

CURE 3006 Special Topics in Cultural Studies: Video Game and Play Culture (Sem 1 2024/2025)

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Date: Tuesdays 10:30 AM – 1:15PM
Venue: Digital Scholarship Lab, CUHK library



Course Description:

This course offers a cultural studies approach to understanding the cultural phenomenon of video games. The course introduces students to various topics to study video games based upon the premise that playing video games is more than an act of entertainment. While playing games is less seen as a controversial leisure activity in Asian societies after the pandemic, this course looks into the possibility of incorporating open approaches to investigate the significance of researching video games. One of the learning agendas of the course is to introduce game studies as an academic discipline in studying culture. As game studies is gradually developed into an emerging discipline, this course encompasses interdisciplinary views from the fields of humanities, social science, computer science and design studies. This course focuses on three parts to study video games. The first part reviews the origin of game studies as an academic discipline. The second part covers scholarly debates evolving from theories of cultural studies and other disciplines. The third part examines the ways that play matters in the cultural context of Hong Kong. This course examines play culture and investigates its relationship to cultural politics and heritage conservation. The course adopts a creative approach to make room for design thinking in student learning. The course explores the potential for video game being a new digital art form that presents contemporary culture in the data-driven and computational society.

Learning Outcomes:

By completing the course, students are expected to have learned the following:

- § Students are familiar with the basic issues and debates in the scholarly field of game studies.
- § Students develop critical abilities to evaluate the cultural, political, economic and social values of video games.
- § Students develop analytical capabilities to review video games.
- § Students cultivate potential design abilities to work with professionals in game development and production.

Course Assessment:

Lecture attendance and participation	25 %
Tutorial attendance and discussion	25 %
Game review (week 8)	10 %
Final project presentation (week 12 & 13)	10 %
Final project (week 14)	30 %
Total:	100 %

✓ Lecture attendance and participation (25%): Students are expected to attend weekly lectures. Students should feel free to share their thoughts and all opinions made in class will be highly respected. The course has two forms of participation: classroom and online. Students will join the discussion and play games together in class. Students are encouraged to continue the conversation after the class online. A Discord channel will be created for all class members to participate at any time that is preferred.

✓ Tutorial attendance and participation (25%): Students will engage in the tutorial activities by presenting and discussing class readings in groups. From week 3 to week 11, students will play board games, digital games and analyze these games together. The teacher and the tutor will decide a list of games that students will play in class starting from the third week of the semester. Competitive gaming skill is not a must for this course. Passion and interest to learn more about games is the key to do well in the class.

✓ Game review (10%): The assignment allows students to write game reviews as a game critic. Guidelines to select and evaluate the game will be provided in class on week 4.

✓ Final project presentation (10%): Students will present their final projects in the 12th and 13th weeks of the class. The language of presentation will be in English.

✓ Final project (30%): Students will work in groups (2-3 members per group) to develop creative projects related to gamification. There is no restriction on the topic of selection. For example, students can try to design a simple board game based upon the story of current affairs in Hong Kong. Students can also design a history game to preserve heritage about Hong Kong. Alternatively, students can choose to write academic papers by working on topics related to video game and play culture in general. Students are encouraged to use the free and easy to use game-making software, Twine, to develop their game projects. Details of Twine can be found at <https://twinery.org/>. For academic papers, the maximum word limit is 4,000 words in English and 6,000 words in Chinese. Students can decide their use of language to write the final projects. The instructor will provide further guidelines about the final project at the later date of the semester. Students are, however, highly encouraged to discuss ideas about their final projects with the teacher and the tutor any time since the beginning of the semester.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Class Introduction (September 3, 2024)

Mayra, Frans (2008). Chapter 1. *In An Introduction to Game Studies: Games in Culture*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Shaw, Adrienne (2010). "What is Video Game Culture: Cultural Studies and Game Studies," *Journal of Games and Culture* 5(4): 403-424.

Week 2: Historical Development of Global Game (September 10, 2024)

Dyer-Witheford, Nick & de Peuter, Greig (2009). Chapter Introduction In *Games of Empires: Global Capitalism and Video Games*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kerr, Aphra (2017). Chapter 2: Going Global? The Value, Structure and Geography of the Digital Games Industry. In *Global games: Production, Circulation and Policy in the Networked Era*. New York: Routledge.

Week 3: Form (September 17, 2024)

Aarseth, Espen (2001). "Computer Game Studies, Year One", *Game Studies* 1(1). Online Article Available at <<http://gamestudies.org/0101/editorial.html>>

Kokonis, Michalis (2014). "Intermediality between Games and Fiction: The "Ludology vs. Narratology Debate in Computer Game Studies," *Sapientiate, Film and Media Studies* 9:171-188.

Week 4: Play (September 24, 2024)

Huizinga, Johan (1955). Chapter 1 In *Homo Luden: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Sicart, Miguel. (2014). Chapter 6 In *Play Matters*. Boston: The MIT Press.

Week 5: National Day. No Class Meeting (October 1, 2024)

Week 6: System (October 8, 2024)

Hayles, Katherine (2021). Chapter 2 In *Postprint: Books and Becoming Computational*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bogot, Ian (2021). "Persuasive Gaming: A Decade Later." In *Persuasive Gaming in Context*. De la Hera, T., Jeroen Jansz, Joost Raessens & Ben Schouten (Eds). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Week 7: Independent Game (October 15, 2024)

Grace, Lindsay (2015). Chapter 7: Digital Affection Games. In Tamar Leaver & Michelle Wilson (Eds). *Social, Mobile and Casual Games: The Changing Gaming Landscape*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Chang, Alenda (2019). Chapter 3 Nonhuman In *Playing Nature: Ecology in Video Games*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Week 8: Game as Art (October 22, 2024)

Invited Speaker: TBA. Independent Game Developer of Genuine Studio Lt. <猛鬼大廈：一樓的鎖匠>, <雨夜屠夫><<https://www.genuine-studio.com/games.html>>

§ Game review essay due. Electronic submission to Blackboard.

Week 9: Networked Gaming & Transnational Play (October 29, 2024)

Taylor, T. L. (2023). "The Rise of Massive Multiplayer Online Games, Esports and Game Live Streaming. An Interview with T. L. Taylor." The Strong National Museum of Play. Online Document Available at <<https://www.museumofplay.org/app/uploads/2022/01/AJP-12-2-Article-1-Multiplayer.pdf>>

Schleiner, Anne-Marie (2020). Chapter 5: The Geopolitics of *Pokemon Go*. In *Transnational Play: Piracy, Urban Art and Mobile Game*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press.

Week 10: Representation & Postcolonial Play (November 5, 2024)

Hutchinson, Rachael (2019). "Chapter 3: Japan and its Others in Fighting Games". In *Japanese Culture Through Videogames*. Pp. 70-100. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Muhkerjee, Souvik (2024). "The Video Game Version of the Indian Subcontinent: The Exotic and the Colonized". In Christopher Patterson & Tara Fickle (Eds). *Made in Asia/America: Why Video Games Were Never (Really) about Us*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Week 11: Game for Cultural Heritage & Conservation (November 12, 2024)

Harkai, Istvan (2022). "Preservation of Video Games and Their Role as Cultural Heritage". *Journal of Intellectual Property Law & Practice*. 19(10): 844-856.

Social Event: Conversation with Hong Kong game developers.

Week 12: Student Project Presentations & Class Review (November 19, 2024)

Week 13: Student Project Presentations (November 26, 2024)

Week 14: No Class Meeting (December 3, 2024)

Final project due. Electronic Submission to Blackboard.

Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students and Teachers:

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. Students must submit their assignments via

VeriGuide: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide>.

Although cases of cheating or plagiarism are rare at the University, everyone should make himself/herself familiar with the content of this website and thereby help avoid any practice that would not be acceptable.

Section 1	What is plagiarism [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p01.htm]
Section 2	Proper use of source material [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p02.htm]
Section 3	Citation styles [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p03.htm]
Section 4	Plagiarism and copyright violation [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p04.htm]
Section 5	CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p05.htm]
Section 6	CUHK disciplinary guidelines and procedures [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p06.htm]
Section 7	Guide for teachers and departments [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p07.htm]
Section 8	Recommended material to be included in course outlines [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p08.htm]
Section 9	Recommended declaration to be included in every assignment handed in [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p09.htm]
Section 10	Electronic submission of term papers [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p10.htm]