COURSE DESCRIPTION
Games are everywhere and over 155 million Americans play them regularly on tabletops and electronic devices across the county. Their prevalence has promoted the medium as a space for expression, art, and meaning-making. Moving beyond the notion of simple entertainment, games are creating provocative experiences to promote change or understanding. This course emphasizes exploration and critical thinking as we discover how games are designed to address issues such as social justice, gender representation, behavioral change, and education. Through analyzing game artifacts and engaging in creative exercises, students will be able to think critically about games and how they are designed. Students will then apply this literacy into their own game projects. This course is open to anyone who is interested in games and their possibilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES.
By participating and completing in this course, students will:
1. Gain familiarity of games and their potential beyond entertainment
2. Know and employ the terminology of games and design
3. Recognize the approaches, strategies, and tools needed to produce interactive experiences.
4. Be able to work as part of a design team.
5. Be more creative, expressive, and analytical about all aspects of game culture.
6. Create game projects via hands-on methods and digital creation tools.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
1. Explain and understand the basic concepts and theory in digital media.
2. Explain how media technologies impact today’s digital culture
3. Identify innovations that continue to change how games address complex issues.
4. Develop and refine skills needed for physical and digital content creation.
5. Use web technology to effectively communicate, share, and display ideas.
6. Employ the techniques needed for converting ideas into analog media and digital content.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Be prepared for class. Be active and engaged in both solo and group assignments.
2. Stay on top of gaming news and discussions from sites such as Gamasutra, Rock Paper Shotgun, Eurogamer, /r/pcgaming, /r/truegaming, etc.
3. Spend time outside of class preparing for and working on projects
4. We are a community. Participate in active learning in class by asking questions and helping classmates solve problems.
5. Ask your instructor for help or clarification.
6. You will be playing games in this class and not just for fun. Be prepared to think critically and look deeper.
7. Some games will have to be purchased on Steam (or elsewhere). These small charges replace expensive textbooks. You will need a Steam account for this course (or GoG if you prefer).
ATTENDANCE
1. Come to class. More than two (2) absences and lateness will lower your grade according to Fordham rules. If you anticipate lateness or absence, you need to email me with an update and/or acquire a doctor’s note.
2. Classroom behavior counts. The use of any electronic device other than those actively used in the lesson are prohibited. No cell calls are allowed. Emergencies do happen though!

PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism is strictly unacceptable. If a student plagiarizes a discussion, forum posting, designed experience (without citing inspiration), or partakes in other forms of academic dishonesty, the assignment will be graded an F and I will automatically deduct at least one full letter grade from the student’s final course grade.

GRADING
Attendance: 10% of grade
Participation, Blackboard discussions, and weekly game reflections: 30% of grade
First Assignment: Physical Educational Game: 30% of grade
Second Assignment: Digital Game: 30% of grade

Grading guidelines for assignments and projects:

A = excellent, ready for further development
A- = excellent, with a minor flaw or flaws
B+ = good work, but not ready for prime time
B = okay, not bad, but needs work
B- = not okay, worse than class average, several mistakes
C+ = serious problems, but shows effort
C = serious problems and lack of demonstrated effort
C- = see me

OVERVIEW OF HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
You will have two big graded assignments:
First Assignment: Physical Education Game: 30% of grade
Second Assignment: Digital Game: 30% of grade

You will have a weekly “watch” or “read” assignment:
This will involve watching or reading assigned material with specific guidelines on how to assess/critique it. Be ready to discuss at the beginning of the following class.
These assignments will be graded as part of Participation: 30% of grade

You will have a weekly “do” or “play” assignment:
This will involve interacting with physical or digital experiences to apply what you’re learning in class.
You will be given specific guidelines on how to assess/reflect/critique.
These assignments will be graded as part of Participation: 30% of grade.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND NEWS
Please “like” our departmental Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FordhamCMS and/or follow us on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/FordhamCMS to receive departmental news, notices of jobs, internship opportunities, etc.
FORDHAM AND EQUAL ACCESS
Regarding Disabilities: If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please let me know!

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS: The Office of Disability Services at Fordham University helps to ensure equal educational access and opportunity for all members of our community. In the Jesuit tradition of cura personalis, members of the ODS staff work individually with each student to understand his or her strengths and limitations in order to develop their most effective and comprehensive accommodation plan. Fordham will offer reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to assist otherwise qualified persons in achieving access to its programs, services, and facilities once students meet with ODS for an initial intake meeting to develop an accommodation plan directly with the student in accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students seeking accommodation(s) should the Rose Hill Office of Disability Services, (718) 817-0655 or email disabilityservices@fordham.edu.

COURSE CALENDAR AND PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS (this will update as the semester goes on)

WEEK ONE (1) September 5
1. Review syllabus
2. Intro/course objectives
3. Games Discussion
4. Game Variation and Play Types

*Homework*

a. Watch/Read *Due in Class on Sept 12*
   Watch: Bartle’s Taxonomy - What Type of Player are You? - Extra Credits
   Reflect; What do you want from a game? Be ready to discuss in class.

   Read: Chapter 1 from “Reality Is Broken” by Jane McGonigal (Reading provided)

b. Do/Play *Due Sept 11, 5pm EST*
   Do: Bartle’s Taxonomy of Player Types Questionnaire
   Complete this basic questionnaire. Discover the type of player you are!

   Play: A game of your choice
   Analyze it based on; (1) Mcgonigal’s Four Traits as per reading; (2) Bartle’s Taxonomy of player types; and (3) How the game incorporates systems to draw those playstyles. Post on Blackboard.

WEEK TWO (2) September 12
1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Games and Psychology
3. Addicting Mechanics
4. Avatars, Identity, and Social Play
*Homework*

a. **Watch/Read *Due in Class on Sept 19***
   
   Watch: Controlling vs "Being" Your Video Game Avatar | Idea Channel | PBS Digital Studios
   
   Reflect; The video describes how games put players in uncomfortable moral situations via an illusion of choice, but recommends that games should incorporate more ‘socially or culturally progressive’ choices. What kinds of games or avatars/characters incorporate such a mechanic? Discuss in class.

   Read: Chapter 6 from “Getting Gamers: The Psychology of Video Games” (Reading provided)

b. **Play/Do *Due Sept 18, 5pm EST***

   Play: World of Warcraft (trial account; do not purchase anything).

   Do: World of Warcraft (WoW) combines elements described in both Watch/Read assignments; avatars, identity, social play, and psychology. Analyze play experience based on; (1) How WoW incorporates psychological theory to promote continued play; (2) How the game provides choice (or the illusion of choice) in moral situations; and (3) How elements of identity and role-play are incorporated. Post on Blackboard.

**WEEK THREE (3) September 19**

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Intro to game development
3. Mechanics, aesthetics, dynamics, and plot
4. Play agency
5. Design activity
6. First Project Assigned

*Homework*

a. **Watch/Read *Due in Class on Sept 26***

   Watch: “What Can We Learn From Doom”

   Read: “Video Games in Education”

   Reflect; How the formal elements of games can be translated into interactive, educational games.

b. **Play/Do *Due Sept 25, 5pm EST***

   Play: Any educational game on BrainPOP's GameUp
   Play: Undertale (demo or full version)

   Do: Deconstruct educational game experience in relation to (1) embedded formal game elements and their relation to typical games, and (2) how educational content is provided or made game-like. Extra question - Can games be effective educational tools? Post on Blackboard.

   Do: Analyze Undertale play experience and discuss (1) How typical game elements are reframed to create a unique experience, and (2) How the game promotes discussion on moral choices and complex issues. Post on Blackboard.

   Do: Outline content area and learning goals for Gamified Learning assignment.
WEEK FOUR (4) September 26

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Educational Games
3. Fun vs. Learning Balance
4. Implementation of Educational Games
5. Scaffolding and Knowledge Transfer

*Homework*

a. Watch/Read *Due in Class on October 3*
   Read: “Overview of research on the educational use of video games”
   Read: “The Human Microbiome World” (Reading provided)

b. Play/Do *Due October 2, 5pm EST*
   Play: Minecraft Microbiology Map
   Play: Monster School Bus

   Do: Outline scope and game mechanics for Gamified Learning assignment
   Do: Outline One-Day Curriculum for Gamified Learning assignment
   Do: Analyze the approaches both games used to embed educational content and connected learning goals with the game’s mechanics. Post on Blackboard.

WEEK FIVE (5) October 3

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Assignment 1 build day
3. Design Deliverable: Playable prototype

*Homework*

a. Watch/Read *Due in Class on October 10*
   Read: “Changing the Game: What Happens When Video Games Enter the Classroom?”

b. Play/Do *Due October 9, 5pm EST*
   Do: What were some of the major challenges that Squire experienced in implementing Civilization III into a classroom? How would those issues translate into the design of your project, its connected curriculum, and implementation in a classroom? Post on Blackboard.
   Do: Finalize Assignment 1 game mechanics, systems, end states, embedded content
   Do: Complete playable prototype in preparation for upcoming playtest

WEEK SIX (6) October 10

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Assignment 1 Playtest
3. Constraints and Restrictions
4. Measuring Learning

***1ST GRADED PROJECT — EDUCATIONAL GAME + ONE-DAY CURRICULUM***
Due Wednesday, Oct. 17

*Homework* Due in Class on Oct 17*
  a. Watch (announced in class)

WEEK SEVEN (7) October 17

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Empathy and Games
3. How games tackle challenging subjects
4. The plight of the space janitor
5. Assignment 1 Due

*Homework*
  a. Watch/Read *Due in Class on October 24*
     Watch: A Question of Empathy - Are There Positive Effects from Gaming? - Extra Credits
     Read: “Designing Games to Foster Empathy” by Jonathan Belman and Mary Flanagan
     Be prepared to discuss the article’s design principles in class.
  b. Play/Do *Due October 23, 5pm EST*
     Play: That Dragon, Cancer
     Play: This War of Mine
     Do: Reflect on one of the two games; What makes these game experiences so visceral or powerful? In what other ways can games foster empathy from its players? How can games be used to connect with broader social issues? Post on Blackboard.

WEEK EIGHT (8) October 24

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Games and mental health
3. Behavioral change
4. Gamification

*Homework*
  a. Watch/Read *Due in Class on October 31*
     Watch: Karl Kapp Series 1 through 4 (20 minutes total)
     Read: Chapter 8 in “Serious Games: Games that Educate, Train, and Inform” (Reading provided)
  b. Play/Do *Due October 23, 5pm EST*
     Play: Depression: The Game
     Do: Share your thoughts on how games can instill behavior change. Reflect on the ideas presented in the Karl Kapp series. What stands out to you? What does the future hold? Also, share your thoughts on Depression: The Game. Post on Blackboard.

WEEK NINE (9) October 31

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Intro to Digital Design
3. Learning digital design tools
4. Game Development
5. Final Assignment discussed

*Homework*

a. Watch/Read *Due in Class on November 7*
   Watch: How To Start Your Game Narrative - Design Mechanics First - Extra Credits
   Read: (announced in class)

b. Play/Do *Due November 6, 5pm EST*
   Play: (announced in class)
   Do: Outline game concept, game mechanics, and systems
   Do: Refine skill sets and complete tutorials
   Do: Begin construction of game systems

WEEK TEN (10) November 7

1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Storytelling and Narrative
3. Narrative design
4. Characters and Choice
5. Continued digital design

*Homework*

c. Watch/Read *Due in Class on November 14*
   Read: “Narrative, Interactivity, Play, and Games”, by Eric Zimmerman
   Watch: Pacing by Extra Credits

d. Play/Do *Due November 13, 5pm EST*
   Play: (announced in class)
   Do: Finalize game concept, game mechanics, and systems for Assignment 2
   Do: Outline game concept, story, and characters for Assignment 2
   Do: Continue construction of game systems
   Do: Begin construction of character art, location, and story design

WEEK ELEVEN (11) November 14

1. Assignment 1 build day
2. Design Deliverable: Playable prototype

*Homework*

a. Watch/Read *Due in Class on November 28*
   Read: (announced in class)
   Watch: (announced in class)
b. **Play/Do *(Due November 27, 5pm EST)***
   - Play: (announced in class)
   - Do: Finish playable prototype in preparation for playtest

November 21 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

**WEEK TWELVE (12) November 28**
1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Assignment 1 Playtest
3. Implement feedback

***2ND GRADED PROJECT — DIGITAL GAME + ONE-PAGE REFLECTION***
Due Wednesday, Dec 5

**WEEK THIRTEEN (13) December 5 - Last Day**
1. Review last class (questions/issues/concerns) and discuss homework
2. Present Digital Game Assignment
3. Submit Digital game Assignment