

INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING

Instructor: KYLE BOHUNICKY	CREDIT HOURS: 3.0
Office location/Hours: TURLINGTON 4317/M PERIODS 5 AND 6	CLASS MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION: M 4, W 4 - 5; CSE E413
Course Website: http://digitalworlds.ufl.edu/programs/ma-in-das/	COURSE NUMBER: DIG 6027C
CANVAS SITE: LSS.AT.UFL.EDU	
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE: Writers and designers often use “interactivity” to distinguish storytelling with digital media from other media types. Nick Montfort explains that interactivity refers to “computer processes that respond to user input during execution” (7), and Alexander Galloway adds that, for readers, “What used to be primarily the domain of eyes and looking is now more likely that of muscles and doing, *thumbs*, to be sure, and what used to be the act of reading is now the act of doing...there has emerged in recent years a whole new medium, computers and in particular video games, whose foundation is not in looking and reading but in the instigation of material change through action” (3 – 4). Applied to story design, interactivity thus refers to participatory narratives that invite and respond to consequential and deeply transformative actions from an audience.

Building on these ideas, our course explores some of the major theories behind creating and discussing interactive stories. Throughout the semester, we will grapple with various approaches to interactive story design and discuss how to incorporate various interactive storytelling elements into media. By the end of the course, students will submit a short piece of interactive media that incorporates the ideas they have encountered throughout the semester.

COURSE GOALS AND/OR OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course, students will:

1. Describe and implement diverse current approaches and techniques for writing engaging interactive narratives
2. Gain familiarity with key theorists and concepts in the field
3. Design their own approach to interactive narratives
4. Collaborate on writing with a team
5. Creatively imagine a digital media project and write documents that support the development and production of the project

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS: Students can communicate directly with the instructor regarding the course material. Students are also encouraged to use e-mail. E-mails must demonstrate a formal tone and style and will be responded to M-F from 9 AM to 5 PM (unless emergency).

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE:

- GameSalad Game Developer (<http://gamesalad.com/>)

- GameMaker (<http://www.yoyogames.com/gamemaker>)
- Unity (<https://unity3d.com/>)
- Twine (<https://twinery.org/>)

REQUIRED TEXTS AND SOFTWARE: All course readings are available through our Canvas page under the “Modules” section. Steam is required for certain games. Microsoft Word is required for written assignments.

NOTE ON INSTRUCTION: This is a discussion-based graduate seminar, not a lecture. As such, the value of this class will depend largely on what and how you decide to contribute to it. I expect everyone to participate in and lead course discussion by carefully engaging with the assigned readings. Many of these texts are complex, and some may challenge your conception of interactive media/stories, so careful reading and note taking is necessary. Give yourself enough time to work through the texts and approach each reading/discussion generously and with an open-mind.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

This schedule is only a guide and is subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due the day they are listed on the syllabus, not the following day.

Date	Class Discussion
Aug 22nd	Topic Course Introduction; Syllabus Review; Major Assignments
Fundamentals of Interactive Storytelling	
Aug 24th	Topic Defining “story” Assignments Read: Crawford Chapter 1; Adams Chapter 7 Play: <i>Passage</i>
Aug 29th	Topic Defining “Interactivity” Assignments Read: Salen and Zimmerman Chapter 6; Crawford Chapter 2 Play: <i>Unmanned</i>
Aug 31st	Topic Story Assignment Read: Hart Chapter 1

	<p>Play: <i>Loss of Grasp</i> Response 1 Due</p>
Sept 5th	<p>Holiday, no class</p>
Sept 7th	<p>Topic Cybertext and Hypertext</p> <p>Assignment Read: Aarseth Chapter 1; Montfort “Cybertext” Play: <i>Player 2</i></p>
Sept 12th	<p>Topic Defining “Interactive Storytelling”</p> <p>Assignment Read: Crawford Chapter 3 and Chapter 9 Play: <i>Depression Quest</i></p>
<p>Elements of Interactive Storytelling</p>	
Sept 14th	<p>Topic Character</p> <p>Assignment Read: Hart Chapter 5 Response 2 Due</p>
Sept 19th	<p>Topic Play Presenter(s):</p> <p>Assignment Read: Salen and Zimmerman Chapters 3, 22, and 26 Play: <i>Colossal Cave Adventure</i></p>
Sept 21st	<p>Topic Character</p> <p>Assignment Read: Adams Chapter 6 Play: <i>Façade</i> Response 3 Due</p>

DIG 6027C – Interactive Storytelling

<p>Sept 26th</p>	<p>Topic Creating dialogue between players and games</p> <p>Assignment Read: Salen and Zimmerman Chapter 18 Play: <i>The Stanley Parable</i></p>
<p>Sept 28th</p>	<p>Topic Dialogue</p> <p>Assignment Read: Hart Chapter 8 Play: <i>Oxenfree</i></p> <p>Response 4 Due</p>
<p>Oct 3rd</p>	<p>Topic Critical Play</p> <p>Assignment Read: Flanagan Chapters 1, 7, and 8</p>
<p>Oct 5th</p>	<p>Topic Designing Space</p> <p>Assignment Read: Adams Chapters 4 and 12</p> <p>Response 5 Due</p>
<p>Oct 10th</p>	<p>Topic Narrative Space Presenters:</p> <p>Assignment Read: Wolf, Jenkins</p>
<p>Oct 12th</p>	<p>Topic Scenes</p> <p>Assignment Read: Hart Chapter 6 Play: <i>Gone Home</i></p> <p>Response 6 Due</p>
<p>Oct 17th</p>	<p>Topic Rules and story Presenter(s):</p> <p>Assignment</p>

	Read: Juul Chapters 1 and 5
Oct 19th	<p>Topic Structure</p> <p>Assignment Read: Miller Chapter 7; Hart Chapter 2 Response 7 Due</p>
Oct 24th	<p>Topic Ludology vs Narratology Presenters:</p> <p>Assignment Read: “Ludology Meets Narratology;” “Videogames are a Mess;” “Ludologists Love Stories, too”</p>
Oct 26th	<p>Topic Characters and Emotions</p> <p>Assignment Read: Miller Chapter 6 Response 8 Due</p>
Writing Interactive Stories	
Oct 31st	<p>Topic Persuasive Games Discuss Media Prototype Assignment Presenters:</p> <p>Assignment Read: Bogost Intro and Chapter 1 Play: September 12th; Darfur is Dying</p>
Nov 2nd	SLSA Conference, no class
Nov 7th	<p>Topic Games and Learning</p> <p>Assignment Read: Squire Chapters 1, 2, and 6 Play: <i>Citizen Science</i></p>
Nov 9th	<p>Topic Point of View</p>

	<p>Assignment Read: Hart Chapter 3 Play: <i>The Beginner's Guide</i></p>
Nov 14 th	<p>Topic Player Agency</p> <p>Assignment Read: Murray Intro and Chapter 5</p>
Nov 16 th	<p>Topic Action</p> <p>Assignment Read: Hart Chapter 7</p>
Nov 21 st	<p>Topic Action</p> <p>Assignment Read: Anthropy and Clark Chapters 1 and 2</p>
Nov 23 rd	<p>No class, holiday</p>
Nov 28 th	<p>Topic Voice and Style</p> <p>Assignment Read: Hart Chapter 4</p>
Nov 30 th	<p>Topic Prototype wrap-up</p> <p>Assignment Discuss prototype progress and experience</p>
Dec 5 th	<p>Topic Prototype wrap-up</p> <p>Assignment Discuss prototype progress</p>
Dec 7 th	<p>Topic Demo prototypes in class</p> <p>Assignment Media Project due Dec 14th at 5 PM</p>

We will not meet for our scheduled course final. Please submit your project electronically or with a jump drive in my English Department Mailbox by Dec 14th at 5 PM.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (AVAILABLE AT THE UF BOOKSTORE OR ONLINE)

1. Hart, Jack. *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Print
2. Miller, Carolyn Handler. *Digital Storytelling: A Creators Guide to Interactive Entertainment*. Boston: Elsevier, 2008. Print.

EVALUATION OF GRADES

Assignment	Percentage
Attendance/Participation – Students are expected to attend classes and participate in discussions, critique, and group work.	10%
Responses --- A series of written and presented assignments	20%
Presentations – Students will sign up in pairs for a day to present. On that day, you will lead discussion on the assigned texts. You are welcome to bring in outside media to further develop our understanding of the text’s ideas and concepts.	10%
Midterm Proposal --You will write a proposal for a short piece of interactive media that may become your final project for the class.	25%
Final Group Project – Working in small teams, you will produce a short piece of interactive media that draws on the ideas and concepts discussed throughout the course. You will also submit individual analyses of said media.	35%

GRADING SCALE:

Letter Grade	% Equivalency	GPA Equivalency
A	94 – 100%	4.0
A-	90 – 93%	3.67
B+	87 – 89%	3.33
B	84 – 86%	3.00
B-	80 – 83%	2.67
C+	77 – 79%	2.33
C	74 – 76%	2.00
C-	70 – 73%	1.67
D+	67 – 69%	1.33

D	64 – 66%	1.00
D-	60 – 63%	.67
E, I, NG, S- U, WF		0.00

More information on grades and grading policies is here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

COURSE POLICIES:

PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE POLICY:

We value **participation** more than mere **attendance**. Each instructor is responsible for communicating the specific details of what percentage of your grade (if any) will be assigned to participation, and how will class participation be measured and graded.

In our course, attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed **two unexcused absences**. If you miss more than **two classes** during the semester, each additional absence will lower your overall grade by 100 points. If you miss more than **six classes**, you will fail the course. Exempt from this policy are only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, family emergencies, and health issues for which **you must provide appropriate documentation in advance of the absence**.

Additionally, tardiness will not be tolerated. If you are tardy for three class periods, you will receive an unexcused absence.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY: The students will be required to have access to, and use a personal computer with the access to the Internet.

UF POLICIES:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. “You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”* It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of

disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/SCCR/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is a violation of the UF honor code. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

“1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.”

Students shall not use unauthorized materials or resources in an academic activity. Unauthorized materials or resources includes any paper or project authored by the student (or another student) “and presented by the student for the satisfaction of any academic requirement if the student previously submitted substantially the same paper or project to satisfy an academic requirement and did not receive express authorization to resubmit the paper or project.”

CLASS DEMEANOR:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

NETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY:

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats, more information can be found at: <http://teach.ufl.edu/docs/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

GETTING HELP

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents the instructor’s current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.