

IS 204: WI / Themes in Popular Culture: Games and Gaming
T: 1:00pm—3:30pm (CRN #63278)
Palanakila 213

INSTRUCTOR:
OFFICE:
OFFICE HOURS:

Nicolas Logue
Palanakila 138
Office Hours:
M and W 10:00am – 11:30pm;
T 11:00am – 1:00pm
Also by appointment
780-9785
logue@hawaii.edu
Fall 2014

TELEPHONE:
EMAIL ADDRESS:
EFFECTIVE DATE:

GAME ON!!!

WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Windward Community College offers innovative programs in the arts and sciences and opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of Hawai'i and its unique heritage. With a special commitment to support the access and educational needs of Native Hawaiians, we provide O'ahu's Ko'olau region and beyond with liberal arts, career and lifelong learning in a supportive and challenging environment — inspiring students to excellence.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

An interdisciplinary study of a specific event, person, idea, or process in popular culture which will bring together various methodologies and conceptual tools to create a complex analysis. Topics covered will include: the concept of popular culture, how elements of popular culture are created and circulated, how elements of popular culture connect to historical, political, social, symbolic and intellectual history, how different groups in society are related to the elements of popular culture, and how popular culture plays a role in the lives of individuals. (3 hours lecture)

CATALOG DESCRIPTION APPLIED TO THIS THEME IN POPULAR CULTURE

An interdisciplinary study of games and gaming in popular culture which will bring together various methodologies and conceptual tools to create a complex analysis. Topics covered will include: the concept of gaming in popular culture, how games are created and circulated in popular culture, how elements of gaming in popular culture connect to historical, political, social, symbolic, and intellectual history, how different groups in society relate to gaming, and how games play a role in the lives of individuals.

This course examines the human activity of gaming through the lenses of history, economics, education, mathematics, military theory, neuroscience, psychology, and anthropology, also introducing students to game theory, the field of professional game design, and how certain kinds of games enhance intelligence quotient, creative problem solving, and life skills.

Students will study and play many games: classic strategy games used by kings and emperors of old such as Chess or Go, games which generated economies of gambling around them (poker, blackjack, craps, roulette), games as social activities to strength familial and/or social ties (such as monopoly, trivial pursuit, taboo, charades), complex modern strategy gaming used in military academies around the world (games such as diplomacy, game of thrones

the board game, Warhammer 40k miniatures gaming, etc.), and the wide world of video gaming entertainment (everything from resource management games, simulations, real-time strategy games, role playing games, first person shooters, etc.). We will also look at the use of games to further education, and the burgeoning field of alternate reality games for life enhancement.

Students will research and write on games and game theory (as applied to a specific field of their choice) write comprehensive reviews of specific games after logging hours of play and determining levels of entropy vs. optimal play/risk vs. reward/etc., and finally design their own original games and produce mock-ups/design-documentation of these games including board/cards/items and rulebooks.

WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE HALLMARKS

- Writing promotes learning of course content.
 - Writing is considered to be a process in which multiple drafts are encouraged.
 - Writing contributes significantly to each student's course grade.
 - Students do a substantial amount of writing, a minimum of 4,000 words. Depending on the types of writing appropriate to the discipline, students may write critical essays or reviews, journal entries, lab reports, research reports or reaction papers.
- *To allow for meaningful teacher-student interaction on each student's writing, the class is restricted to 20 students.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- Identify the connection between the theme in popular culture with larger political, social, and intellectual patterns in society.
- Analyze the connection between the theme in popular culture and other themes, either contemporary or historical.
- Participate effectively in group discussions, given evidence of thoughtfulness and an engagement with other people's positions.
- Connect local elements of popular culture to global economic and political systems.
- Explain and justify an evaluation of the role of popular culture in the student's life.

COURSE TASKS

This course will analyze, through writing, reading, seminar-style discussions, and break out game sessions, the popular culture rage that surrounds gaming in our modern society. We will look at the evolution of gaming from ancient times to the exploding video game culture surrounding us in 2014, and look at how games are being utilized in our society not only as a means of distraction/relaxation, but also how they are educating us in unconventional ways, building better communities, and even curing cancer.

In order to meet the course SLOs and fulfill the Writing Intensive Hallmarks, this course will revolve around the following tasks:

- ✓ Research and select a table top board/card/miniatures/roleplaying game of your choice, purchase said game and then present it to a small group of your peers on a Game-splasion day. You will be assessed at how well you can analyze the game, break it down for new players, explain the rules and then run the game smoothly. This assignment is worth 10 points and is due on the designated day according the class schedule, failure to be prepared by the assigned day will result in a 5 point penalty each class session it is late (so if its late twice, the assignment is failed completely).
- ✓ Write 1 research paper (MINIMUM 2,000 words) on a specific game or trend in gaming culture. This paper must be typed, use transitions where appropriate, include a word count and be grammatically and mechanically correct. This assignment is worth 20 points and is due on the designated day according to the class schedule, and will be assessed a 5-point penalty for each day it is late, regardless of reason.
- ✓ Write 1 Game Design Document/Mock-Up (MINIMUM 2,000 words). Over the course of this semester you will design your very own game for any medium you see fit (video, board, pen-n-paper roleplaying, card,

alternate reality game, etc.). You will create a detailed mock-up and design document for your game, which you will then present to the class on our final Game-a-thon Day. This assignment is worth 30 points of your final grade (20 points for the design work/writing and 10 points for the presentation).

- ✓ Complete a variety of in-class activities (40 points total)
 - You will be frequently required to participate in group assignments, discussions, and informal writing assignments such as journal reflections. You will also be required to play games often in class. Your sportsmanship, ability to apply yourself in a concentrated manner will be evaluated every class session.
 - **Since all of these activities require being present for class, you will NOT be able to make-up these activities, regardless of reason, if class is missed. However,** your first 3 absences will automatically be excused (meaning you **are able to make-up the points** for these days). On the other hand, any absences beyond these first 3 absences **will NOT be excused, regardless of reason (unless, of course, the zombies are walking the earth, which though, in this case, grades would be the least of your worries)**. After your 3rd unexcused absence, your final grade will automatically drop one letter grade.
 - Participate in class by being physically, as well as mentally, present and respectful of others. This includes **turning off your cell phone (unless we are using it to play a game as part of a structured class activity)**, not talking story with friends, not listening to music, and coming to class on time. This also includes not monopolizing class discussion with your own point-of-view and not being respectful of what your classmates have to say. The class is a designated **Safe Zone**. Negative comments will **NOT** be tolerated. Please prepare yourself to face the consequences if you engage in any disrespectful behavior.

ASSESSMENT TASKS AND GRADING

Present and Demonstrate a Game to Classmates	= 10 points
Research Paper	= 20 points
Game Design Doc/Mock-up and Presentation	= 30 points
In-Class Activities	= 40 points
	= 100 points total

****Everyone starts the class with an "A" (100 points)!
What you do with your "A" is now up to you!***

To keep your	You can't lose more than	Which means
A	10 points	A = 90 points & above
B	20 points	B = 80 points & above
C	30 points	C = 70 points & above
D	40 points	D = 60 points & above

*(Hopefully, this will not happen, but if it turns out that more than 40 points is lost, an "F" for the class will result.)

*The "N" grade is only given in circumstances in which the student has worked conscientiously, attended regularly, finished all work, fulfilled course responsibilities, and has made measurable progress. However, either the student has not achieved the minimal student learning outcomes and is not prepared to succeed at the next level, or the student has made consistent progress in class but is unable to complete the class due to extenuating circumstances, such as major health, personal, or family emergencies. The "N" grade is **NOT** given in circumstances in which you have NOT made consistent progress in the class &/or attended class regularly.

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED TEXTS

REQUIRED: *Reality is Broken* by Dr. Jane McGonigal. RECOMMENDED: *Cowboys Full: The Story of Poker*

Other Supplemental Readings will be handed out in class

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

- ❖ This course makes use of learner-centered activities to help you learn the material. In other words, this class will not rely solely on lecture. If you find that this teaching style does not work for you, please drop the class.
- ❖ This course will utilize peer-feedback methods for your games and papers. You will typically be asked to share your writings and game design in small (3—4 person) groups. You will also be expected to give constructive feedback to your group members.

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU IN THIS CLASS

1. This class is not only **writing-intensive** but also **reading-intensive AND thinking-intensive**. Since we will move at an extremely fast pace, it is crucial for you to keep up with the readings and paper assignments.
2. You will be expected to write thoughtful & analytical papers on given topics AND keep up with all assigned readings. Seriously consider dropping the class if you find that the topic of Games and Gaming does not interest you since lack of interest in a subject corresponds to a negative grade.
3. Faithfully attend class since failure to attend class on a regular basis corresponds to a negative grade.
4. Always take notes. This includes anything that is written on the board, viewed on the overhead projector, discussed with one another, gleaned from videos, etc. These notes can help you write your papers!
5. Bring required readings to class according to the class schedule. We will typically refer back to these readings in class. Also, these readings will help you complete in-class assignments. Failure to buy the required texts always corresponds to a negative grade.
6. Ask questions if you don't understand and definitely let me know if you are having any problems in the class.

***This class is designed to be accessible to all students. Thus, please take note of the following statement:**

DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, lemke@hawaii.edu, or you may stop by Hale 'Akoakoa 213 for more information