

SPRING 2014, University of Baltimore
COSC408 (SG1)
History of Video Games

Course Syllabus

Classroom Location: III-3220
Instructor: Antonio “Tango” Thomas

Office Phone: 240-567-1785
Office Hours: R 09:50 – 10:50 am

Meeting Time: R 11:00am – 1:30 p.m.

Office Location: UB Adjunct Faculty Office (III, 5th Floor)

Email Address: antonio.thomas@montgomerycollege.edu

Website: <http://proftango.weebly.com>

INTRODUCTION:

COSC408- This course surveys the history of video games, from the first experiments in the decades following World War II to the current era of consoles and network games. Despite being a relatively recent medium, video games have already undergone significant evolution from their earliest roots. Examine these transformations in terms of art, narrative, graphics, audio, and game mechanics. Throughout the course, students position these trends within the cultural roles games have played and speculate on the future of the form. Lab fee required

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Use common terminology of game development
- Examine the history of game development in the US and overseas
- Examine the past, present, and future trends in the evolution of video games
- Identify gaming companies, platforms, operating systems, and organizations which made major contributions to the evolution of the video game phenomena

REQUIRED TEXT

Donovan, T., (2010). *Replay: The history of video games*. East Sussex, Great Britain: Yellow Ant.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: One hundred percent attendance and punctuality is expected. This is a lecture-based course, which means the main content portion of this course will be delivered in lecture. The class meeting time is on **Thursdays from 11:00 to 1:30 pm from 1/30/14 to 5/15/14.**

You must come and participate in class each week in order to do well and receive the maximum benefit and points in this course. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class every week and leaving early or tardiness of more than 30 minutes is counted as an absence. Sleeping in class will also be counted as absence. If you are going to be absent, you must e-mail the instructor the day you are going to miss class. Students **must check** their **UB e-mail** several times during the week. Any changes in schedule, assignments, and location will be posted on the site or emailed to you.

Homework: Written assignments and readings are listed in the course syllabus by titles and due dates. **All written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced in a 12-point font Times Roman style, and spell-checked.** Computer labs located on campus are available to students for free. Reading assignments, as designated on the syllabus, are subject to unannounced quizzes (**given at the beginning of Week**) that may influence the outcome of your final grade. **Homework is due on the due date and will be collected at the beginning of class.** Any exceptions due to special circumstances must be pre-approved by the instructor. Late submissions will lead to drastically reduced credits on the assignment. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to complete all assignments and submit them to the instructor’s office or by email as an attachment. Completing any assignment during Week time is not permitted.

Examinations: There will be three exams in this course. These comprehensive, objective exams may include matching, multiple choice, and/or short responses. Reviews for the exams are scheduled one Week prior to the exam. **Students who miss the exam due to absence are allowed to take the make-up only when arrangements are made before the initial exam date or in the event of an emergency, the student provides appropriate documentation.**

GRADING SYSTEM

- In-class Assignments A-I (8 assignments x 10pts ea) 80pts
 - Journal Article Critique Assignment (4 Articles x 50pts ea) 200pts
 - Group Course Project I: Classic Video Game 100pts
 - Group Course Project II: Modern Video Game 200pts
 - Examinations (2 exams x 100pts) 200pts
- Total Points: 780pts

Distribution for final grade: A = 702 -780 (90 - 100 %)
 B = 624 – 701 (80 - 89 %)
 C = 546 – 623 (70 - 79 %)
 D = 468 - 545 (60 - 69 %)
 F = 467 and below (59% and below)

ADDITIONAL CHECKLIST FOR AN “A” IN THIS COURSE

- _____ I have attended and actively participated in all class and lab activities.
- _____ I have completed high quality assignments and submitted them on time.
- _____ Average grade on quizzes and exams was approximately 90%.

INFORMATION

1. Each and every student is expected to behave in ways that promote a teaching and learning atmosphere. Students have the right to learn; however, they do not have the right to interfere with the freedom of the faculty to teach or with the rights of other students to learn. Students will be treated respectfully in return for respectful behavior.
2. Course discussions should be carried out in a way that keeps the classroom environment respectful of the rights of others. Students are also expected to conduct themselves in ways that create a safe learning and teaching environment that is free from such things as violence, intimidation, and harassment.

3. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Student found committing academic dishonesty could receive an “F” in the course.
4. For detailed information, please refer to the section College Policies and Student Code of Conduct in the current *Student Handbook*.
5. If you need accommodations due to a disability, please see me early in the semester to discuss this matter. **A letter from Disability Support Services authorizing your accommodations will be needed.** See below for addition information.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

A. Computers

Students may use laptop computers, I-Pads, tablets, etc. for class related purposes.

B. Class Cancellation

If the instructor must cancel a class, notices will be sent to students via email and posted on the classroom door. If there is inclement weather, students should visit the University of Baltimore web page or call the University's Snow Closing Line at (410) 837-4201. If the University is not closed, students should presume that classes are running on the normal schedule.

C. Academic Integrity: Students are obligated to refrain from acts that they know or, under the circumstances, have reason to know will impair the academic integrity of the University and/or the School of Law. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; misuse of library materials; use of another’s book or study materials without consent; unapproved multiple submissions; material misrepresentation of one’s academic history or standing; misrepresentation of any academic matter; intentionally giving another student false or inaccurate information about class requirements; inappropriate discussion of exams; and misrepresenting or falsifying class attendance reports.

D. Disability Policy

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires an academic accommodation, please contact Karyn Schulz, Interim Director of Disability Support Services at 410-837-4141 or via email at kschulz@ubalt.edu. For services at the Shady Grove Campus: <http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/student-services>

E. IT Support

The mission of the Office of Information Technology is to encourage, support, and enhance the use of technology for faculty, staff, and students through planning, budgeting, and technology leadership, and to operate, manage, and coordinate information systems and support for USG's IT infrastructure in order to meet the academic and administrative computing needs of its participating institutions. For all technical support issues please call **301.738.6363** or e-mail us at usg-helpdesk@umd.edu. Here is the website: For services at the Shady Grove Campus: <http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/oit>

COSC408

History of Video Games

Spring 2014 Schedule

Date	Lecture	Assignment(s)
<p>Week 1</p> <p>Thurs:</p> <p>1/30/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions & UB Simulation & Digital Entertainment Overview • Course Protocol & Syllabus Review • Let's Talk Video Games <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment #1: Form Groups & Choose Video Game 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 1 - 3</p> <p>Journal: Video Game As An Art For? By Martin Picard</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Thurs:</p> <p>2/6/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Birth of The Video Game • The Race to Make The First Video Game • The Atari Revolution <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 1 - 3</p> <p>Journal: Video Game As An Art For? By Martin Picard</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Thurs:</p> <p>2/13/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Microprocessor's Impact On Video Games • Computer Gaming: Mainframe To Home • The Rise of Cartridge-Based Consoles <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment #2: Group Project I, Section I & II 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 4 - 6</p> <p>Journal: Video Game As An Art For? By Martin Picard</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>Journal Critique #1: Technical Art</p>

<p>Week 4</p> <p>Thurs: 2/20/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American Video Game Boom of The Early 1980's The American Video Game Bubble Bursts <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 7 & 8</p> <p>Journal: Gameplay And Game Design Mechanics by Carlo Fabricatore</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Thurs: 3/6/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> British, Spanish, and Australian Video Gaming During The 1980s French, West German, Dutch and Italian Video Gaming During The 1980s <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment #3: Group Project I, Section III 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 9 & 10</p> <p>Journal: Gameplay And Game Design Mechanics by Carlo Fabricatore</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Thurs: 3/13/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of The Apple Computer & Life After The Boom Years Japanese Gaming During the 1980s: Rise of Nintendo <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 11 & 12</p> <p>Journal: Gameplay And Game Design Mechanics by Carlo Fabricatore</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>Journal Critique #2: Level Design</p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>Thurs: 3/20/14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“Spring Break”</p>	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s) - None</p> <p>Journal: Gaming DNA by Douglas Brown</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>

<p>Week 8</p> <p>Thurs: 3/27/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nintendo Entertainment System Conquers America Video Games Look To Hollywood <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm Exam Assignment #4: Group Presentation I: Classic Video Game 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 13 & 14</p> <p>Journal: Gaming DNA by Douglas Brown</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>Thurs: 4/3/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will Wright & Peter Molyneux The Battle of Tetris and Gaming Behind The Iron Curtain <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 15 & 16</p> <p>Journal: Gaming DNA by Douglas Brown</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>Journal Critique #3: Game Writing</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>Thurs: 4/10/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sega Takes on Nintendo US Senate's Crack Down on Video Game Violence <p>In-class Assignment: In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment #5: Group Project II, Section A 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s) : CH 17 & 18</p> <p>Journal: Serious Games Authoring Environments by Stephen Tang</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>Thurs: 4/17/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CD-ROM Revolution Games Go 3D & How ID Software Reshapes The Medium <p>In-class Assignment: In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment #6: Group Project II, Section B 	<p>This Week's Readings: - None</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 19 & 20</p> <p>Journal: Serious Games Authoring Environments by Stephen Tang</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>

<p>Week 12</p> <p>Thurs: 4/24/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Play Station & Girl Gaming Music Games Sweep The World & Decline of Arcades <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 21 & 22</p> <p>Journal: Serious Games Authoring Environments by Stephen Tang</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>Journal Critique #4: Serious Games</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>Thurs: 5/1/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Birth of the Virtual World South Korea Becomes A Gaming Giant & Virtual World Economies How Game Designers Turn Players Into Creators <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment #7: Group Project II, Section C 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 23 - 25</p> <p>Journal: None</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 14</p> <p>Thurs: 5/8/14</p>	<p>Lecture Topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video Games Reconnect With The Mainstream Audience Grand Visions & Grand Theft Auto Indie Developers Take Video Games Back to The Bedroom <p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment #8: Group Presentation II: Modern Video Game 	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): CH 26 - 28</p> <p>Journal: None</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Week 15</p> <p>Thurs: 5/15/14</p>	<p>In-class Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment #8: Group Presentation II: Modern Video Game None <p style="text-align: center;">Final Exam @11:30am</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Have a Great Summer Break!!!!”</p>	<p>This Week's Readings:</p> <p>Chapter(s): None</p> <p>Journal: None</p> <p>Assignment(s) Due This Week:</p> <p>None</p>

Additional Course Assignment:

Group Projects

INTRODUCTION

Many students actually prefer to work individually rather than in a group. However, individuality does not actually represent how the video game industry works, except maybe when it comes to indie games. This assignment requires students to use the following skills; research, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as time management

The group project requires the group to conduct an extensive examination and analysis of a video game in its historical context, drawing a thesis about the early or modern evolution of video games. For starters, this project will not be easy. There are a total of two group projects this semester.

1. Group Project I: Classic Video Game

2. Group Project II: Modern Video Game

Although the requirements for both projects are the same, the era for each project is different. Group Project I focuses on *classical* video games while Group Project II focuses on *modern* video games. There is debate as to what era of video games are considered to be classic or modern. For the purpose of this course I will create a clear demarcation line. *Classical video games* will include any video games created 1990s and earlier. Any video games made in 2000 and beyond will be considered to be a Modern video game.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Your group will provide a historical perspective of a particular video game. The paper will have three distinct sections; A) company biography, B) transition, and C) video game.

Section A: Requires the group to focus on the company that was responsible for creating the video game chosen by the group. The report must begin with the video game company's biography. At a minimum, the report must provide a historical prospective based on the following areas:

- Creation (key players, structure, etc.)
- Philosophy (past , present, and future)
- Current status (structure, performance, earnings, game releases)
- Survivability (still viable, phasing out, or phased out)

Section B: of the report requires the group to focus on the transition section of the report. Transition section primary function is to introduce the chosen video game. In this section, the group wants to provide the historical perspective relating to the how the company chose to make this particular video game. At a minimum, the following areas should be reflected:

- Key Players (present concept)

- The Argument(s) (what argument was used)
- How Game Was Chosen (methods, person, etc.)

Section C: This section of the report requires the group to focus on the video game itself. At a minimum, the report must provide the following historical perspective:

- Concept (initial, changes, final)
- Creators (key players, structure, etc.)
- Game's Genre (RPG, FPS, etc.)
- Platform (PC, Sega, Atari, Playstation, XBOX, Wii, etc.)
- Marketing Strategy (online, commercials, etc.)
- Performance (ranking, sales, etc.)

The report must include scholarly and analytical sources. The project requires group members to spend a considerable amount of time combing through the university's scholarly databases, company's website and archives, books, internet, as well as other sources of scholarly information. In other words, just providing information from Wikipedia will not be enough. Wikipedia should only provide the group with a starting point for historical information. Hint: follow the reference at the bottom of Wikipedia and journal articles. Students will often find valuable information when they do. **Here a few examples:**

- Chapters in books
- [Gamasutra](#)
- Essays in journals, such as [Game Studies](#) and [other journals for game research](#)
- Essays in gaming periodical, such as [Edge Magazine](#) or [Wired Magazine](#)
- Blogs from game researchers, such as [Ian Bogost](#), [Gameology](#), [The Ludologist](#), [Avant Game](#), [Terra Nova](#) and many others

GROUP PRESENTATION

The final stage of the report requires the group to report their findings to the class. All group members must be present as well as present during the presentation. If not, those group members will lose points on the presentation portion. Depending on the class size, presentations will be about 10 to 15 minutes. Here are the group presentation requirements:

- Visual Presentation
- Report Content
- Gameplay (~1:00 minute)

Journal Article Critique

by

[University of Dayton](#)

Any type of journal article your critique should begin with the basic bibliographic information in APA format. This includes:

1. Name(s) of the author(s)
2. Title of article
3. Title of journal, volume number, date, month and page numbers

Then, you should provide a brief overview of the article. This section should include a statement of the problem or issue discussed in the article, a description of the author's purpose, the approach taken or method used, the author's hypothesis, and the major conclusions (or findings).

The bulk of your critique, however, should consist of your opinion of the article. Read the article you are to critique once to get an overview of what the article is about. Then read it again, critically.

During this second pass through, you may want to make some notes to yourself. The following are examples of questions you will want to address in your critique:

1. Is the title of the article appropriate and clear? (Does it make sense?)
2. Is the abstract representative of the article? (Does it adequately explain what the researcher(s) did?)
3. Is the **purpose of the article** made clear in the introduction? (Do you understand WHY the research was done?)
4. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the research –
 - a. Did you find errors of fact and interpretation?
 - b. Is all of the discussion relevant to the expressed purpose of the article?
 - c. Have any ideas been overemphasized or underemphasized? If so, suggest some possible changes.
 - d. Are the author's statements clear? Challenge ambiguous statements.
 - e. What underlying assumptions does the author make?
 - f. Has the author been objective in his or her discussion of the topic?

Additionally, here are some questions that are more specific to quantitative/empirical research articles.

1. Are the experimental methods described adequately?
2. Have the procedures been presented in enough detail to enable a reader to duplicate them?

The last section of your critique should explain how you plan to utilize the article in the support & development of your research topic. In other words, does the article provide justification of your research?

EXAMPLE

Jane Doe
10/29/08
COCS 408

Suzuki, S., & Rancer, A. S. (1994). Argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness: Testing for conceptual and measurement equivalence across cultures. *Communication Monographs*, 61, 256-279.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

In this article, Suzuki & Rancer attempted to....

CRITIQUE

The title of the article made sense considering what the researchers in this study sought to accomplish...

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARTICLE

The research conducted in this article supports the idea that...

REFLECTION

- In your opinion, do the data support the conclusions being made by the author?
- In your opinion, are the results thought provoking?
- In your opinion, what could be done to improve the research?
- What was the most important thing you learned by reading and critiquing this article?

This section was borrowed from [Gordon State College](#):