Plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty, includes the copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts.
   • All academic work submitted for grading contains an implicit pledge and may contain, at the request of the instructor, an explicit pledge by the student that no unauthorized aid has been received.
   • Academic dishonesty includes attempts to copy, edit, or delete computer files that belong to another person without permission of the file owner.
   • Reusing work from a previous course or using work from another course you are currently taking, without first receiving instructor approval, also constitutes a violation of Academic integrity.
Procedures for breaches of the academic integrity policy have been addressed in the University Honor Code as well as in the supplemental Rhetoric & Writing Policy Statements handout.

DISCLAIMER
This syllabus, including the course calendar and grading approaches detailed in the remaining pages, as well as including the supplemental QUESTS PACKET, is designed as a "best plan" for this course. But changes, alterations, and the like may be required as this course, its design, and its practice is experimental in nature. As such, the instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course design, calendar, assignments/quests, grading, and the like as needed to ensure the functionality and integrity of the course. All changes will be discussed with the students and any changes that may unintentionally disadvantage students will not be permitted.

GRADE GUIDE

Like the rest of the elements of this course, measuring students' success in the course (i.e., course grades) will also be built around common principles found in games, and thus falling somewhat outside what might be considered traditional grade structures or processes. And given the central importance of course grades—to both students and the University—it is of the utmost primacy that students understand the grading process being utilized in this course from its outset. As such, this Grade Guide is designed to provide students with an explanation of how grades will be earned and determined in this course.

The primary guide for grades in this course is that the process for determining final course grades involves two components. First, students must meet set requirements (i.e., must complete a basic set of course quests) to be eligible to earn an A, a B, a C or D in the course—see Eligibility Requirements beginning on page 5. Second, students who meet those requirements must also meet the corresponding percentage range (figured in relation to the highest point total earned in the course) to receive that grade: see italicized statement at end of each grade section in the Eligibility Requirements (also see Percentage Breakdown on page 7).

Thus, as brief example, a student who has completed the quest requirements to be eligible for an A in the course and who has a point total that equals 90% or more of the highest point total achieved in the course will receive an A in the course. But if that same student, with the same point total (within 90-100% of the highest point total in the course) only completed the quest requirements for a B in the course, then he or she would not be eligible for an A and thus, despite the point total earned, would receive a B in the course. (Grades and the grading system will be discussed in-depth in class.)

The idea behind this grading structure/approach is
1) to provide a basic set of criteria to ensure that students have engaged the course content and created discourse on that engagement to varying degrees (i.e., grades) of success; and
2) to provide a structure by which grades will be determined by students' success relative to the successes of their peers (i.e., competition-oriented, but also comparative in design).

Students should note that while this may be competitive in nature, collaborative efforts to help ensure the development of each other and the quality of the engagements each has with the course material can be *very rewarding* for all involved. (More on this collaborative approach will be discussed in class).

Also, as the quests are varied in nature, and as there is a plethora of points available beyond the minimum of these eligibility requirements, students who may be less tech-savvy than others or who have less experience with games are not at a disadvantage (at least not anymore so than they would be in a traditionally-taught course on this topic).

Thus, to summarize:
- Students must complete quests, with varying degrees of completeness, to meet certain grade eligibility requirements.
- Grade eligibility + points earned (relative, percentage wise, to the highest point total earned in the class[*]) will determine a student's course grade.

[*] The highest point total achieved in the course will be our 100% value, with grade breakdown based on percentage values relative to that total score. Thus, if the highest point value in the course is 3000, then 2700-3000 would be the A percentage range (90-100% of the 3000 points), 2400-2699 would be the B range, and so on.

GRADE GUIDE: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

For the purposes of this document, course quest lines will be divided into two categories: required and optional. The *required quest lines* include the Assigned-Work Quest Line and the Achievement Quest Line. The *optional quest lines* include the Image, Video, Presentation, Character, and Research Quest Lines. All quest lines can be found in the Quests Packet.

<u>A Eligibility</u>
To be eligible for an A in the course, students must:
- Complete and/or satisfy the requirements of 9 of the 10 quests in the Assigned-Work Quest line
- Earn at least 200 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (see next page*)
- Complete quest #4 on any one of the *optional quest lines*:
    o Image Quest Line
    o Video Quest Line
    o Presentation Quest Line
    o Character Quest Line
    o Research Quest Line
- Complete any one of the following:
    o Complete 4 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s
    o Complete 2 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #2s
    o Complete 2 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s & earn 500 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (this 500 includes the 200 from the previous requirement)
    o Earn 900 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (this 900 includes the 200 from the previous requirement)
- *Total Points Earned must be above 89.49% of Highest Point Total Earned in course.*

<u>B Eligibility</u>
To be eligible for a B in the course, students must:
- Complete and/or satisfy the requirements of 8 of the 10 quests in the Assigned-Work Quest line
- Earn at least 140 course points from the Achievement Quest Line*
- Complete quest #3 on any one of the *optional quest lines*:
    o Image Quest Line
    o Video Quest Line
    o Presentation Quest Line
    o Character Quest Line
    o Research Quest Line
- Complete any one of the following:
    o Complete 3 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s
    o Complete 2 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s & complete and/or satisfy 9 of the 10 quests in the Assigned-Work Quest Line
    o Complete 2 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s & earn 400 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (this 400 includes the 140 from the previous requirement)
    o Earn 600 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (this 600 includes the 140 from the previous requirement)
- *Total Points Earned must be above 79.49% of Highest Point Total Earned in course.*

C Eligibility
To be eligible for a C in the course, students must:
- Complete and/or satisfy the requirements of 7 of the 10 quests in the Assigned-Work Quest line
- Earn at least 80 course points from the Achievement Quest Line*
- Complete quest #3 on any one of the *optional quest lines*:
    o Image Quest Line
    o Video Quest Line
    o Presentation Quest Line
    o Character Quest Line
    o Research Quest Line
- Complete any one of the following:
    o Complete 3 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s
    o Complete 2 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s & earn 250 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (this 250 includes the 80 from the previous requirement)
    o Earn 400 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (this 300 includes the 80 from the previous requirement)
- *Total Points Earned must be above 69.49% of Highest Point Total Earned in course.*

D Eligibility
To be eligible for a D in the course, students must:
- Complete and/or satisfy the requirements of 6 of the 10 quests in the Assigned-Work Quest line
- Earn at least 40 course points from the Achievement Quest Line*
- Complete quest #3 on any one of the *optional quest lines*:
    o Image Quest Line
    o Video Quest Line
    o Presentation Quest Line
    o Character Quest Line
    o Research Quest Line
- Complete any one of the following:
    o Complete 2 of the 5 *optional quest lines* quest #1s
    o Earn 300 course points from the Achievement Quest Line (this 300 includes the 40 from the previous requirement)
- *Total Points Earned must be above 59.49% of Highest Point Total Earned in course.*

Failure to meet the D Eligibility Requirements will result in a failing course grade.

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* Sample illustration of earning Achievement Points – Following the details provided in the Achievement Quest Line description (page 20 of the QUESTS PACKET): If a student reaches level 20 by the end of the course, resulting in 80 course points (40 for level 10, 40 for level 20), and if that student earns 8 explore achievements (resulting in 120 points), he or she would be at the 200 points necessary to be eligible for an A in the course.

GRADE GUIDE: PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN

With each grade eligibility criteria there is a percentage range that factors into that eligibility. But in terms of the final course grade, we will use a +/- system (i.e., A-, B+, C+ etc.) and the following percentage divisions for those grades are detailed below.

For determining grades, the instructor will first figure a student's point percentage in the course. To do this, the instructor will divide the student's total points earned by the highest point total earned by a student in the course.

Next, the instructor will see what grade eligibility requirements the student has completed. (NOTE: If a student has only met the requirements for a B in the course, no matter how many points he or she has earned, his or her final course grade will be no higher than the B range: B-, B, or B+.)

Then, using the percentage breakdown below, coupled with the eligibility requirements met, the instructor will figure and assign a student's grade.

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN

A+	97 – 100%
A	93 – 96%
A-	90 – 92%
B+	87 – 89%
B	83 – 86%
B-	80 – 82%
C+	77 – 79%
C	73 – 76%
C-	70 – 72%
D+	67 – 69%
D	63 – 66%
D-	60 – 62%
F	59% and below

HIGHEST POINT TOTAL

As the highest point total earned by a single student in the course is knowledge of the utmost importance, there will be a daily highest point total earned update. Thus, everyday, at the beginning of class, the instructor will post, in full display of all students, the highest point total earned.

NOTE: At no time shall this point total notification include any identifying information.

Thus, if a student meets the eligibility requirements for an A and has a percentage grade of 91.37%, he or she would receive an A- in the course.

NOTE: We will discuss grades and the grading process in significant depth in class. Students should feel free to ask questions about grades and the grading process at any point during the semester as to ensure a full understanding of how the final course grades will be determined.

DISCLAIMER: This approach to grading, while common in game spaces, is relatively new, pedagogically speaking. As such, anomalies may occur that could undermine or compromise the integrity of the grading system and its intentions. In these cases, the instructor reserves the right to adjust the grading criteria, requirements, practices, and procedures as needed. Any grading changes necessary to insure students are not disadvantaged by this experimental grading process shall be discussed, in full, with the students in the course. Additionally, if changes are necessary, none of those changes shall negatively impact any student's grade.

COURSE CALENDAR

In the table below:
- ® indicates that a Reading Response accompanies a particular reading
- CRP stands for Critical Response Paper
- DR stands for Discuss Reading
- QLW stands for Quest Line Work, which includes everything from in -class discussions on quests, individualized work on quests, group and/or peer-review quest efforts, student quest presentations, as well as guided instruction on particular quests and course goals.
- Workshop indicates either 1) a studio type environment where specific technologies will be taught with students having an opportunity to work with those technologies with guided instruction, or 2) workshop can refer to peer-focused review, feedback, assistance, and guidance on course work.
- Play indicates days we will be involved with in-game activities or discussions.
- for the text used in the course,
    - *PG* stands for *Persuasive Games* by Ian Bogost
    - *FP* stands for *First Person*, the edited collection by Noah Wardrip-Fruin & Pat Harrigan
    - *Gee* stands for *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy* by James Paul Gee

Date	Reading for Class	In-Class Focus	Work Assigned/Due
7/12	None	Intro	Syllabus & Quests	Quests Assigned
7/13	None	Course Study	WoW Intro	
7/14	Handout: *Homo Ludens* (1-27) ®	DR	Workshop (images)	Reading Response DUE
7/15	None	Play	QLW	
7/16	*FP* Section II (35-70) ®	DR	Play	Reading Response DUE CRP 1 Assigned
7/19	*PG* Section 1 (1-64) ®	DR	Workshop (video)	Reading Response DUE
7/20	None	Play	QLW	
7/21	*PG* Section 3 (99-120) ®	DR	Workshop (audio)	Reading Response DUE
7/22	None	Play	Workshop (TBD)	CRP 1 DUE
7/23	*FP* Section 1 (1-34) ®	DR	QLW	Reading Response DUE
7/26	*FP* Section IV (117-164) ®	DR	QLW	Reading Response DUE
7/27	*FP* Section VIII.3 (310-318)	DR	Play	
7/28	Handout: *Homo Ludens* (105-119)	DR	Worskhop (Sophie 1)	
7/29	*Gee* Chapter 1 (1-12)	DR	Workshop (Sophie 2)	
7/30	*Gee* Chapter 2 (13-50) ®	DR	Play	Reading Response DUE CRP 2 Assigned
8/2	*PG* Section 8 (233-260) ®	DR	Workshop (TBD)	Reading Response DUE
8/3	None	Play	QLW	
8/4	*PG* Section 9 (261-292) ®	DR	Workshop (TBD)	Reading Response DUE
8/5	None	Play	QLW	CRP 2 DUE
8/6	*Gee* Chapter 3 (51-72) ®	DR	QLW	Reading Response DUE
8/9	*Gee* Chapter 4 (73-112) ®	DR	QLW	Reading Response DUE
8/10	*FP* Section VI.2 (218-226)	DR	QLW	
8/11	*PG* Section 11 (317-340) ®	DR	QLW	Reading Response DUE
8/12	*FP* Section V.3 (192-206)	DR	QLW	
8/13	None	DR	QLW	
8/16			CRP 3 DUE ALL WORK DUE

POINTS   RECORD

A-WQL – Assigned-Work Quest Line   B-Prof – Becoming Professional
® - Reading Response   SS – Survival Skills
CRP – Critical Response Paper   Another's Q – Another's Quest
(G) – Indicates an assignment that is graded.   Q# – Quest 1, 2, 3, 4 of a given quest line
   – Non (G) indicates completion-for-points.   PR – Peer Review
B-EQ – The Beginning-Explorer Quest   RA/RP – Rhetorical Analysis/Reflection Paper
AH Sale – Auction House Sale   Required – Required to earn any points in Quest

Quest Name	Pts Available	Pts Earned
A-WQL:		
® 1	25 (G)	
2	25 (G)	
3	25 (G)	
4	25 (G)	
5	25 (G)	
6	25 (G)	
7	25 (G)	
8	25 (G)	
9	25 (G)	
10	25 (G)	
11	25 (G)	
12	25 (G)	
CRP 1	100 (G)	
CRP 2	100 (G)	
CRP 3	100 (G)	
B-EQ	25	
Turning 10	50	
AH Sale	25	
Dungeoneer	75	
B-Prof.1	25	
B-Prof.2	25	
SS	50	
Another's Q	25	
Dailies 7/12	4	
7/13	4	
7/14	4	
7/15	4	
7/16	4	
7/19	4	
7/20	4	
7/21	4	
7/22	4	
7/23	4	
7/26	4	
7/27	4	
7/28	4	
7/29	4	
7/30	4	
8/2	4	
8/3	4	
8/4	4	
8/5	4	

Quest Name	Pts Available	Pts Earned
A-WQL:		
Dailies 8/6	4	
8/9	4	
8/10	4	
8/11	4	
8/12	4	
8/13	4	
A-WQL Total:	1000	
IMAGE QL:		
Q1: TC	75	
Q1: PR 1	10	
Q1: PR 2	10	
Q2: Image C	100 (G)	
Q2: Process S	50 (G)	
Q2: Eval C/E	Required (√)	
Q2: PR 1	15	
Q2: PR 2	15	
Q3: Proposal	50 (G)	
Q3: Poster	200 (G)	
Q3: Context/E	Required (√)	
Q3: PR 1	20	
Q3: PR 2	20	
Q4: Proposal	100 (G)	
Q4: I-Image	225(G)	
Q4: RA/RP	50 (G)	
Q4: PR 1	30	
Q4: PR 2	30	
IQL Total:	1000	
VIDEO QL		
Q1: C-Video	75 (G)	
Q1: PR 1	10	
Q1: PR 2	10	
Q2: Proposal	30 (G)	
Q2: Video	115 (G)	
Q2: P-Reflect	30 (G)	
Q2: PR 1	15	
Q2: PR 2	15	

POINTS   RECORD

Quest Name	Pts Available	Pts Earned
VIDEO QL:		
Q3: Proposal	50 (G)	
Q3: Video	200 (G)	
Q3: Eval	Required (√)	
Q3: G-Eval	Required (√)	
Q3: PR 1	20	
Q3: PR 2	20	
Q4: Proposal	100 (G)	
Q4: M-M C	200 (G)	
Q4: RP	50 (5)	
Q4: PR 1	30	
Q4: PR 2	30	
VQL Total:	1000	
PRESENTATION QL		
Q1: T-Approv	Required (√)	
Q1: Pres.	100 (G)	
Q1: Pres. Aids	Required (√)	
Q1: PR 1	15	
Q1: PR 2	15	
Q2: Lead Dis	125 (G)	
Q2: Activity	Required (√)	
Q3: Proposal	50 (G)	
Q3: Pres.	200 (G)	
Q3: Pres. Aids	Required (√)	
Q3: Self-Eval	50 (G)	
Q3: PR 1	25	
Q3: PR 2	25	
Q4: Proposal	90 (G)	
Q4: MM Pres.	200 (G)	
Q4: RP	45 (G)	
Q4: PR 1	30	
Q4: PR 2	30	
PQL. Total:	1000	
CHARACTER QL		
Q1: Notes	Required (√)	
Q1: Story	75 (G)	
Q1: PR 1	15	
Q1: PR 2	15	
Q2: Proposal	25 (G)	
Q2: The LQ	100 (G)	
Q2: LQ Eval	25	
Q2: PR 1	25	
Q2: PR 2	25	

Quest Name	Pts Available	Pts Earned
CHARACTER QL		
Q3: Proposal	50 (G)	
Q3: Video	275 (G)	
Q3: Exposure	25(G)	
Q4: Proposal	45 (G)	
Q4: MM Pres.	200 (G)	
Q4: RP	40 (G)	
Q4: PR 1	30	
Q4: PR 2	30	
CQL Total:	1000	
RESEARCH QL		
Q1: Proposal	80 (G)	
Q1: PR 1	15	
Q1: PR 2	15	
Q2: Paper	300 (G)	
Q2: PR 1	20	
Q2: PR 2	20	
Q3: Cut	225 (G)	
Q4: MMC	200 (G)	
Q4: RP	75 (G)	
Q4: PR 1	25	
Q4: PR 2	25	
RQL Total:	1000	

ACHIEVEMENTS QL		
Achievement & Pt Value	Modifier	Pts Earned
	AQL Total:	