

Effective: Summer 2022

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: Game Studies

Course Number: CMNS 230

Credits: 3

Total Weeks: 14 (Fall, Spring)
12 (Summer)

Total Hours: 39

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

Department: Humanities

Department Head: G. Kim

Former Course Code(s) and Number(s) (if applicable): N/A

Pre-requisites: CMNS 110 or CMNS 130 or equivalent

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 archaeology, 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 (<i>specify</i>):	
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:	80%
<i>Specify number of, variety, and nature of assignments:</i>	
In-class projects & presentations	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Design & critical analysis	30%
Participation	5%
Final exam:	20%

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	Assigned readings	Supplementary readings
Week 1	Introduction & game histories. The study of games and game cultures and their histories.	Wright, Will. “Computer and Video Games”. In: Grenville et al (eds) <i>Krazy: The Delirious World of Anime, Comics, Video Games, and Art</i> (University of California Press: 2008) pp 128-161.	Wells, Priscilla. “Playing as a Woman”. In: Dickinson, Andrew (ed) <i>A Handheld History</i> (Harper Collins, 2023) pp 42-45.
Week 2	Ludology. Rules, systems, operations, and genre.	Bogost, Ian. “Videogames and Expression”. <i>Unit Operations</i> (MIT Press: 2006) pp 55-71.	Galloway, Paul. “The Input” In: Antonelli, Paola (ed) <i>Never Alone: Video Games as Interactive Design</i> (MOMA New York, 2022) pp 30-57.
Week 3	Players. Designing interactive systems, flow, gameplay loops, the magic circle.	Brown, Barry, and Juhlin, Oskar. “Play, Games, and Enjoyment”. <i>Enjoying Machines</i> (MIT Press: 2015) pp 39-64.	Giddings, Seth. “Soft Worlds: Play with Computers”. <i>Gameworlds: Virtual Media and Children’s Everyday Play</i> (Bloomsbury: 2016) pp 89-115.
Week 4	Aesthetics. Art & fashions, aesthetic theory, the experiential, dissonance.	Kirkpatrick, Graeme. “Chapter 6: Aesthetics & Politics”. <i>Computer Games and the Social Imaginary</i> (Polity: 2013) pp 159-187.	Pearson, Luke, and Youkhana, Sandra. “Persona 5”. <i>Videogame Atlas: Mapping Interactive Worlds</i> (Thames & Hudson, 2022) pp 236-259.
Week 5	Agency. Player agency, automata, harmony, and affect.	Bodi, Bettina. “A Multidimensional Heuristic Framework for Analysing Player Agency”. <i>Videogames and Agency</i> (Routledge: 2023) pp 41-63.	Nguyen, C Thi. “The Aesthetics of Agency”. <i>Games: Agency as Art</i> (Oxford: 2020) pp 101-120.
Week 6	Game analysis workshop & midterm exam	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.

Week 7	Industry. The political economy of games in the creative industries.	Nieborg, David. "From premium to freemium: The political economy of the app". In: T. Leaver & M. Willson (eds) <i>Social, Casual and Mobile Games: The Changing Gaming Landscape</i> (Bloomsbury: 2016) pp 225-240.	Schreier, Jason. "Introduction". <i>Blood, Sweat, and Pixels</i> (Harper Collins, 2017) pp xiii-xx.
Week 8	Ideology. Cultural hegemony, framing, verisimilitude, and perspective.	Dyer-Witheford, Nick, and de Peuter, Greig. "Imperial City: Grand Theft Auto". <i>Games of Empire</i> (University of Minnesota Press: 2009) pp 153-182.	Bown, Alfie. "Level 2 Dreamworld: Cyborgs on the Analysts Couch". <i>The Playstation Dreamworld</i> (Polity: 2018) pp 61-92.
Week 9	Representation. Gender, intersectionality, and systemic biases in the creative industries.	Chess, Shira. "Gaming Feminism". <i>Play Like a Feminist</i> (MIT Press: 2020) pp 85-106.	Sarkeesian, Anita. <i>Feminist Frequency</i> (2013) https://feministfrequency.com/series/tropes-vs-women-in-video-games/
Week 10	Reality. Remediation, cinematography, animation, hyper-reality.	Ivanescu, Andra. "Games on Media: Beyond Remediation". <i>Popular Music in the Nostalgia Video Game</i> (Palgrave Macmillan: 2019) pp 29-74.	Pallant, Chris. "Video Games and Animation". <i>The Animation Studies Reader</i> (Bloomsbury: 2022) pp 203-214.
Week 11	Culture. Playbour, participatory culture, user generated content, streaming, mods.	Muriel, Daniel, and Crawford, Garry. "The emergence and consolidation of video games as culture". <i>Video Games as Culture</i> (Routledge: 2018) pp 16-59.	Berger, John. "Chapter 1". <i>Ways of Seeing</i> (Penguin: 1972) pp 7-34.
Week 12	Game design workshop	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.
Week 13	Revision. Final exam preparation.	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.
Week 14	Final exam	No reading assigned.	No reading assigned.

NOTES

- Students are required to follow all College policies. Policies are available on the website at: [Coquitlam College Policies](#)
- To find out how this course transfers, visit the BC Transfer Guide at: bctransferguide.ca

Last Revised: May 2022

Last Reviewed: September 2024