

# Course Syllabus: ATEC 6356.501

## INTERACTIVE STORY

AKA: "MECHANICS OF STORY II"



### Course Information

ATEC	6356	501	Interactive Story	MofS II	Wed : 7:00pm-9:45pm SLC 2.302
------	------	-----	-------------------	---------	-------------------------------

**Class Blog:** [writerscurtain.blogspot.com](http://writerscurtain.blogspot.com)

**Professor Contact Information:** [alb032000@utdallas.edu](mailto:alb032000@utdallas.edu) → ([albrackin@gmail.com](mailto:albrackin@gmail.com))

**Adam L. Brackin, Ph.D** - Research Assistant Professor, ATEC - University of Texas at Dallas

OFFICE: **JO 3.506** (OFFICE PHONE: **972-883-4350**) Alternate: 214-354-6161 / 972-516-8844

OFFICE HOURS: **Monday 10-12, 1:15-3:30 & Wednesday 10-12, 1:15-3:30**

(& other times by appointment)

### Course Description

Not long ago we were spectators, passive consumers of mass media. Today, we ARE media. Abandoning our role as passive audience members, we approach television shows, movies, even advertising as invitations to join in - as experiences to immerse ourselves in at will. This course will be taught as a follow up to ATEC 6351 "Mechanics of Story I" though courses can be taken out of sequence or independent of one another. (May be repeated for credit as topics vary to a maximum of 9 credit hours.) ***Students must be actively enrolled in or officially auditing this class in order to attend it due to UTD policy, fire code, and very real seating restrictions.***

### Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students will rethink the ancient art of narrative for a two way world - innovators and story mechanics that are changing how we play, communicate, and think. From marketing to experimental forms, interactive narrative is as surprising as it is inevitable and we are the witnesses to the emergence of this new form of storytelling in which the audience becomes the player and if pushed far enough, author in their own right.

### Required Textbooks and Materials

Art of Immersion: How the digital generation is remaking Hollywood, Madison Ave, and the way we tell stories.  
by Frank Rose (Hardcover), W. W. Norton & Company; First Edition (2011) 0393076016

Reality is Broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world.

by Jane McGonnigal (Hardcover), Penguin Press; First Edition (2011) 1594202850

*(And selected short readings online and given in class as well as various selections from the "book" list - TBD.)*

### Additional Recommended Readings (from MofS I):

#### ***The Hero with a Thousand Faces***

by Joseph Campbell (Hardcover), New World Library, (July 28, 2008) 1577315936

#### ***The Art And Craft Of Storytelling: A Comprehensive Guide to Classic Writing Techniques***

by Nancy Lamb (Paperback) F&W Media, Inc., (December 15, 2008) 1582975590

#### ***The Hero's Journey***

by Harold Bloom (Hardcover), Facts On File, Inc. (January 30, 2009) 0791098036

#### ***Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives***

by Pat Harrigan (Hardcover) MIT Press (May 29, 2009) 0262232634

#### ***Quests: Design, Theory, and History in Games and Narratives***

by Jeff Howard (Paperback), A K Peters Ltd (February 26, 2008) 156881347

## Course Content, Assignments, & Academic Calendar

Students will complete reading assignments throughout the semester followed by group discussion and individual analysis on the [class blog](#) as a part of a daily participation grade. Students will turn in five deliverables throughout the semester: first by becoming an expert in a given IP universe by researching and ingesting ALL related media and writing about it, then presenting it to the class, then by creating an Original Intellectual Property Adaptation in an appropriate other media format and presenting it to the class, followed by a post-mortem of the creative process. A more detailed description of the weekly reading assignments and other requirements will be posted each week on the Class Blog: <http://writerscurtain.blogspot.com/>

(Course requirements or due-dates may be amended or changed; such changes will be given in writing, with sufficient advance notice for completion.)

### TENTATIVE TOPICS:

**The art of visualization:** *Paratext and the real, "real" IP?*

**Adapting to adaptations:** *Lost in translation, or necessary fulfillment?*

**The misunderstanding of story and game:** *How do you engage with it?*

**The importance of choice:** *Interacting with interactivity.*

**The blurring of linear and nonlinear:** *Does the sequence matter? Can it (not)?*

**Audience to author:** *Audience, agency, the storyteller, and me!*

**The fusion of entertainment and marketing:** *What function does it serve?*

**The blurring of fiction and reality:** *Where does "ludic activity" begin?(Reality TV & Vlogs)*

**Collaboration and Emergence:** *Fun times with strangers! (MMO, ARG, & TMI)*

**Note:** Case Studies are tentative, flexible, and subject to change as "new media" never stops – especially for academics such as ourselves.

1	AUG 29	Defining "Interactive" Storytelling: What is it? What isn't it?
2	SEPT 5	Adaptation, Visualization ( <i>Hogwarts &amp; Hunger Games</i> )
3	SEPT 12	Interaction, Sequence, Choice ( <i>Yogscast Survival Games</i> )
4	SEPT 19	Ludic Activity, Authenticity, & Validity ( <i>Walking Dead</i> )
5	SEPT 26	Audience, Authorship, Agency ( <i>James Potter &amp; Star Wars Fanfics</i> )
6	OCT 3	D1 DUE PRESENTATIONS DAY
7	OCT 10	D1 & D2 DUE PRESENTATIONS DAY
8	OCT 17	D1 DUE PRESENTATIONS DAY (19 <sup>TH</sup> MIDTERMS AVAIL)
9	OCT 24	Case Study - TBD
10	OCT 31	NO CLASS (HALLOWEEN NIGHT)
11	NOV 7	Collaboration, Emergence, Self-Organization
12	NOV 14	Entertainment, Marketing, Reality ( <i>ARGlikes and Trans-media</i> )
13	NOV 19-23	NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)
14	NOV 28	D3 DUE PRESENTATION DAY
15	DEC 5	D3 DUE PRESENTATION DAY
16	DEC 12	(D3, D4 & D5 DUE) PRESENTATION DAY
--	DEC 13/17	READING DAY / FINAL DAY (NO EXAM)

### Attendance and Grading Policy

Students are generally expected to attend ALL classes unless you have a special circumstance in which case, as a courtesy, please contact me in advance by phone or email. Late work will be dropped by one letter grade (10 points) for each week it is late without exception. If there is a conflict, please turn it in early. Participation Grade is calculated as an average of all class related activity and communication.

There are five deliverables for this class NOT including any weekly homework or small assignments (which count towards the daily participation grade). **This class will be graded on a standard 10 point grading scale for all deliverables.** Grade weights will be determined as follows:

Weekly Class & Blog Participation -----	15% of total grade
D1: Commercial IP Presentation & Bibliography -----	15% of total grade
D2: Commercial IP Critical Analysis -----	20% of total grade
D3: Original IP Adaptation Presentation -----	15% of total grade
D4: Original IP Adaptation -----	25% of total grade
D5: Post-Mortem of Creative Process -----	10% of total grade

This class relies heavily on discussion and class participation, and a high level of professionalism and good citizenship is expected. Attention should be given to the speaker at all times and respect shown as expected within the university classroom environment. Appropriate multi-tasking is permitted only so long as it does not interfere with the high expectations described above. **This DOES NOT include personal use of the lab computers, social media sites, games, etc** unless directly related to instruction at that moment. Any student who attends all classes, completes all coursework on time, and whose deliverables all meet the high standards expected of a UTD graduate student, will receive an A in this course.

### UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information found at the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of course syllabi. Be aware that all information contained at this link are considered to be fully a part of this syllabus herein without exception as if it were printed below.

<http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>