



Why We Play

36-XXXX-XX, Monday 12:30 – 3:20
916 S. Wabash Ave. Room 150

Interactive Arts and Media
Columbia College Chicago

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Course Description

This course covers the history of tabletop games, from *Go* to *Settlers of Catan*, and everything in between. Students will examine the recent popularity of board/card games, its impact on video game culture, and why games are important in everyday life. Students will also create board or tabletop games using concepts explored during the semester.

Prerequisites

None.

Instructional Resource Fee

\$70.

Learning and Performance Objectives

- Understand the history of board games
- Understand the cultural and social implications of gaming
- Make connections between video and tabletop games
- Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze games
- Understand the importance tabletop games have in your daily life
- Demonstrate ability to apply these concepts into your own game design

Projects and Grade Breakdown

- Various Assignments (20%), which include in-class workshops and outside readings, watchings, and other activities.
- Midterm (30%), a game prototype based on class discussions from first half of semester. This will include a proposal, a list of research sources, and the prototype itself.
- Final (40%), a game based on class discussions from whole semester. This will include a proposal, an annotated bibliography, a methodology and process paper, and the piece itself.
- Participation (10%)

Grading Policy and Evaluation Procedures

• In addition to the learning and performance objectives listed above, grades in this class are also judged on participation, writing and other critical assignments, a midterm, and your final project. The instructor is the final decider on the grade you have earned.

Please note that the grades are assigned as follows:

A = 93% and above	C+ = 77 – 79%
A- = 90 – 92%	C = 73 – 76%
B+ = 87 – 89%	C- = 70 – 72%
B = 83 – 86%	D = 60 – 69%
B- = 80 – 82%	F = 59% and below

A, A-, and B+ are given out for excellent work; B, B-, C+ for good work; C, C- for satisfactory work, and D and F for poor or inadequate work. Think of your grades as a conversation with me about how the work is going, and not a set in stone mile marker for your progress. Final grades will not be solely based on individual assignment grades.

• One late assignment (no more than one week after the due date) will be allowed per semester. Any other late work must be discussed with the instructor. No assignments can be handed in after the last class session. Assignments will be handed in via Moodle unless otherwise indicated.

• An Incomplete is issued only when the student qualifies for one. Please see <http://work.colum.edu/~amiller/incomplete.htm> for more information.

• A C or better is required in this class if you are completing this class as a requirement or required prerequisite for your major. If you get below a C, you must take this class again and cannot advance to the next required class.

• An Academic Progress Report must be filed by faculty about your progress during week 5 of the semester. This report is independent from your grade. Information on the APR can be found at http://www.colum.edu/Administrative_offices/Provost/academic-progress-reports.php

Required Texts and Materials

• Text(s): *Characteristics of Games*, by George Skaff Elias, Richard Garfield, and K. Robert Gutschera.

• Supplies/Materials: Sketchbook/notebook; backup hardware such as a flash drive or Dropbox account. Not backing up your work is not an excuse for a late assignment.

• Other readings, videos, and podcasts will be assigned throughout the semester.

Classroom Policies

- **Email:** All students are assigned a @loop.colum.edu email when they arrive at Columbia. This is the only email that instructors will use to communicate with you about class. It is your responsibility to check this email regularly, either by checking it daily (a link can be found on Oasis), or by forwarding it to a different email address.

- **Backup/Archives:** It is your responsibility to back up your work to a hard drive, flash drive, or online account. The dog might not be able to eat your homework anymore, but that doesn't mean you can blame the cloud for not having your files, either. Please be diligent about your backups.

- **Academic Integrity:** Academic honest is expected of all students. Any inappropriate use of materials or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Make your own original work, and if you're taking information from somewhere, cite it. Details on Columbia's policy are located online at <http://catalog.colum.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=1053>. In addition to anti-plagiarism, harassment and offensive behavior are also not tolerated in the classroom. Respect your fellow students, as well as faculty, staff, and guests.

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend every session and arrive on time. It is the Interactive Arts and Media departmental policy that a student automatically fails a class upon their third unexcused absence. Two late arrivals (after the beginning of the class) equal one absence. Students who leave class early are also considered absent. It is your duty to contact the instructor as soon as possible if you are going to miss a class to arrange for an excused absence. Unless otherwise approved of by the instructor, assignments are due on time for students who are absent (excused or not). The instructor may require make-up work in the place of a missed class.

Conaway Center Statement

Students with disabilities are requested to present their Columbia accommodation letters to their instructor at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner by the College, the department or the faculty member, as appropriate. Students with disabilities who do not have accommodation letters should visit the office of Services for Students with Disabilities in room 520 of the Congress building (312-344-8134/V or 312-360-0767/TTY). It is incumbent upon the student to know their responsibilities in this regard. For more information, visit [http://www.colum.edu/Students/Academics/Services for Students with Disabilities//index.php](http://www.colum.edu/Students/Academics/Services_for_Students_with_Disabilities//index.php)

Course Calendar

(readings and assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class)

1: Introduction

in class: syllabus; create class constitution; in-depth discussion of class goals

2: History

in class: games in ancient history; games in the modern era; contemporary board and tabletop gaming

3: Basics of Games

in class: types of games (party, real-time strategy, platformers, atoms and points); euro-games versus “ameri-trash”; number of players

reading: chapter 1, *Characteristics of Games*

4: Games as Systems

in class: metagames; subgames; games mimicking real-life actions

reading: chapter 4, *Characteristics of Games*

5: Video versus Tabletop

in class: importance of D&D; similarities of both; differences of both

watch: The Point <http://www.gamespot.com/videos/the-point-tabletop-vs-gaming/2300-6415949/>

due: read midterm description

6: Types of Players

in class: Bartle test; Robin’s laws; creating games that suit different types

reading: <http://mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm>; chapter 2, *Characteristics of Games*

7: Midterm, part 1

in class: discuss proposals; game design strategies

reading: chapter 3, *Characteristics of Games*

due: midterm proposal

8: Midterm, part 2

in class: teach and play games

due: midterm project

9: Narrative

in class: introduce final; hero’s journey; storytelling

watch: Extra Credits

10: Game Analysis

in class: analysis versus review; rules; outcomes

reading: chapter 3, *Characteristics of Games*

11 Final Proposals

in class: in-depth discussion of proposals; discussion of annotated bibliography and methodology and process assignments

due: final proposal

12: Gamification and Research

in class: meaningful gamification; games in daily life, playtesting; (easy) game theory

watch/read: two videos or one publication from

<http://becauseplaymatters.com/pubs/>; appendix A or B from *Characteristics of Games*

13: Work Day

due: some form of prototype to work on in class

14: Final, Group A

due: annotated bibliography (all groups)

15: Final, Group B**15: Final, Group C**

due: methodology and process paper (all groups)

Disclaimer statement

This syllabus is subject to change as the course proceeds. Students will be notified of any changes as they occur.