



**Course** ATCM 3366.001  
**Course Title** Game Studies I  
**Professor** Josef Nguyen  
**Term** Spring 2019  
**Meetings** Mondays, 4:00-6:45PM in ATC 1.305

---

### Professor's Contact Information

**Office Phone** 972-883-7552  
**Office Location** ATC 1.513  
**Email Address** [jdn160330@utdallas.edu](mailto:jdn160330@utdallas.edu)  
Please consult this resource for proper email etiquette:  
[\[medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087\]](https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087)  
**Office Hours** 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** ATCM 2365 – Game Design Fundamentals, or Instructor Permission

**Course Description** This course serves as an introduction to vocabularies, frameworks, and arguments in the field of game studies. This course will centrally investigate how games and play are situated phenomena with material conditions, social conventions, cultural meanings, and historical contexts. Students will explore how concepts, theories, and arguments about games and play across varied forms enable careful examination and reflection on gameplay experiences, practices, and cultures.

This course is, in part, a companion to Game Design I, as the process and practice of dissecting and analyzing games and play will improve capacities in designing games. Likewise, experiences in play and designing games will provide important resources for critically exploring games as cultural artifacts. Outside of game design practices, the critical analysis of games and play hones skills and capacities in the critical engagement with media and culture more broadly.

Students will complete regular short responses as well as work toward an argumentative and researched think piece, which will involve composing topic pitches, an annotated bibliography, an outline, and final paper submission in addition to a short presentation.

**Learning Outcomes** Students will:

- Gain an overview of discussions pertaining to games and play as social and cultural phenomena from a range of perspectives
- Practice crafting critical and supported analyses of games and play by situating these phenomena within historical, material, and cultural contexts
- Develop research and writing skills for engaging in the scholarly study of games and play

**Required Texts & Materials** All readings and other materials will be available free online through this link: <https://utdallas.app.box.com/v/atcm3366-001>

**Course Policies**

<b>Grading Criteria</b>	Class Participation and Discussion	30%
	Weekly Responses (due 5:00PM online the day before class)	20%
	Argumentative and Researched Think Piece	50%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitches (5%)</li> <li>• Annotated Bibliography and Outline (10%)</li> <li>• Presentation (10%)</li> <li>• Final Version (25%)</li> </ul>	

**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 at hand as well as create and contribute their own work respectfully and productively.

Disagreements and conflicting perspectives will, unavoidably, emerge. To ensure that participants feel comfortable contributing a diverse set of thoughts, comments, and views, we will not use oppressive or harmful language, tolerate harassment, personal attacks, and other forms of actions and expressions that unduly distract from the educational mission 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 in good faith. 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, ability, class, etc... Refer to people by their names, pronouns, and other identifiers that they disclose. Avoid insisting on imposing identity markers onto others. Allow people to self-identify as they feel comfortable.

What you discuss in, create for, and share with this class reflects not only you as both a student and a civic subject, but it also reflects on me as your instructor, the class as a learning community, and UT Dallas as an academic institution.

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 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 [\[utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/gspolDishonesty.htm\]](http://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 tasks, 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 [\[utdallas.edu/campuscarry/\]](http://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 [\[go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies\]](http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies) for these policies.*

### Assignments & Academic Calendar

**Week 1: Monday, 14 January 2019**

**Course** In-Class Activities:  
**Introduction** Introductions  
 Cover Syllabus  
 Preliminary Activities

**Week 2: Monday, 21 January 2019**  
**MLK Jr. Day** NO CLASS MEETING

**Week 3: Monday, 28 January 2019**  
**Play as Cultural Practice** Assigned Readings:  
 Miguel Sicart, “Play Is,” *Play Matters*  
 Thomas S. Henricks, “Cultural Play,” *Play and the Human Condition*  
 Amber Muller, “Queering *Girl Talk* (The Board Game),”  
[\[analoggamestudies.org/2015/07/queering-girl-talk-the-board-game/\]](http://analoggamestudies.org/2015/07/queering-girl-talk-the-board-game/)

In-Class Activity:  
 A Range of Board and Card Games

**Week 4: Monday, 4 February 2019**

**Rules and Players** Assigned Readings:

Bernard Suits, "Cheaters, Triflers, and Spoilsports," *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, Utopia*

Mia Consalvo, "There Is No Magic Circle"

Edmond Chang, "Cards against Humanity Is \_\_\_: Playing With & Playing Up Difference in Games," [[firstpersonscholar.com/cards-against-humanity-is/](http://firstpersonscholar.com/cards-against-humanity-is/)]

In-Class Activity:

Mattel, *Apples to Apples*

**Week 5: Monday, 11 February 2019**

**Representation and Inclusion** Assigned Readings:

Adrienne Shaw, "Diversity without Defense: Reframing Arguments for Diversity in Games"

Bo Ruberg, "Straight-washing *Undertale*: Video Games and the Limits of LGBTQ Representation," [[doi.org/10.3983/twc.2018.1516](https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2018.1516)]

Amanda Phillips, "dicks dicks dicks: Hardness and Flaccidity in (Virtual) Masculinity," [[flowjournal.org/2017/11/dicks-dicks-dicks/](http://flowjournal.org/2017/11/dicks-dicks-dicks/)]

In-Class Screening:

Feminist Frequency, *Damsel in Distress: Part 1—Tropes vs Women in Video Games*, [[youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r\\_Q](https://youtube.com/watch?v=X6p5AZp7r_Q)]

Markiplier, *Genital Jousting | Party Mode*, [[youtube.com/watch?v=GNYzgSot1pE](https://youtube.com/watch?v=GNYzgSot1pE)]

**Friday, 15 February 2019**

Extra Credit Opportunity:

Adrienne Shaw Guest Lecture

Dean's Colloquium Series

2:30-3:45PM, ATC 2.602

**Week 6: Monday, 18 February 2019**

**Technologies of Play** Assigned Readings:

Gary Cross, "Toys and Time: Playthings and Parents' Attitudes toward Change in Early 20th-Century America"

Brendan Keogh, "With Thumbs in Mind," *A Play of Bodies*

Nathan Altice, "The Playing Card Platform,"

[[analoggamestudies.org/2014/11/the-playing-card-platform/](http://analoggamestudies.org/2014/11/the-playing-card-platform/)]

In-Class Discussion:

Bring a Favorite or Impactful Toy from Your Childhood

**Week 7: Monday, 25 February 2019**

**Playgrounds** Assigned Readings:

Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight"  
Bonnie Nardi, "Culture: *WoW* in China... and North America," *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*  
Sawyer Kemp, "Escape Rooms and the Seductive Ubiquity of Capture," [[analoggamestudies.org/2017/11/escape-rooms-and-the-seductive-ubiquity-of-capture/](http://analoggamestudies.org/2017/11/escape-rooms-and-the-seductive-ubiquity-of-capture/)]

In-Class Activity:

Trip to the Games and Media Library

**Week 8: Monday, 4 March 2019**

**Gaming Commodities** Assigned Readings:

Ellen Seiter, "Children's Desires/Mothers' Dilemmas: The Social Contexts of Consumption," *Sold Separately: Children and Parents in Consumer Culture*  
Steven E. Jones, "Collecting *Katamari Damacy*," *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*  
Christina M. Spiker, "Should You Pull: Gachapon, Risk, and Reward in Mobile Gaming," [[firstpersonscholar.com/should-you-pull/](http://firstpersonscholar.com/should-you-pull/)]

In-Class Activity:

A Range of Betting and Gambling Card Games

Introduce Think Piece Assignment

**Week 9: Monday, 11 March 2019**

**Think Piece Pitches** In-Class Activity:

Bring Three Think Piece Pitches for Workshopping and Feedback

**NO CLASS MEETING 18-24 March 2019 Spring Break**

**Week 10: Monday, 25 March 2019**

**Gaming Labor** Assigned Readings:

Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter, "Immaterial Labor: A Workers' History of Videogaming," *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*  
Patrick Jagoda, "Gamification and Others Forms of Play"  
Oscar Moralde, "From Passion to Power: Game Unions and Historical Lessons from Media Labor," [[firstpersonscholar.com/from-passion-to-power/](http://firstpersonscholar.com/from-passion-to-power/)]

In-Class Activity:

Gamification

**Week 11: Monday, 1 April 2019**  
**Think Piece Workshop** In-Class Activity:  
Bring Annotated Bibliography and Outline for Workshopping and Feedback

**Week 12: Monday, 8 April 2019**  
**Professional Play** Assigned Readings:  
Carlin Wing, "Hitting Walls (v. XXVIII): Captured Play"  
T. L. Taylor, "Computer Games as Professional Sport," *Raising the Stakes: E-Sports and the Professionalization of Computer Gaming*  
Matthew Ferrari, "Mixed Martial Arts' Burgeoning Wild Kingdom,"  
[[flowjournal.org/2009/07/mixed-martial-arts-burgeoning-wild-kingdom/](http://flowjournal.org/2009/07/mixed-martial-arts-burgeoning-wild-kingdom/)]  
In-Class Screening:  
Steven Dhoedt, *State of Play*

**Week 13: Monday, 15 April 2019**  
**Players and Fandom** Assigned Readings:  
Hanna Wirman, "Playing by Doing and Players' Localization of *The Sims 2*"  
Anastasia Salter, "Fan Games," *What Is Your Quest? From Adventure Games to Interactive Books*  
Matthew Thomas Payne and Michael Fleisch, "Policing the Sandbox in *Grand Theft Auto Online*," [[mediafieldsjournal.org/policing-the-sandbox/2014/6/5/policing-the-sandbox-in-grand-theft-auto-online.html](http://mediafieldsjournal.org/policing-the-sandbox/2014/6/5/policing-the-sandbox-in-grand-theft-auto-online.html)]

In-Class Activity:  
A Range of Fan Archives

**Week 14: Monday, 22 April 2019**  
**Presentations, Part 1** Paper Presentation Due

**Week 15: Monday, 29 April 2019**  
**Presentations, Part 2** Paper Presentation Due

**Finals Week Saturday, 11 May 2019**  
**Final Version of Think Piece Due Online by 5:00PM**

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