Course Description:

This section of ENG 1131 is for students interested in writing, critical media theory, and digital games. Students will develop compositional skills in analysis, synthesis, and argumentation as they play, analyze, read, design and write about digital games. In addition to developing writing skills, students will hone a critical vocabulary developed from contemporary and historical scholarship on the medium. By the end of the course, students will have a better understanding of how digital games communicate ideas, how digital games are rhetorical platforms, how games construct arguments about race, class, gender, economics, and society, and how to write about these issues.

This is a General Education course providing the student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general---educationrequirement.aspx#learning

Course Objectives

At the semester's end, students will have achieved the following:

• A basic familiarity with the history, major theories, and debates in the field of videogame studies

• The ability to discuss and analyze gaming cultures and the various genres of games

• A critical understanding of game production, as well as how production shapes the medium

• The ability to think critically about the role of writing and culture in the production of games

• Produce writing that possesses a focused thesis, unity throughout the essay, and coherence between paragraphs and ideas and within the essay as a whole

• Display a command of grammar, mechanics, punctuation, spelling, and accurate MLA citation and documentation of research

• Work collaboratively in an academic writing community, learning from and contributing to the writing of your classmates in addition to engaging in critical verbal discourse

Required Texts (Available at the UF Bookstore or from online vendors)

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *"They Say / I Say"*. 3rd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014. Print.

Mayra, Frans. *An Introduction to Game Studies*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2008. Print.

Williams, Joseph M. and Joseph Bizup. *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*. 5th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2015. Print.

Required Games
In addition to weekly readings, students are required to play all of the games listed below. Games will be played and reviewed collaboratively during our weekly screening (M, period 9 – 11), so students are expected to attend and take notes on gameplay. Game screenings will be the basis for weekly responses and major assignments in the course, so you cannot pass this course if you do not attend and participate in our screenings.

Screening sessions are designed so that students do not need to purchase and play these games outside of class; however, I do invite you to do so in case you need to reference a game for a later assignment. All of these games are available for both Windows and Mac OS through the Steam store: http://store.steampowered.com. Minecraft can be purchased at Minecraft.net.

Braid
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/26800/)

Colossal Cave Adventure
(http://www.amc.com/shows/halt---and---catch---fire/exclusives/colossal---cave---adventure)

Darfur is Dying
(http://www.darfurisdying.com)

Doom
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/2280/)

Gone Home
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/232430/)

Kentucky Route Zero
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/231200/)

The Legend of Zelda
(http://www.8bbit.com/legend---of---zelda---the)

Loom
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/32340/)

Minecraft
(Minecraft.net)

Myst
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/244430/)

Papers, Please
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/239030/)

September 12th
(http://www.newsgaming.com/games/index12.htm)

The Stanley Parable
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/221910/)

Super Mario Bros.
(http://www.8bbit.com/super---mario---brothers)

This War of Mine
(http://store.steampowered.com/app/282070/)

World of Warcraft
(http://us.battle.net/wow/en/)

Assignments

Assignments must be submitted on ELS before class on the day they are listed as due (see course reading schedule). Essays should be uploaded as Microsoft Word documents (.doc or .docx) to the appropriate assignment box. Title files with your last name, first name, and the title of the assignment. All assignments should be written following Modern Language Association (MLA) formatting guidelines. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner along with the appropriate citations and a works cited page.

No late assignments will be accepted, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Failure of technology (hard drive crashes, printer out of ink, etc.) is not an excuse. If Canvas is not functioning properly when you attempt to submit a paper, you must immediately email me and apprise me of the situation and bring a hard copy to class, which you may submit for no penalty.

Course Assignments

In all of your writing, I will be looking for well---written and well---reasoned arguments that address the questions posed. Mere descriptions of the function of a particular software artifact are not what I'm looking for; you will be asked to analyze, evaluate, and then make and support arguments about such artifacts. The following are formal written assignments, not a note or a status update. Proofread and cite sources. Well---reasoned, persuasive writing is what I'm looking for, whether or not I agree with your position is irrelevant. In both cases, going beyond the letter of the assignment and integrating it with your own ideas, questions, and interests is encouraged and will help you improve your performance.

Note: Failure to turn in any major assignment without prior discussion will result in a failing grade for the class.

- **Weekly Response Papers** (400 points total) — Minimum 500 words

  Following our weekly screenings, you will produce a response paper addressing that week's themes and gameplay. Please refer to the response prompt assignment sheet for specifics. Response prompts are due before class on Friday and should be both brought to class and submitted on Canvas.

- **Assignment 1: Rhetorical Analysis** (100 points total) — Minimum 1000 words

  For this assignment, you will use the argumentative and rhetorical "tools" we have examined up to this point in class. You will choose one of the games we have played and analyze the procedural structure of the argument. Once you have a good sense of how the argument is constructed and have determined whether that construction is or is not effective in making the argument, write an analysis of the argument. Remember, part of your task in writing this analysis isn't just to show how the argument was constructed, but is to *argue* that **your analysis** is accurate and logical. Your task is not to argue with the argument, but to offer a persuasive analysis of how that argument is made.

- **Assignment 2: Synthesis Essay** (200 points) — Minimum 1500 words

    In argumentative writing, *synthesis* is commonly understood as a counterpart to *analysis*. When writers analyze, they break something down into parts to view the relationship among those parts; synthesis writers, however, put those parts back together in some new way. In other words, synthesis is a way of seeing and coming to terms with complexities. A synthesis essay thus moves beyond analysis to show how a writer interacts with a group of texts, explores their alternative perspectives on an issue, and presents a new, enlarged perspective of his or her own—forging a new whole out of potentially confusing parts. This assignment asks you to synthesize a text and game we have played to reach some new insight.

- **Assignment 3: Proposal** (200 points) — Minimum 2000 words

    Proposals are a writing genre that argues for a solution to a problem or recommends some action. Important in decision making and problem solving, proposals can also provide readers with an idea or concept backed by a plan to implement the idea/concept as a tangible product. Proposals must persuade an audience that its solutions are feasible, effective an accurate; they must analyze problems to determine solutions; they state the value of the proposal and provide data to support the proposed action, solution, or concept. In this course, you will draw on the proposal genre to propose a digital game that you would like to create. Your proposal must be feasible given current technology and bodily limitations, but it should be more complex than a Flappy Bird or Call of Duty knock---off.

- **Quizzes and Participation** (100 points)

    Participation accounts for in---class discussion, workshops, in---class work and other related activities. Participation is a necessary component of your time in this class, and as such will factor into your grade. You are expected to arrive to class prepared, with homework done, articles/books read, and paper and writing tools at hand. You will work individually, in small groups and in class---wide discussion. I will expect each of you to actively participate each day, and your contributions to class discussion are documented. You are expected to add constructively to the conversation we have each day. You will treat the instructor and your fellow classmates with respect at all times, especially when you disagree with them. Anyone who breaks that rule will be asked to leave the classroom. ***We will have weekly quizzes, but I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes if necessary***

This is a General Education course providing the student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general---educationrequirement.aspx#learning

Course Policies:

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed **three** unexcused absences. If you miss more than **three** classes during the semester, each additional absence will lower your overall grade by 100 points. If you miss more than **six** classes, you will **fail** the course. Exempt from this policy are **only** those absences involving university---sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, family emergencies, and health issues for which you must provide appropriate documentation in advance of the absence.

Additionally, tardiness will not be tolerated. If you are tardy for **three** class periods, you will receive an unexcused absence.

Note: If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all class discussions and activities as well as any new developments, such as assignments and due dates. You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. You will not, however, be able to make up any in---class assignments. I will not approach you regarding absences and missing or late assignments; it is your responsibility to speak to me and keep track of your own attendance and assignments. If you anticipate having a prolonged absence for any reason, please speak with me in advance to make appropriate arrangements.

Email Etiquette:

Many of you will need to write courteous, formal e---mails in your place of work, and this classroom is no different. As this is a writing classroom focused on rhetoric and communication, students are expected to be critical and sensitive writers in all their communication including e---mail. With that in mind, I will only respond to e---mails that demonstrate a formal tone and style. This means that your e---mails must display the following:

- Subject Line

- Greeting

- Reader---centered

- Edited, error---free, proofread

- If making a request (deadline extension, meeting, etc.), e---mail has been sent at least **72 hours** in advance

- Demonstrate that the student has consulted other documentation (course syllabus, student handbook, peers in the course) prior to writing

I reserve the right to ignore (and, depending on the situation, report) inconsiderate, colloquial, rude, accusatory, and poorly edited e---mails.

I will only respond to e---mails between the hours of 9 – 5, M---F.

Finally, I will not discuss the following over e---mail:

- Grade Disputes

- Edit/provide feedback on papers

- Course policy (refer to the course syllabus)

Grading Scale

A 4.0 / 93---100 / 930---1000	B--- 2.67 / 80---82 / 800---829	D 1.0 / 63---66 / 630---669
A--- 3.67 / 90---92 / 900---929	C+ 2.33 / 77---79 / 770---799	D--- 0.67 / 60---62 / 600---629
B+ 3.33 / 87---89 / 870---899	C 2.0 / 73---76 / 730---769	E 0.00 / 0---59 / 0---599
B 3.0 / 83---86 / 830---869	C--- 1.67 / 70---72 / 700---729	
	D+ 1.33 / 67---69 / 670---699	

Statement of student disability services: The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

Statement on harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/

Statement on academic honesty: All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php

Class and Assignment Schedule

This schedule is only a guide and is subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due the day they are listed on the syllabus, not the following day.

Date	Class Discussion	Readings/Homework
Aug 24th	Syllabus review	No screening
Aug 26th	Major Assignment introduction	
Aug 28th	Weekly Journal Assignments; Steam	
Aug 31st	What is Game Studies?	Mayra: Chapter 1; Screening: *Gone Home*
Sept 2nd	Writing effective summaries; MLA Citation; how to paraphrase	
Sept 4th	Discuss *Gone Home*	**Summary and Citation Response Due**

Sept 7th	**Holiday, no class**	No screening;
Sept 9th	Writing instruction	Williams and Bizup: Chapters 1 – 3;
Sept 11th	What is rhetorical analysis? How do I analyze?	Carroll: Backpacks vs. Briefcases: Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis; Play *September 12th*;
Sept 14th	Procedural Rhetoric	Bogost: The Rhetoric of Videogames; Screening: *Papers, Please*
Sept 16th	Discuss *Papers, Please*	
Sept 18th	What is rhetoric and what does it have to do with games?	Herrick: Chapter 1
Sept 21st	Discuss Game Studies Methods	Mayra: Chapter 8; Screening: *This War of Mine*
Sept 23rd	How do I analyze an argument?	Jones: Finding the Good Argument OR Why Bother With Logic?
Sept 25th	Discuss *This War of Mine*	**Analysis and Rhetoric Response Due**
Sept 28th	Discuss meaning in games	Mayra, Chapter 2; Screening: *Portal*
Sept 30th	Discuss *Portal*	
Oct 2nd	Writing instruction	Williams and Bizup: Chapters 4 and 5;
Oct 5th	Discuss history of games	Mayra: Chapter 3; Screening: Board games
Oct 7th	Writing instruction	Sentence structure, punctuation
Oct 9th	**Rhetorical Analysis Peer Review**	**Rhetorical Analysis Draft Due; Rhetorical analysis due Sunday at 5 PM**

Oct 12th	Discuss Juul	Read Juul: http://www.jesperjuul.net/text/wcgcacd.html; Screening: *Kentucky Route Zero*
Oct 14th	Discuss *Kentucky Route Zero*	
Oct 16th	Compare and contrast; starting conversations	Graff and Birkenstein: Chapters 1 --- 3;
Oct 19th	Discuss IF and 70's games	Mayra: Chapter 4; Screening: *Adventure*; *Pong*; *Space Invaders*
Oct 21st	Synthesizing ideas	Graff and Birkenstein: Chapters 4 --- 6
Oct 23rd	Discuss *Adventure*, *Pong*, *Space Invaders*	**Compare and Contrast Response Due**
Oct 26th	Discuss game narrative and 80's games	Mayra: Chapter 5; Screening: *Super Mario Bros.*; *The Legend of Zelda*; *Loom*
Oct 28th	Discuss *Super Mario Bros.*; *The Legend of Zelda*; *Loom*	
Oct 30th	Synthesizing ideas	Graff and Birkenstein: Chapters 7 --- 10
Nov 2nd	Discuss three dimensional games	Mayra: Chapter 6; Screening *Myst*, *Doom*, *Afternoon*
Nov 4th	**Synthesis paper peer review**	**Synthesis paper due Sunday at 5 PM**
Nov 6th	**Holiday, no class**	
Nov 9th	Contemporary games and culture	Mayra: Chapter 7; Screening: *World of Warcraft* and *Minecraft*
Nov 11th	**Holiday, no class**	Play *World of Warcraft* OR *Minecraft*
Nov 13th	Out of town, SLSA Conference	Play *World of Warcraft* OR *Minecraft*

Nov 16th	Out of Town SLSA Conference	Play *World of Warcraft* OR *Minecraft*
Nov 18th	Discuss *World of Warcraft* and *Minecraft*	***World of Warcraft* OR *Minecraft* Response Due**
Nov 20th	How to write a proposal	
Nov 23rd	Writing instruction	Williams and Bizup: 6 and 7
Nov 30th	Why Game Studies Now?	Why Game Studies Now Readings; Screening: *dys---4---ia, Depression Quest, The Stanley Parable*
Dec 2nd	Discuss *dys---4---ia, Depression Quest, The Stanley Parable*	
Dec 4th	Writing Instruction: Proposal Guidelines	
Dec 7th	Final Paper Peer Review	
Dec 9th	Course Wrap---up	**Final due Wednesday, Dec 16th**