UTD

Course	**ATEC 6342.001**
Course Title	**Game Studies: Approaches to Play and Game Studies**
Professor	Josef Nguyen
Term	Fall 2016
Meetings	Thursdays, 1:00-3:45PM

Professor's Contact Information

Office Phone	972-883-7552
Office Location	ATC 1.513
Email Address	jdn160330@utdallas.edu
Office Hours	Mondays, 2-3PM; Thursdays, 11AM-12PM; and by appointment
Other Information	Please allow up to 24 hours for responses to emails Please do not leave voicemail messages on the office phone

General Course Information

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions — n/a

Course Description

Focusing on classical texts as well as contemporary debates, this graduate seminar prepares students for advanced research work in the field of play and game studies. This course introduces students to a variety of theories, approaches, methods, and frameworks for the material, semiotic, and socioeconomic analysis of play and games. Interrogating definitions and devices, platforms and practices, the readings for this course include foundational works as well as recent scholarship concerned with play and games that are analog, digital, and anywhere in between. Readings for this course also include perspectives from other fields with insights to contribute to the critical investigation of play and games, including but not limited to anthropology, sociology, literary and media studies, gender and sexuality studies, performance studies, science and technology studies, and human-computer interaction.

Students will each choose a particular game phenomenon (a game title, a console, a company, a magazine, a website, a practice, a community, etc…) that they will refract through the various approaches presented throughout the course. In so doing, the course tasks students to explore how any given game artifact, game event, or game phenomenon is much more complex and contested than a hermetically sealed object or entity. Students will emulate and modify existing approaches for analyzing the many sociocultural and material facets of games and game cultures by bringing their primary phenomena of study into dialogue with existing scholarship.

Students will complete short writing assignments analyzing their chosen game phenomena through several of the weekly thematics, compile a report on the publication details of a relevant academic journal, and compose an article-length research paper that intervenes in a contemporary debate in play and game studies.

Learning Outcomes Students will:
- Become familiar with both classical and contemporary debates in the field of play and game studies
- Investigate play and games as material, socioeconomic, and semiotic phenomena
- Develop proficiency in locating, reading, and synthesizing scholarly materials from and other research areas beyond the field of play and game studies
- Integrate existing scholarship into their own original research with awareness to the concerns of academic publishing

Required Texts & Materials There are no textbooks or readers required for purchase for this course. All readings will be available online through the learning management system or through links to online articles and videos.

Course Policies

Grading Criteria

5 Responses (roughly 500 words each)	25%
Journal publication report	10%
15-20 page research paper, with abstract (double spaced)	40%
Class participation and discussion	25%

Accommodation Students with disabilities are encouraged to utilize the on-campus resources at the Office of Student AccessAbility. You can contact the office at 972-883-6104 or by email: studentaccessability@utdallas.edu. Their office is located in the Student Service Building (SSB), suite 3.200. They can provide documentation and details for accommodations to address your individual needs. If you need any special accommodations to complete this course successfully, please provide me with this information as soon as possible, so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Classroom Citizenship It is our responsibility to work together to produce a classroom environment where everyone can share, discuss, and question the materials being discussed respectfully.

Disagreements and conflicting perspectives will, unavoidably, emerge. To ensure that participants feel comfortable voicing a diverse set of thoughts, comments, and views, we will not tolerate harassment, personal attacks, and other forms of actions and expressions that unduly distract from the educational mission at-hand and inflict emotional, physical, or psychological harm on those involved.

Part of the role of encouraging a diverse learning environment is acknowledging that individuals should feel safe and respected to contribute to the classroom. This involves not only allowing everyone opportunities to contribute their thoughts but to be mindful of how we recognize and address others. Do not assume things about others' identities, backgrounds, or experiences—whether that is age, race, gender, sexuality, class, etc… Refer to people by the names, pronouns, and other identifiers that they prefer. Avoid insisting on imposing identity markers onto others. Allow people to self-identify as they feel comfortable.

Please discuss with me any concerns you have regarding an unsafe or hostile classroom environment, particularly if something arises that causes distress.

Late Work Late work will be penalized 10% (a full letter grade) for each 24-hour period beyond the deadline. If you need an extension, let me know well in advance, so we can make arrangements.

Academic Honesty	All written work must be original for this class. Unless you are specifically told to collaborate with classmates, complete your graded work individually. Plagiarism is using the words and materials of others as if they were your own. It is a serious offense with serious consequences. Use proper citation to indicate the use of other people's work to support and strengthen your own. All suspicions of plagiarism will be investigated.

For more information on academic honesty, please consult
http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/gsPolDishonesty.htm

Class Attendance	Attend class regularly and in full. Any absences should include documentation of a valid excuse (family or medical emergency, for example). Unexcused absences may impact course grades. Discuss upcoming potential absences with me to make appropriate arrangements.

Arriving more than 30 minutes late or leaving more than 30 minutes early, without prior clearance, may be grounds for marking that day as an absence. Failure to prepare for class participation (such as not having done the necessary reading) will also be regarded as conditions for an absence.

Technology in the Classroom	Laptops and computers can be used in the classroom solely for purposes directly pertinent to the activities and discussions at-hand. Do not use computers for other purposes, including but not limited to idle web-surfing, social media management, and completing work for other courses. The use of cell phones is prohibited during class time. I should not see them on your desk or in your hand at any point. Excessive misuse of technology in the classroom will result in an absence for the day.
Campus Carry	For more on campus carry policy, see http://www.utdallas.edu/campuscarry/
Comet Creed	*This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:*

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures	*The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies for these policies.*

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1: **Theorizing Play**	**Thursday, 25 August 2016**
	COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW
	Johan Huizinga, "Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Phenomenon," *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*
	Roger Caillois, "The Definition of Play," *Man, Play, and Games*
	Miguel Sicart, "Play Is" and "Playfulness," *Play Matters*
	Supplemental: Brian Sutton-Smith, "Play and Ambiguity," *The Ambiguity of Play*

Week 2: **Theorizing Games**	**Thursday, 1 September 2016 -- Guest led by Dr. Monica Evans**
	Roger Caillois, "The Classification of Games," *Man, Play, and Games*
	Bernard Suits, "Construction of a Definition," *The Grasshopper:*

Games, Life and Utopia
Jane McGonigal, "What Exactly is a Game?," *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*
Bonnie Ruberg, "Sex as Game: Playing with the Erotic Body in Virtual Worlds" [http://www.rhizomes.net/issue21/ruberg.html]
Supplemental: Gregory Bateson, "A Theory of Play and Fantasy," *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*

Week 3:
Form and Genre

Thursday, 8 September 2016
Jesper Juul, "Video Games and the Classical Game Model," *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*
Mark J. P. Wolff, "Genre and the Video Game," *The Medium of the Video Game* (edited by Mark J. P. Wolff)
Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre"
Christopher Goetz, "Tether and Accretions: Fantasy as Form in Videogames"
Supplemental: Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, "To Classify Is Human," *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*

Sunday, 11 September 2016
Response 1, responding to Weeks 1-3, due by 10PM

Week 4:
Interactivity and Narrative

Thursday, 15 September 2016
Brenda Laurel, "Dramatic Foundations: Part Two - Orchestrating Action," *Computers as Theater*
Janet Murray, "Agency," *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*
Espen Aarseth, "Ergodic Literature," *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*
Gonzalo Frasca, "Ludologists Love Stories, Too: Notes from a Debate that Never Took Place"
Noah Wardrip-Fruin, "The *Eliza* Effect," "The *Tale-Spin* Effect," and "The *Sim City* Effect," *Expressive Processing: Digital Fictions, Computer Games, and Software Studies*
Supplemental: Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact"

Week 5:
Values, Procedures, and Algorithms

Thursday, 22 September 2016
Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum, "Groundwork for Values in Games" and "Uncovering Values at Play" *Values at Play in Digital Games*
Janine Fron, Tracy Fullerton, Jacquelyn Ford Morie, and Celia Pearce, "The Hegemony of Play"
Ian Bogost, "Videogames and Ideological Frames,"
Alexander Galloway, "Allegories of Control," *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture*
Supplemental: Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of

Control"

Sunday, 25 September 2016
Response 2, responding to Weeks 4-5, due by 10PM

Week 6:   **Thursday, 29 September 2016**
Platform Studies   Nick Montfort and Ian Bogost, "Pac-Man," *Racing the Beam:*
                         The Atari Video Game Computer System
                   Matthew Kirschenbaum, "'An Old House with Many Rooms":
                         The Textual History of Mystery_House.dsk,"
                         Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination
                   Nathan Altice, "The Playing Card Platform"
                         [http://analoggamestudies.org/2014/11/the-playing-card-
                         platform/]
                   Aaron Trammell and Emma Waldron, "Playing for Intimacy:
                         Love, Lust, and Desire in the Pursuit of Embodied
                         Design," *Rated M for Mature: Sex and Sexuality in Video
                         Games* (edited by Matthew Wysocki and Evan Lauteria)
                   Ryuto138, "(TAS) Brain Age 'Art Academy' in 6:33.51"
                         [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOfcvPf-22k]
                   Supplemental: Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?"

Week 7:   **Thursday, 6 October 2016**
Records and Traces   Gerard Genette, "Introduction to the Paratext"
                   Miguel Sicart, "Toys," *Play Matters*
                   Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMieux, "Dwarven Epitaphs:
                         Procedural Histories in *Dwarf Fortress*," *Comparative
                         Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in the
                         Postprint Era* (edited by N. Katharine Hayles and Jessica
                         Pressman)
                   Eric Grundhauser, "How to be Cool (According to a Video Game
                         Magazine From 1982)"
                         [http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/how-to-be-cool-
                         according-to-a-video-game-magazine-from-1982]
                   Supplemental: Raymond Williams, "The Analysis of Culture,"
                         The Long Revolution

Sunday, 9 October 2016
Response 3, responding to Weeks 6-7, due by 10PM

Week 8:   **Thursday, 13 October 2016**
Players, Audiences,   Bernard Suits, "Triflers, Cheats, and Spoilsports," *The
and Fans   Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*
                   Espen Aarseth, "I Fought the Law: Transgressive Play and the
                         Implied Player"
                   Cornel Sandvoss, "The Dominant Discourse of Resistance:
                         Fandom and Power," *Fans: The Mirror of Consumption*
                   James Newman, "Superplay, Sequence Breaking, and
                         Speedrunning," *Playing with Videogames*
                   Mia Consalvo, "Gaining Advantage," *Cheating: Gaining
                         Advantage in Videogames*

Supplemental: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author"

Week 9:
Representation,
Identification, and
Inclusion

Thursday, 20 October 2016

Henry Jenkins and Justine Cassell, "Chess for Girls?: Feminism and Computer Games," *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games* (edited by Henry Jenkins and Justine Cassell)

Adrienne Shaw, "Does Anyone Really Identify with Lara Croft? Unpacking Identification in Games," *Gaming at the Edge: Sexuality and Gender at the Margins of Gamer Culture*

Evan Lauteria, "Assuring Quality: Early 1990s Nintendo Censorship and the Regulation of Queer Sexuality and Gender," *Rated M for Mature: Sex and Sexuality in Video Games* (edited by Matthew Wysocki and Evan Lauteria)

Edmond Chang, "*Cards against Humanity* Is _____: Playing Up and Playing Difference in Games" [http://www.firstpersonscholar.com/cards-against-humanity-is/]

Supplemental: José Esteban Muñoz, "Introduction: Performing Disidentifications," *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*

Week 10:
Educational Play

Thursday, 27 October 2016

Mizuko Ito, "Academics," *Engineering Play: A Cultural History of Children's Software*

Constance Steinkuehler and Sean Duncan, "Scientific Habits of Mind in Virtual Worlds"

Colin Milburn, "Massively Multiplayer Laboratories," *Mondo Nano: Fun and Games in the World of Digital Matter*

Patrick Jagoda, "Gamification and Other Forms of Play"

Lewis Padgett (Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore), "Mimsy Were the Borogoves"

Supplemental: B. J. Fogg, "Computers as Persuasive Tools," *Persuasive Technology: Using Computers to Change What We Do*

Sunday, 30 October 2016
Response 4, responding to Weeks 8-10, due by 10PM

Week 11:
CANCELLED

Thursday, 3 November 2016
NO CLASS MEETING

Sunday, 6 November 2016
Journal publication report due by 10PM

Week 12:
The Military-
Entertainment
Complex

Thursday, 10 November 2016

Tim Lenoir, "All but War Is Simulation: The Military-Entertainment Complex"

Patrick Crogan, "Introduction: From the Military-Industrial to the Military-Entertainment Complex," *Gameplay Mode: War, Simulation, and Technoculture*

Ed Halter, "Introduction: America's Army Goes to War," *From Sun Tzu to XBox: War and Videogames*
Amanda Phillips, "Shooting to Kill: Headshots, Twitch Reflexes, and the Mechropolitics of Video Games"
Marisa Brandt, "Simulated War: Remediating Trauma Narratives in Military Psychotherapy"
Supplemental: Paul Virilio, "The Sight Machine," *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*

Week 13:
Labor and
Economics

Thursday, 17 November 2016
Edward Castronova, "Free Commerce," *Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games*
Lisa Nakamura, "Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game: The Racialization of Labor in *World of Warcraft*"
Julian Kucklich, "Precarious Playbour: Modders and the Digital Games Industry"
[http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue5/kucklich_print.html]
Hector Postigo, "The Socio-Technical Architecture of Digital Labor: Converting Play into YouTube Money"
T. L. Taylor, "Computer Games as Professional Sport," *Raising the Stakes: E-Sports and the Professionalization of Computer Gaming*
Supplemental: Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labour," *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*

FALL BREAK

Thursday, 24 November 2016
NO CLASS MEETING

Week 14:
Gaming Ecologies

Thursday, 1 December 2016
Alenda Chang, "Games as Environmental Texts"
Steven Jones, "The Halo Universe," *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*
Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter, "Exodus: The Metaverse and the Mines," *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*
Eli Blevis, "Sustainable Interaction Design: Invention & Disposal, Renewal & Reuse"
storyofstuffproject, "The Story of Electronics (2010)"
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW_7i6T_H78]
Supplemental: Susan Leigh Star, "The Ethnography of Infrastructure"

Sunday, 4 December 2016
Response 5, responding to Weeks 12-14, due by 10PM

Finals Week

Thursday, 15 December 2016
NO CLASS MEETING
Research papers due by 11:59PM

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.