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Writing In and Around Video Games

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Writing In and Around Video Games

Abstract

This undergraduate course uses video games as a lens through which to explore the infinitely broader topic of digital rhetoric. Students encounter games in several different ways: as texts to analyze, raw material for video compositions, systems to create and explore. Key topics include genre conventions and constraints, audience, procedural rhetoric, interface design, and convergence culture.

Disciplines

English Language and Literature

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WRITING IN AND AROUND VIDEO GAMES

Wendi Sierra, St. John Fisher College

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY: CONTEXT

“Writing In and Around Video Games” is an upper-division interdisciplinary course offered under the special topics designation “Studies in Rhetoric and Digital Media,” which is cross-listed between the Communication and English Departments at North Carolina State University. NCSU is a public land grant university, with roughly 25,000 undergraduates. The university maintains a strong focus on information technology in all majors: In the English Department, this course is one option for fulfilling a 3 credit hour Digital Technology requirement for the Language, Writing, and Rhetoric concentration. The course met no specific requirement for Communication majors but could be used as one of their required electives. Finally, this special topics course may also count as General Education credit under the “humanities” designation for all university students.

STUDENTS

The student population for the course is quite varied, given the General Education designation, the major requirements for English and Communication students, and the subject matter (which varies between offerings, but always focuses on a particular digital media and its connection to rhetoric). Certainly the largest proportion of students comes from English and Communications; however, a substantial number of other majors—including psychology, business, computer science, and education in this particular session—also take the course for their General Education credit or simply for interest in the subject matter. With this diversity in background and preparation come substantial differences in academic preparation. The goals of the course include exploring various elements of rhetoric and composition through the lens of digital media; some students will have studied rhetoric in several other courses while others have had no exposure to rhetorical principles since their first year writing and speaking courses. Similarly, some students come to the course fully prepared to engage in multimodal composition and the construction of digital artifacts while others have no composition experience outside the traditional research essay.

Additionally, a small but significant number of students in my section did not realize they enrolled in a special topics course with a focus in gaming. These students, roughly 25% of the class, saw only the special topics title “Studies in Rhetoric and Digital Media” and not the specific focus of this offering. While none of these students had any gaming experience to

speak of, all but one of these students decided to stay in the course. As a result, the course had a wide degree of variation between students with extensive gaming experience and students with virtually no gaming experience.

COURSE DESIGN

There are, of course, numerous ways to incorporate games into college curricula. Eric Klopfer, Scot Osterweil and Katie Salen identify twelve possible uses for games in pedagogy, including using games as assessment (having students play an educational game to test their knowledge of content) and using games as exemplars of points of view (providing students access to a viewpoint otherwise restricted to them) (22-25). Because this particular course was charged with introducing students both to game studies and to basics of digital rhetorics, I incorporated games into the curriculum in two different ways: as texts to generate traditional forms of composition and as textual authoring systems.

While discussions of games for learning purposes often sparks memories of explicitly educational games like *Oregon Trail* or *Carmen San Diego*, the use of games as texts to be critically read and interpreted has been gaining traction. Rebekah Schultz Colby and Richard Colby have written about their first-year writing course, which incorporates the massively multiplayer online game *World of Warcraft* (*WoW*) as a key component of classroom activities. They note that focusing on *WoW* requires specific set up and readings, including both traditional content for writing classes and readings that socialize students to critical game play. More than simply another text to analyze, Colby and Colby they send students into the game “looking for rhetorical exigencies that create opportunities for emergent learning” (309). In their example, *WoW* is played neither because the game itself teaches any particular concept or idea nor as a system through which the students’ in-game writings can be assessed, but instead as a generative text providing material students may use to develop research projects. Colby and Colby describe two different student projects as models of this generative possibility, one a quantitative study on in-game economics, the other an official proposal to the game’s designers (309). In this case, *World of Warcraft* “highlights play as an important part of the writing process, intertwining work and play in ways that more productively highlight areas of the rhetorical canon that have often been underutilized within composition” (309).

The first two units in my course follow this model, using games as a text that helps students develop ideas on particular topics and explore course concepts in action. For their first paper, students were required to complete an academic and a commercial game review. In this case, the game they choose to write about and what they thought of the game itself was relatively unimportant to me. Instead, we used this activity to demonstrate how different audiences approach digital technologies from different perspectives and to discuss the various values and attributes that different audiences might privilege in their interactions with technology. Our second unit, an auto-ethnography project, asked students to reflect on the social dimensions of technology through the lens of their own experiences with gaming. As with the first unit, the

content of the games was generally unimportant; instead, I was looking to see the students begin to explore through their own experience how technological artifacts shape our experiences, become incorporated into our daily lives, and mediate our activities.

The first two units of the course are, in many ways, the most traditional: Students are given a text, presented with a set of tools and concepts, and asked to put the two together into a text-based composition. Of course, there is some added novelty in that the texts students will be analyzing are video games as opposed to novels or newspaper articles, and with that novelty comes the hope that students will be more engaged and more receptive to challenging topics and ideas. The latter two units were far less traditional though they drew from well-established pedagogical scholarship in design and multimodal composition. In these units, students used “games as engines or authoring platforms” (Klopfer, Osterweil, and Salen 24). This method of incorporating games into classroom spaces is, from my own experience, far less common, and involves “us[ing] games to produce an artifact, be it a game (*Spore*), a mod (*Starcraft*), a video (machinima in *WoW*, the *Sims*, *Second Life*, etc.), a visual text (*Sims Family Album*), an avatar (*Miis*), a written text (*MiLK*, an sms-based game platform), or a body of code (*Alice*, *Scratch*)” (Klopfer, Osterweil, and Salen 24-25).

While using games to create a variety of different compositional forms is a relatively new practice, multimodal composition itself has a rich history in Rhetoric and Composition and has been solidly theorized. Indeed, Jody Shipka highlights multimodal composition as an essential part of our curriculum, calling for an understanding of the role of the composition course as those where “students leave their courses exhibiting a more nuanced awareness of the various choices they make, or even fail to make, throughout the process of producing a text and to carefully consider the effect those choices might have on others” (85). Working in nontraditional mediums helps to highlight various rhetorical choices that students otherwise view as value-neutral (things like font choice and visual presentation).

Both the third and fourth projects for this course address these issues—the third unit asks students to work in groups to produce a machinima (a video made using a game system as the content) and the fourth unit requires students to create a persuasive game. These units also draw heavily on Matt Ratto’s definition of critical making: the unification of “two modes of engagement with the world that are often held separate—critical thinking, typically understood as conceptually and linguistically based, and physical ‘making,’ goal-based material work” (253). Ratto observes that we traditionally hold analysis and production apart as separate modes of thinking and communication, an inherently problematic and leaky taxonomy. With critical making, Ratto enjoins us to experiment, to prototype, to use design to fuel criticism and criticism to fuel design. Moreover, Ratto notes that the products made as part of this model are not intended to be polished, finished, consumable objects on their own. Rather, “they are considered a means to an end, and achieve value through the act of shared construction, joint conversation, and reflection” (253). The products students made toward the end of my course, the videos and games, were never meant to be commercial-quality, finished and polished

pieces. Instead, they were meant to give students experience designing in limited systems. Students certainly didn't re-create *World of Warcraft* during our four-week unit on game design and creation, but they did learn an amazing amount about game design through “the act of shared construction” (253).

COURSE FEATURES

The version of this special topics course presented here acts as an introduction to basic principles of digital rhetoric through a careful analysis of gaming. Concepts like remix, intertextuality, genre, and customization are discussed in relation to gaming and rhetoric. As mentioned above, students completed four major projects, two written and two digital, asking them to apply these concepts for particular audiences in particular media. By composing an academic and commercial game review, an ethnographic research essay, a multimodal video composition, and a simple game, students thought about how the rhetorical situation (writer, media, and audience) both shapes the digital media they encounter and helped them to shape their own responses to these media. I believe there were two key elements to the success of this class: guest speakers and “Game Play Days.” However, before describing these features, I'd like to briefly explain the cost-sharing measure I instituted to ensure that we covered a breadth of games without placing an excessive financial burden on students.

COST-SHARING

Assigning games in a class such as this is always challenging. Given limitations on systems, which both include the varying technical capabilities of each student's personal computer and the cost and access to console systems, and also the relatively high cost of newly released games, it seemed impractical to have every student buy and play every game. Thus, at the beginning of the course, students were split into small groups (3 or 4 students per group) based on what consoles/computers they had access to and which game genres they preferred. Of the ten games we played during the “Game Play Days,” at least one person in each group had to have access to the game and be willing to bring it to class on the proper day. The division of cost varied per group—in one group a very eager student decided he wanted to own all the games we studied; in another the students divided the games equally by price to ensure each group member spent roughly the same amount. Groups were not required to meet outside of class to play their games, but several did.

GAME PLAY DAYS

ENGL/COMM 395 met three days a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. On Fridays, we had what I termed “Game Play Days.” Game Play Days used the following schedule: twenty minutes of group play (in their previously assigned small groups), fifteen minute student presentation (done in pairs, connecting a reading of their choosing to the game we played),

twenty minutes of prompted discussion (student presenters provided questions for discussion). The goal was to provide a common gaming experience all class members could refer to in later discussions of course readings. For example, during our introductory unit, we read a substantial selection from Jesper Juul's *Half-Real: Video Games Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*. In the first chapter, Juul discusses a number of definitions other theorists have proposed for what a game is, before offering his own six-part definition. In our discussion of the reading, many of the “gamer” students were quite eager to contribute, using their various individual backgrounds and the play experiences they had prior to our class to expand upon and interpret the text. While their willingness to participate in discussion was certainly valuable, these students often inadvertently closed down productive conversation threads by drawing on obscure titles or simply games the “non-gamer” group of students was unfamiliar with. I matched this reading with a Game Play Day on *Minecraft*, an open world sandbox that stretches what we commonly think of as a game. Following our play session, our conversation about Juul was much richer since all students were able to draw on a collective experience.

GUEST SPEAKERS

In each of the four units, I brought one guest speaker with industry experience to speak with my students. Students researched the speaker and the industry, and each student had to prepare a short list of questions for one of the speakers. The guest speakers gave brief presentations about the importance of writing in their particular fields and the genres they used most frequently. Of these, two of the speakers were exceptionally useful to my students. The first, Susan Arendt, was the managing editor of *The Escapist*, an online gaming magazine. Since their first assignment included writing a commercial review for a game, students found her input and advice particularly timely and useful. Furthermore, several of my students aspired to one day work as professional gaming journalists, so Arendt's expertise and knowledge of both her field and of the rigors of writing for commercial publication directly related to their prospective career trajectories. Grace Hagood, a former content designer at Icarus games, also visited the class. Hagood's position involved writing character descriptions and dialogue, and my students had begun to design their own games when she came to speak with them. As with Arendt's visit, Hagood gave them an insider perspective on how industry professionals handle the very tasks they themselves struggled with. In addition to the journalist and game writer, we had both an ethnographer and a video producer speak with us about their industry and what writing and genre meant to them.

ASSESSMENT

Overall, the class was a success. The Game Play Days fueled our discussions of readings in very productive ways, as demonstrated by the connection of Jesper Juul's definition of games and *Minecraft* (Mojang 2011), and the guest speakers helped students connect the work we were doing in the class to real world contexts and audiences. Of the four units, the first unit on

academic and commercial game reviews was clearly more successful than the others, while the multimodal video composition unit seemed to need a bit of refinement. It should be noted here that the most successful unit, the game reviews unit, was also one of the more traditional major assignments. While the genre was new and unfamiliar to most of the students, they were generally comfortable with the text-based assignment. On the other hand, the less successful unit, the multimodal video composition, was both a new form of composing for many students and required them to create a narrative—new tasks for many students.

ACADEMIC AND COMMERCIAL GAME REVIEWS

This first unit laid the foundations for the semester in two important ways. First, it introduced students to the key theoretical concepts they would need to be comfortable with for the rest of the course (game, play, narrative, interactive, and so forth). Likewise, the unit was framed in such a way to encourage students to think about how the rhetorical context of an argument about gaming would dictate what should be discussed as well as how it should be discussed. For this assignment, students wrote an academic review and a commercial review of the same game. This was an individual project, though students did have peer review opportunities. Students looked at several samples for both types of review and then met with Susan Arendt, the editor of a gaming magazine, to get her perspective on the industry side of things. The students turned in very strong work for this unit, and in their post-assignment reflections, they felt positive about the work they did and with the flow of the unit. As previously mentioned, this unit introduced students to new concepts and new contexts for writing but drew on a thesis-driven approach and was composed in a textual format. Thus, students worked well within the strengths and abilities they acquired throughout their academic careers.

MULTIMODAL VIDEO PROJECT

In this assignment students worked in groups of three or four (different from their gameplay groups) to create a machinima, a video made of gameplay footage, which told a new narrative or presented a novel twist on the game's existing narrative. The goals of this project were to examine how rules constrain systems, to explore fan cultures, and to write new narratives for existing games. We again focused intensely on the rhetorical context, using fan cultures. Their video projects were situated within a particular fan culture, which helped to clarify the audience and situation for the narrative they developed. Students were responsible for theoretical content, which included the scholarly readings and key concepts we discussed in class, and for production activities, which included learning how to use both video editing and audio editing software. Ultimately, the dual focus of theoretical and production content made this unit a bit too broad and unwieldy; the balance between production work and analytical work ended up being less than ideal for either purpose. According to their post-assignment reflections, many of the non-gamer students simply found themselves following the instructions of the more game-savvy students in developing narratives for fan cultures. Several

of the students mentioned wanting more focus on the technical instruction and felt uncomfortable with using the software to create videos.

However, while student reactions were less positive for this unit than previous units, I think with a bit of careful management in terms of grouping students and with optional extra-curricular tutorial sessions, the assignment could easily succeed as written. Many of my students had never used any video or audio editing software, and while I gave them only the most basic instruction, using these programs is an increasingly important skill in a media-saturated society. Having had an introduction to the process, they may more readily pick up these tools in the future.

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Ratto, Matt. "Critical Making: Conceptual and Material Studies in Technology and Social Life." *The Information Society* 27.4 (2011): 252-60. Web.

Shipka, Jody. *Toward a Composition Made Whole*. Pittsburgh, PA: U of Pittsburgh, 2011. Print.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Overview: This course will introduce you to the various ways that scholars in English and Communication studies approach games, both as sites for study and as multimodal composing practice. The course is divided into four units that transition gradually from traditional academic research papers to multimodal explorations of key concepts in gaming and in digital media broadly defined. All work in this course emerges from a solid theoretical grounding, making this a reading and writing intensive course. ENG/COM 395 is an upper division course filling a Humanities GEP. The course is centered on in-class application activities, readings in theory, seminar style discussions, and a variety of composing processes. To succeed in this course you must approach the course material with energy and enthusiasm, do all readings, attend class regularly, and participate actively.

HUMANITIES LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Because ENG/COM 395 fulfills a humanities requirement, each section of the course achieves the following objectives:

1. Interpret human experience through the lenses of rhetorical and digital media theories. Students will analyze both their own experience as players and the collective social experience of specific communities using theories drawn from communication research, rhetorical studies, and game studies.
2. Explain theories of rhetoric and digital media as frameworks for interpretation. Students will use rhetorical and digital media theories to develop a critical lens of interpretation for games, one that may be applied more broadly to other participatory media.
3. Construct academic arguments grounded in rhetorical ways of knowing and support those arguments with evidence appropriate to their rhetorical situations. Students will compose academic arguments in traditional research essays and in a multimodal project and game design. Each of these assignments will require students to develop a nuanced understanding of their rhetorical situation and context-dependent means of expression.

COURSE DELIVERY

Three fifty-minute classes a week, face-to-face delivery. Two days a week in a traditional classroom, one day a week in a lab.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

To offset the costs of purchasing games, I have taken two steps. First, I have placed all readings on course reserves, so there is no textbook to buy.

More importantly, the class will be broken up into five “gameplaying groups.” For most titles we will use in class, only one member of your group needs to have access to the title. HOWEVER, the person choosing to take responsibility for that title must be able to have a playable copy IN CLASS on the day it is required. Thus, if you choose to take responsibility for a game you own on a console, you must bring your console to class.

REQUIRED GAMES

Alan Wake. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Game Studios, 2010. Computer software.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. Rockville: Bethesda Softworks, 2011. Computer software.

The Endless Forest. Belgium: Tale of Tales, 2006. Computer software.

Flower. Los Angeles: ThatGameCompany, 2009. Computer software.

Limbo. Copenhagen: Play Dead, 2011. Computer software.

Minecraft. Stockholm: Mojang, 2011. Computer software.

The Path. Belgium: Tale of Tales, 2009. Computer software.

Portal. Bellevue, WA: Valve Corporation, 2008. Computer software.

StarCraft. Irvine, CA: Blizzard Entertainment, 1997. Computer software.

Team Fortress 2. Bellevue, WA: Valve Corporation, 2007. Computer software.

World of Warcraft. Irvine, CA: Blizzard Entertainment, 2004. Computer software.

REQUIRED READINGS

All readings for this class will be available online, both through the course Moodle site and on the library course reserves.

You are not required to print the readings if you do not wish to, however you must have a copy of the reading (physical or electronic) in class on the day we discuss it.

Bogost, I. (2007). *Persuasive games: The expressive power of video games*. (pp. 5-30). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Co, P. (2006). *Level design for games: Creating compelling game experiences*. (pp. 67-85). Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

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Dean, E., Cook, S., Keating, M., & Murphy, J. (2009). "Does this avatar make me look fat? Obesity and interviewing in Second Life." *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, 2(2).

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Yee, N. (2005). "A model of player motivations." *The Daedalus Project* 3(2). Retrieved from <http://www.nickyee.com/daedalus/archives/001298.php>

Zimmerman, E. (2004). "Narrative, interactivity, play, and games: Four naughty concepts in need of discipline." In N. Wardrip-Fruin & P. Harrigan (Eds.), *First person: New media as story, performance and game* (pp. 154-164). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Zimmerman, M. (2009). "Gaming literacy: Game design as a model for literacy in the twenty-first century." In B. Perron & M. Wolf (Eds.), *The Video Game Theory Reader 2* (pp. 23-32). New York, NY: Routledge.

ASSIGNMENTS

ACADEMIC AND COMMERCIAL GAME REVIEWING

The first unit introduces us to two perspectives on gaming: the scholarly conversation about games and commercial business of reviewing. Each of these audiences has different needs and modes of analysis. For this paper, you will select one game and write two reviews: one from an academic perspective and one from a commercial perspective. For the academic review, you should pay particular attention to the key concepts introduced in this unit, which include (but are not limited to) narrative, interaction, play, and rules. Each paper should be roughly five pages and should demonstrate your understanding of both communities and their approaches.

AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

The second unit, writing about gamers, moves us from considering games as the primary site for analysis to empirical research about players and social relationships. Thus, we will be considering games as a socializing force, one that has the potential to impact the way players

think about communities, identities, and interaction. You will use your personal experiences as a gamer in an 8-10 page paper that explicates or refutes current theories and understandings about the influence gaming has on gamers' lives and ideologies. You are welcome (and indeed, encouraged!) to draw from some of our class readings to ground and support your paper, but you will certainly need to do additional outside research to more deeply explore whatever particular perspective you interrogate in your paper.

VIDEO PROJECT

After interrogating games as texts and as media that impact human experience, you will create multimodal projects using gameplay footage. You will create a machinima, a video made using in-game footage, but re-purposing it through careful editing and audio production to create a new artifact. This project requires you to reinvent packaged game play narratives, using the understanding of how rules impact play and interaction constructed in the first unit to move from the role of media consumer to media producer.

GAME DESIGN PROJECT

In the final unit you will demonstrate the proficiencies you have gained in the previous units to design a browser game. You must, of course, draw on a number of course themes to succeed: narrative, play, interaction design, social perspectives, and so forth. We will also take up one of our more complex theoretical frames, exploring the concept of procedural rhetoric (using processes persuasively) and designing games that use procedural rhetoric.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

In-Class Writings and Homework:	100 points
Game Presentation:	50 points
Unit 1 Academic and Commercial Reviews:	200 points
Unit 2 Auto-ethnography Essay:	150 points
Unit 3 Video Project:	150 points
Unit 3 Reflection Essay:	50 points
Unit 4 Game Design:	200 points
Final Course Reflection:	50 points
Total Possible Points:	1000 points

COURSE CALENDARS

UNIT 1

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Homework Assignments
Week 1: Friday	Course Introduction. Personal Gamer history	Read: Juul Brainstorm: 3 games for Paper 1
Week 2: Monday	Class Activity: Is <i>Choose Your Own Adventure</i> a game? What is a game?	Read: Niedenthal and Thiaus Write: One paragraph on each
Week 2: Wednesday	Group Game Play Assignment: Minecraft: Is it a game?	Prepare: Questions for Guest Speaker Play: Portal through Test Chamber 14
Week 2: Friday	Game Review Q&A: Susan Arendt	Read: Murray and Zimmerman Write: One page game summary
Week 3: Monday	In class discussion: “Four Naughty Terms”	Reading: Assigned by groups-prepare short presentation
Week 3: Wednesday	Play: <i>Alan Wake</i>	Prepare: Group Presentation
Week 3: Friday	Presentations	Write: Annotated Bibliography
Week 4: Monday	Labor Day	Labor Day
Week 4: Wednesday	Play: <i>Starcraft</i> Describing Game Play in Scholarly Writing	Prepare: Paper Draft
Week 4: Friday	Class Cancelled for Paper Conferences	Finish Your Paper

UNIT 2

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Homework Assignments
Week 5: Monday	Unit 1 Reflection Unit 2 Intro and Topic Brainstorm	Read: Minocha et al and Dean et al
Week 5: Wednesday	Class Canceled for Field Trip-Meet at Game Store	Write: <i>Dungeons and Dragons</i> followup
Week 5: Friday	Class Discussion: Field Trip/Empirical Research Methods	Read: Giddings and Kennedy Identify 2-4 Research Topics/Questions
Week 6: Monday	Guest Speaker: Dr. Nicholas Temple	Read: Yee Begin Researching
Week 6: Wednesday	Play: <i>Endless Forest</i>	Write: One Page Topic Summary
Week 6: Friday	Lightning Round Peer Review	Write: Full Paper Proposal
Week 7: Monday	Writing Social Science Research Questions	
Week 7: Wednesday	Play: <i>Team Fortress 2</i>	Read: Kallio et al
Week 7: Friday	Gaming and Identity: What does it mean to be a gamer?	Read Lange et al
Week 8: Monday	Learning and Gaming	Read: Juul
Week 8: Wednesday	Play: <i>Rockband</i>	Finish Your Paper
Week 8: Friday	Fall Break	Fall Break

UNIT 3

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Homework Assignments
Week 9: Monday	Reflection on Unit 2, Intro to Unit 3	Read: Lowood
Week 9: Wednesday	Play: <i>World of Warcraft</i>	Read: Jenkins
Week 9: Friday	Discuss: Convergence Culture, Consumer/Producer Divide	Read: Davis et al
Week 10: Monday	Class Discussion: Project Brainstorming	Write: Detailed Project Proposal
Week 10: Wednesday	Play: <i>Skyrim</i>	Project Work- Shot composition
Week 10: Friday	Film Composition Basics	Write: Video Story Board
Week 11: Monday	Tutorial: Video/Audio Editing	Record Game Play/Audio
Week 11: Wednesday	Play: <i>Halo</i> Discuss: <i>Red vs Blue</i>	Work on projects!
Week 11: Friday	Tutorial: More Video/Audio Editing	
Week 12: Monday	In Class Project Work Time	Projects due Friday!
Week 12: Wednesday	Guest Speaker: Grace Hagood	
Week 12: Friday	Projects Showcase	Write: 3-4 Project self-evaluation and reflection

UNIT 4

Date	Class Topics/Activities	Homework Assignments
Week13: Monday	Unit 3 Reflection/Unit 4 Intro, Play: 1,000 Blank White Cards	Read: Bogost pt 1
Week 13: Wednesday	Play: <i>Flower</i>	Read: Bogost pt 2
Week 13: Friday	How Are Games Persuasive? Play/Discuss: <i>September 12th</i> and <i>McDonalds</i> game	Read: Zimmerman
Week 14: Monday	Gaming Genres and Conventions	Read: Co
Week 14: Wednesday	Play: <i>The Path</i>	Download Gamemaker
Week 14: Friday	Software Intro and Basics	Begin Working on Your Project
Week 15: Monday	Play: <i>Portal</i> (listen to designer commentary Game Design Challenges	Continue Project Work
Week 15: Wednesday	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 15: Friday	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 16: Monday	Game Design Workshop	
Week 16: Wednesday	Play: <i>Limbo</i>	
Week 16: Friday	What Does It Mean to be a Player?	Take-home writing/final.