

# Syllabus

## Instructor:

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You can contact me at anytime and expect a reply within a few hours.

## Course Goals:

In this course, we will discuss how to create a valuable analysis, look at existing critiques, and write our own analyses. We will examine the influence that visual cues, non-diegetic sounds, and control schemes play in the total experience of the game. By the end of the semester, students should ask the questions: "How does the narrative motivate player action?", "Do all of the mechanics convey the same message?", "How does the art style frame the rest of the experience?"

## Structure:

We will meet every Tuesday from six-thirty to seven-twenty. Here we will either discuss the reading for the week or I will present a game and/or analysis. There will be a mid-term and final consisting each of an analysis of your own.

## Readings:

There is no textbook for this course. We will be reading materials that I had out in class and provide online via \*blackboard/google drive\*. I can recommend a few books though, *Introduction to Game Analysis*, by Clara Fernandez-Vara or *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*, by Katie Salen and Andrew Zimmerman.

## Grading:

A passing grade means that you half participated in at least half of the discussions and have shown evidence of understanding on your mid-term and final. You should only fail if you do not engage actively with the material.

## Discussion:

During discussion, when you want to contribute, you may raise your hand, and I will write your name down. After each person in front of yourself has talked, you will be given a chance to share. You are expected to listen and respond to your classmates and reference the reading to support your claims.

## Your Work:

You have to take your new skills and implement them in your own analysis. For your midterm, you will observe a game in class and return the next week with a piece of work deconstructing, critiquing, or interpreting the game. The final requires you to play a game of

your choosing and provide an analysis as a final product of your ability. It is recommended that you choose a very short or free game (this course is 3 units, so you should not let it interfere with your busy cmu schedule). You are encouraged to discuss your ideas with other students, and will be expected to do so in class, but you should cite ideas that others contribute if you do use them in your paper.

### **Readings:**

Dates all TBD

["Ecce, soror" ; Discount Thoughts](#)

["Flower Song" ; Michael Abbott](#)

["Urban Flight" ; Brett Cutler](#)

["Exchanging Marriage Plows: Gender & Sexuality in \*Stardew Valley\*" ; Alayana](#)

["Messianism and \*Earthbound\*" ; Ethan Gach](#)

["Entropy and austerity and \*Little Inferno\*" ; Jackson Wagner](#)

["Playing to Suffer-Suffering to Play" ; G Christopher Williams](#)

["Pacing Morality and \*The Walking Dead\*" ; Daniel Starky](#)

["I Hate Magic" ; Robert Rath](#)

["How I Ruined Journey" ; Accurate Observation](#)

["Finding Myself in the Wastes" ; Daniel Starkley](#)