

HS 112: WRITING AND ANALYSIS II SYLLABUS

Cornish College of the Arts
Humanities and Sciences Department

Spring 2020

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Hours: Mon/Wed 3-4p or by appointment

HS 112 06 LE
Mon/Wed | 440p - 600p | MCC 105

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

This course builds on the foundational skills learned in HS 111 and continues to develop students' understanding of college-level academic writing and research. This course emphasizes reading, analyzing, and writing texts that engage scholarly and creative conversation. Students are introduced to the values and practices of academic and artistic research, and focus on skill-building and flexibility across audiences and genres. The course is writing intensive and includes revision. This course meets 3 credits of the College Writing Requirement and creates a foundation for future study by assisting students with the development of college-level skills, particularly in reading, writing, research, critical thinking, and communication.

Course Theme: "Experimental Game Criticism"

All art forms need a vibrant discourse of criticism. Good criticism generates the feelings, perceptions, and critical reflection that help amplify and extend the impact of the arts on society and on our personal experience. As the philosopher and critic Theodor Adorno noted, "Art without reflection is the retrospective fantasy of a reflexive age." Yet videogames, if we take them together as a young art form, really have no adequate discourse of criticism to generate reflection and highlight marginalized experiments. The popular discussions of videogames that lives online in game reviews, forums and social media comment threads, Let's Play video commentaries, and live stream discussions is often impressionistic, connoisseurial, and underdeveloped. What is more, these discussions are disconnected from important considerations of our everyday lives as human beings (not just "gamers"). Given the rise of game media and their cultural influence in the twenty-first century it is important to develop new forms of criticism that go beyond consumer reviews and fandom. To this end, we will be developing our writing through projects exploring both existing and new forms of writing about videogames.



Videogame simulation of Marina Abramovic's
The Artist is Present by Pippin Barr (2011)

Credits

This course is 3 credit hours. You should expect to spend 3 hours in class and budget 6 hours for work on preparation and assignments for this class per week.

Course Learning Objectives

This course is designed to provide opportunities for:

1. Developing your understanding of the integral relationship between reflective reading practices, thinking critically and clearly, and effective communication in writing
2. Practicing and improving your ability to read texts and communicative media for understanding, and for analyzing and using complex texts and media purposefully in support of writing projects
3. Developing your rhetorical awareness in reading and writing (of genre, audience, purpose, context), specifically your ability to identify strategies writers/artists use in different rhetorical situations to communicate effectively
4. Producing effective writing in multiple genres, including academic writing that demonstrates responsible use of the MLA system of documenting sources
5. Finding and refining your voice in writing, and practicing collaboration on writing projects
6. Give and receive constructive feedback in peer review on writing projects

Program & Course Learning Outcomes

As part of the general education program this course addresses the skill of *effective written communication*. Specifically, this course is designed to:

1. Read analytically and reflect critically on a variety of texts and media
2. Produce idea-driven college-level writing
3. Recognize a writer's purpose, audience, genre, grammar, and syntax and employ these tools in their own writing
4. Read, evaluate, and incorporate feedback in peer review as part of the writing process
5. Use the Writing Center and Library in support of the research and writing process
6. Identify and evaluate strong sources appropriate to the rhetorical situation of writing
7. Learn and apply MLA citation conventions

Teaching Methods & Philosophy

Class sessions will involve a mix of writing instruction, seminar-style discussion of assigned material, writing workshops, and peer review sessions. Seminar discussions will explore shared readings and media experiences which will generate perspectives, ideas, and resources for our writing projects. We will use the instruction sessions to learn about writing techniques and conventions, and workshops to explore and practice them in preparation for the writing projects. The writing projects will develop and practice the process of writing from idea generation and rhetorical strategy to drafting and final revision. Directed peer review sessions will practice critical collaboration on writing and the revision process. We will also be scheduling one-on-one conferences to discuss your writing process, progress, and goals.

Canvas & Course Website

This class makes minimal use of Canvas. The syllabus will be archived there indefinitely, but all ongoing communications should be directed to tschenold@cornish.edu. All other reading materials, media, and assignment documents, lecture slides, etc. will always be published to the course website. The URL for the course website is:

<http://courses.bloodedbythought.org/wa2/>

Required Texts & Materials

1. All course documents (assignments, handouts), assigned texts, and media will be available for download in PDF format or linked to on the course website.
2. A *non-red* ink pen or pencils to use for note-taking, writing exercises, and peer review.

Assessment & Grading

Your final grade in this course will be based on the components listed below:

1. **Engagement:** This is an ongoing "assignment" that pertains to your active attention and participation in the various forms of collaboration in the course. This means interacting in seminar discussions by sharing insights or asking questions, completing "questions & quotations" (Q&Qs) for assigned readings, and generally demonstrating productive contribution to the class group as a learning community and engagement in the learning process.
2. **Writing Exercises:** Short writing exercises that develop thinking and practice techniques used in the three major writing projects (4-6 below)
3. **Peer Review:** There will be a series of directed peer review exercises on the three projects as well targeting specific aspects or your writing.
4. **Game Review:** A game review article on a self-selected, indie, avant-garde, non-traditional, or otherwise marginalized videogame written for a popular, non-specialist audience.
5. **Game Criticism*:** A critical essay on a pre-selected videogame exploring its artistic and cultural significance, drawing on existing scholarly criticism and popular commentary.
6. **Multimedia Essay*:** An experimental form of multimedia videogame criticism published online and incorporating visual and audio elements.

Detailed assignment documents will provide more information, including how each essay will be evaluated. These will be distributed in class and archived on the course website. Please note that assignments marked with (*) require a Writing Center collaboration.

Grades for these areas will be weighted as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Seminar Engagement | 15% |
| 2. Writing Exercises | 15%* |
| 3. Peer Review | 10% |
| 4. Game Review | 20%* |
| 5. Game Criticism (Scholarly Essay) | 20%* |
| 6. Multimedia Essay | 20%* |

Note: You will have the opportunity to reallocate (10%) of grade weight to one of the items marked with (*) in the above list. You should select what you consider to be your best writing. At the end of the semester you will submit your choice with a final revised and polished draft along with a short comment about why you consider it your best work drawing on language, learning, and concepts from the course.

Classroom Expectations & Course Expectations

- ✓ Arrive on time, prepared to engage in the planned activities
- ✓ No headphone use during class time unless approved
- ✓ No checking e-mail or text messaging
- ✓ Respectful participation and discussion is expected

Successful learning in this course depends on many elements, one of which is our ability as a group to create a dependable and inclusive learning community built on the accrual of common understandings as well as cognitive diversity. In the case of the former, if you miss class you will become alienated from the common understanding we will use to develop our writing practices and disrupt the forms of collaboration integral to learning; in the case of the latter, the group cannot benefit from your humanity, your insights into writing and the course material, and your unique experience and point of view. In light of these dynamics, showing up to class takes on a moral dimension!

Participation not only entails attending class prepared and paying full attention, but also actively contributing to the discussions. This means sharing insights and questions on readings or course topics in discussion – those that arise organically in class and those that you have formulated in preparation for class. However, please note that it is not enough to participate, you must also be *engaged*. This means that your participation must be sensitive to the context and our community (active listening): your comment or question takes into account what it follows, your colleagues' contributions, and is informed by the readings for the day. The general idea that should inform your engagement is to respect the opportunities afforded by the course, and the time and voices of others.

If you must miss class because “life happened” contact me *ahead of time* via email (tschenold@cornish.edu). Please note that it is your responsibility to get caught up by going to the website for materials and consulting your colleagues for notes on discussion. If you are absent, writing exercises and in-class peer review work *cannot be made up*.

Late/Missing Assignments

All assignments should be submitted by the due date. You are responsible for noting any changes to the schedule (see Schedule section of the website). Late work may be submitted up to *one week late*, but only with prior arrangement with me. There will also be a *one-third grade penalty*. So, for example, a late essay that earned a B+ (3.3) will become a B (3.0); a C (2.0) will become a C- (1.7), and so on. Refer to the Cornish Student Handbook section on “Grades” for the official college grading system.

Accommodation Statement

Cornish College of the Arts makes its programs accessible to qualified students with disabilities consistent with federal and state laws. The Office of Student Life works cooperatively with College programs to encourage compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Accommodations and access services in the Office of Student Life coordinate accommodations for students with disabilities in academic and non-academic programs. They promote and teach self-advocacy for students. Please contact your Student Success Coach in the Office of Student Life to request information, obtain referrals for testing resources, or to inquire about arranging for accommodations.

If you are not sure if a barrier you are experiencing in your academic life qualifies as a disability, please do not hesitate to speak with your Student Success Coach in the Office of Student Life.

COURSE CALENDAR

The course calendar is provisional and subject to change based on the progress of the learning community. The assignments and grade criteria will not change. The most up-to-date schedule of activities can be found on the course website. Changes to the schedule will be announced in class session as well as via email.

Week 1

1/13, Monday

Class: Introduction: Don't Play Videogames; Exercise 0: Expectations & Goals

Study: Read Syllabus

1/15, Wednesday

Class: Standard Manuscript Format, Google Docs; Game Review assignment

Study: Frank Lantz, "Heart & Minds" *QWOP*

Due: Exercise 0: Expectations & Goals

Week 2

1/20, Monday

Class: NO CLASS: MLK Jr. Day

Study: Rosenwasser, *Writing Analytically* (excerpts)

1/22, Wednesday

Class: Seminar discussion; Exercise 1: Review Analysis

Study: Paolo Pedercini, "Videogames and the Spirit of Capitalism"; *Façade*

Week 3

1/27, Monday

Class: Rhetorical Situation & Genres; Peer Review

Study: [selected game reviews]

Due: Exercise 1: Review Analysis

1/29, Wednesday

Class: Paragraphing & Structure

Study: [selected game reviews]

Week 4

2/3, Monday

Class: Seminar discussion; Peer Review

Study: Salen & Zimmerman, "Interactivity"

Due: Game Review (draft)

2/5, Wednesday

Class: Seminar discussion

Study: Jonathan Blow, "Videogames and the Human Condition"; Number None's *Braid*

Week 5

2/10, Monday

Class: Intertextuality & Integrating Quotations

Study: Ian Bogost, "Art"; Number None's *Braid*

Due: Game Review (revision)

2/12, Wednesday

Class: Plagiarism; Game Criticism assignment / Exercise 2: Critical Approach Commentary

Study: Miguel Sicart "Ludic Hermeneutic Circle"; Number None's *Braid*

Week 6

2/17, Monday

Class: NO CLASS: President's Day

2/19, Wednesday

CONFERENCE #1 Day _____ / Time _____ / Location _____

Due: Exercise 2: Critical Approach Commentary

Week 7

2/24, Monday

Class: Discourse, Reasoning with Sources

Study: Graff & Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say* (excerpts); [selected game criticism]

2/26, Wednesday

Class: MLA Works Cited

Study: Graff & Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say* (excerpts); [selected game criticism]

Week 8

3/2, Monday

Class: Seminar discussion; Media Analysis

Study: Merritt K, "I'm a Transsexual Witch Poet Gamecrafter And You Can Too"
Fullbright's *Tacoma*

Due: Game Criticism (draft)

3/4, Wednesday

Class: Seminar discussion; Multimedia Essay assignment (Exercises 3+4)

Study: Fullbright's *Tacoma*

SPRING BREAK

Study: Fullbright's *Tacoma*

Week 9

3/16, Monday

Class: Multimedia Essay assignment; Peer Review

Study: Brian Schrank, "Videogames as Avant-garde Art"

Due: Game Criticism (revised)

3/18, Wednesday

Class: Microsoft SWAY / Adobe Spark tutorials

Study: Paolo Pedercini, "The Great Art Upgrade"

Week 10

3/23 - 3/25, Monday & Wednesday

CONFERENCE #2: Day _____ / Time _____ / Location _____

Due: Exercise 3: Multimedia Essay Prospectus

Week 11

3/30, Monday

Class: Seminar discussion; Integrating Media (Figures, Accessibility)

Study: Chinese Room's *Dear Esther*; [research reading]

4/1, Wednesday

Class: Seminar discussion; Integrating Media (Figures, Accessibility)

Study: Chinese Room's *Dear Esther*; [research reading]

Week 12

4/6, Monday

Class: Workshopping Multimedia Essays & Troubleshooting; Peer Review

Study: [research reading]

Due: Exercise 4: Annotated Bibliography

4/8, Wednesday

Class: NO CLASS: Writing & Research Day; Drop-Ins

Week 13

4/13, Monday

Class: Seminar discussion; Peer Review

Study: Jane McGonigal, "Gaming Can Make a Better World"

Due: Multimedia Essay (draft)

4/15, Wednesday

Class: Seminar discussion

Study: Leigh Alexander, "'Gamers' Don't Have To Be Your Audience: 'Gamers' Are Over"

Week 14

4/20, Monday

Class: Seminar discussion

Due: Eric Zimmerman, "Manifesto for a Ludic Century"

4/22, Wednesday

Class: Seminar discussion; Showcase preparations

Study: Paolo Pedercini, "Indieocalypse"

Week 15

4/27, Monday

Class: Project Showcase

Due: Multimedia Essay (revised)

4/29, Wednesday

Class: La Croix Party: Future of Videogame Criticism; Evaluations