# COURSE OUTLINE

**COQUITLAM COLLEGE**
*Established 1982*

**Last Revised:** May 2022

## COURSE INFORMATION

**Course Title:** Game Studies          **Course Number:** CMNS 230          **Credits:** 3

**Total Weeks:** 14 (Fall, Spring)          **Total Hours:** 39          **Course Level:**
12 (Summer)

☐ First Year          ☒ Second Year
☐ New          ☐ Revised Course
☐ Replacement Course

**Department:** Humanities          **Department Head:** P. Best          **Former Course Code(s) and Number(s) (if applicable):** N/A

**Pre-requisites:** CMNS 110 or CMNS 130
**Co-requisite Statement:** NONE
**Precluded Courses:** N/A

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the relationship between video games media and contemporary society. It will focus on the analysis of video games as interactive media texts, audiences and players of games, the relationship between games, culture, and society, and the video games industry as a major part of the cultural and creative industries. It will take a critical perspective on video games media and the techno-social phenomena and structures within and around games and their contexts. This course will explore topics primarily around video games such as the political economy of the video games industry, game fan cultures, intersections of class, race, gender, and sexuality, games history and media archeology, relationships and interactions between video games and other communications media, key academic and transferrable skills, and to encourage students to critically explore their own everyday practices and experiences.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of key theories and concepts regarding the relationship between games, culture, and society.

- Critically reflect on their own engagement and experiences with video games media.

- Demonstrate the ability to apply academic concepts to the analysis of practical examples of video games media.

- Produce arguments that demonstrate the development of their own critical perspective on games, culture, and society.

- Find and evaluate the relevance of additional academic resources and apply them to topics from the course.

- Further develop interdisciplinary academic and transferrable skills.

## INSTRUCTION AND GRADING

Instructional (Contact) Hours:

| Type | Duration |
|---|---|
| Lecture/Seminars | 39 |
| Laboratory | |
| Field Experience | |
| Other (specify): | |
| Total | 39 |

**Grading System:**   Letter Grades ☒   Percentage ☐   Pass/Fail ☐   Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory ☐   Other ☐

**Specify passing grade:** 50%

**Evaluation Activities and Weighting** (total must equal 100%)

| |
|---|
| **Assignments:          65%** |
| *Specify number of, variety, and nature of assignments:* |
| Assignment 1: Critical report          10% |
| Students will write a short report that discusses their experiences playing a single game. |
| Assignment 2: Content analysis presentation          25% |
| Students will present recordings of gameplay footage from a game of their choice and talk through these recordings as a live presentation to the class focusing on their analysis of the gameplay footage. |
| Assignment 3: Research essay          30% |
| Students will select an essay topic based on concepts covered in class during the second half of term. They will be required to incorporate a discussion of the required readings, other appropriate academic sources, and examples that fit the topic that the students have selected. |
| **Final exam:          35%** |
| Students will respond to a series of short-answer questions focused on concepts and analysis practices from throughout the semester. |

## TEXT(S) AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

Readings and resources for this course will be available through MyCC – Coquitlam College's Moodle-based virtual learning environment (VLE). The assigned readings are indicated in the course content information below.

## COURSE TOPICS

| Week | Topic | Required Readings |
|---|---|---|
| Week 1 | **Introduction**. Ludology and the study of games and game cultures. | No reading assigned for this week. |
| Week 2 | **Systems.** Rules, systems, logic, and genre. | Will Right. "Computer and Video Games". In: Grenville et al (eds) *Krazy: The Delirious World of Anime, Comics, Video Games, and Art* (University of California Press: 2008) pp 128-161. |
| Week 3 | **Flow.** Flow, gameplay loops, grinding, difficulty. | Barry Brown and Oskar Juhlin. "Play, Games, and Enjoyment". *Enjoying Machines* (MIT Press: 2015) pp 39-64. |
| Week 4 | **Cinematic.** Screen media images and characters, verisimilitude, media archeology. | Wanda Strauven. "The Observer's Dilemma: To Touch or not to Touch?" In: Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (eds) *Media Archeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications* (University of California Press: 2011) pp 148-163. |

| Week 5 | **Analysis**. Close reading of interactive media and their contexts. | Alfie Bown. "Level 2 Dreamwork: Cyborgs on the Analysts Couch". *The Playstation Dreamworld* (Polity: 2018) pp 61-92. |
|---|---|---|
| Week 6 | **Aesthetics.** Embodiment, habitus, aesthetic critique. | Graeme Kirkpatrick. "Chapter 6: Aesthetics & Politics". *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary* (Polity: 2013) pp 159-187. |
| Week 7 | **Midterm week: Presentations.** Assignment 2 content analysis presentations. | No reading assigned for this week. |
| Week 8 | **Agency**. Simulation, interactivity, virtual environments, and the player. | Seth Giddings. "Soft Worlds: Play with Computers". *Gameworlds: Virtual Media and Children's Everyday Play* (Bloomsbury: 2016) pp 89-115. |
| Week 9 | **Ideology.** Nostalgia, semiospheres, cultural politics, intersectional analysis. | Trevor Strunk. "Fallout and Shin Megami Tensei: Whose Apocalypse is it Anyway?" *Story Mode* (Prometheus: 2021) pp 123-150. |
| Week 10 | **Industry.** The political economy of games in the creative industries. | Thomas Poell, David Nieborg, and Brooke Duffy. "Creativity". *Platforms and Cultural Production* (Polity: 2022) pp 132-154. |
| Week 11 | **Game culture.** Fan cultures, playbour, gender, and performance. | Nicolle Lamerichs. "Material Culture on Twitch: Live-Streaming Cosplay, Gender, and Beauty". In: Beil et al (eds) *Paratextualizing Games* (Transcript: 2021) pp 181-212. |
| Week 12 | **Gamification.** Social media, algorithms & AI, augmented & virtual reality, and the quantified self. | Joseph Macey and Juho Hamari, "eSports, Skins and Loot Boxes: Participants, practices and problematic behaviour associated with emergent forms of gambling." *New Media & Society* 21:1 (2018) pp 1-22. |
| Week 13 | **Revision.** Final exam preparation. | No reading assigned for this week. |
| Week 14 | **Final assessment: Exam** | No reading assigned for this week. |

**NOTES**

1. Students are required to follow all College policies. Policies are available on the website at: Coquitlam College Policies
2. To find out how this course transfers, visit the BC Transfer Guide at: bctransferguide.ca