



HSS 206-01
Religion and Video
Games
NSPN 134, MWF
13:00-13:50

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Office Hours: Monday
2pm or by appointment

PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES: None

FOR WHOM PLANNED: The course is intended for Religious Studies majors and non-majors who are interested in how video games reflect what it means to be human, the role of digital media in contemporary society, the role of religion and play in human being. It is an introductory class. Although helpful, no prior religious studies or media studies courses or knowledge is required or expected. Also, while we will do *close play* of video games, you are being evaluated not on how well you play, but upon your demonstration of the basic knowledge of, and comprehension of the categories of religion, popular culture and play. You will also be evaluated on how you apply these terms using written, visual and digital forms of communication, to analyze, evaluate and create critical and imaginative assignments.

FOURFOLD STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Teach you critical and creative thinking.
2. Teach you about the categories of religion, play and popular culture.
3. Teach you how to craft scholarly texts in print and other new media.
4. Teach you how to be part of a peer research team.

TEACHING METHODS AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR ACHIEVING LEARNING

OUTCOMES: To instill a progressive pedagogy, while primarily based on a Socratic face-to-face seminar method, as well as the use of introductory lectures and one-on-one conferences when required, the course blends online teaching, and hands-on computer labs to facilitate student achievement of the stated learning outcomes. The students' primary

responsibility will be to read and discuss the course materials. Yet they will also engage in group-work, presentations, game design, and hands on exploration of digital media.

Progressive Education facilitates Student Learning Outcomes by:

1. Emphasizing hands-on projects, exploratory and experiential learning
2. Basing curriculum on thematic units
3. Integrating students' personal and community experiences into the classroom
4. Emphasizing critical thinking and critical imagining
5. Engaging in group work and other collaborative and cooperative learning projects that develop social skills
6. Forming democratic and social responsibility, that recognizes the larger social and historical context, rather than just rote knowledge
7. Personalizing the curriculum for each student's goals
8. De-emphasizing textbooks in favor of varied learning sources that look forward to the skills need for future technological literacy
9. Emphasizing lifelong learning and social skills that teach students how to teach themselves
10. Evaluating and assessing based on each student's projects and productions.

See: "Media Man explains Progressive Teaching Methods"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8PNfkdxC_I

EIGHTFOLD PATH OF RULES

1. Come to Class [After six unexcused absences you will be dropped from the course].
2. Do the reading [You must bring a PRINTED and MARKED version of the reading to class each day that it is assigned. Not doing so will count as an absence.]
3. Come and see me [If a problem arising it is your responsibility to contact me].
4. No late work.
5. No hats or sunglasses.
6. No phones.
7. No use of Wi Fi.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: You may miss up to six classes (excused and/or unexcused). On the seventh absence you will be dropped from the course. NOTE 1: Coming to class without a hard paper copy of the reading will count as an absence. NOTE 2: Arriving after class begins will count as an absence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: Each student is required to sign the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. Refer to UNCG *Undergraduate Bulletin/Graduate Bulletin*.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: Readings will be emailed and available on Canvas as PDF's at least a week before they will be need to be read. You are responsible for computer access, as well as printing these and bringing to class. Your Research Team will need to have a flash drive. Your research team will need a used board game. Your Research Team will need to pay for lamination of a 8.5 x 11 poster as well as a three foot stick.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

nOOB

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| 1. Reading Quizzes (1 point each x10) | 10 points |
| 2. Identity Card (1point) | 1 point |
| 3. Socrates Graphic Novel Page (3 points) | 3 points |
| 4. Noob QuestLabs 1-4 (3 points) | 12 points |
| 5. Unboard mid-term. | 12 points |
| 6. Traditional mid-term. | 12 points |
| | <50 points> |

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| 7. Super reading Quizzes. (3 points each x 7) | 21 points |
| 8. Middle QuestLabs 5-8 (6 points) | 24points |
| | <45 points> |

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| 9. Proposal. | 10points |
| 10. Paper. | 10 points |
| 11. Video. | 10 points |
| 12. Website. | 10points |
| 13. Popsicle Stick | 10points |
| | <50 points> |

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| 14. Final Presentation (10 student, 20 faculty) | 30 points |
| 15. Team Evaluation | 25points |
| | <55 points> |

Grand total = 200 points!

COURSE SCHEDULE

Section I —nOOb: Explore, Understand and Apply

Week 1: Introduction

Mon Jan 11: Visit to DMC

Wed Jan 13: Introduction to Class and Critical Media Practices

Fri Jan 15: Reading #1 “What is College For?” & Reading #2 “General Education: An information Guide for Students” pages 1-11.

Evaluation: Quiz

Assignment: Identity Card Due

Week 2: Unexamined Life is not Worth Living

Mon Jan 18 No Class MLK

Wed Jan 20: Reading #3 Evaluation: Quiz

Fri Jan 22: Reading #4

Watch: “How To Create A Graphic Novel”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBivrykaAbA>)

In Class: Bring in computer and/or art supplies (see:

<http://www.donnayoung.org/art/comics.htm>)

Week 3: Imagining Religion

Mon Jan 25 “Thinking About being a Student of Religion and Video Games.”

Read: Reading# 5, “Thinking About Being a Student of Religion.”

Reading#5a “Playing with Religion and Digital Games”

Evaluation: Quiz

Assignment: Socrates Graphic Novel Page

Wed Jan 27 “Imagining Religion.”

Read: Reading#6, “Imagining Religion.”

Assignment: QuestLab_1

Evaluation: Quiz

Fri Jan 29 Meet in DMC

Handout: QuestLab_2

Week 4: Imagining Religion

Mon Feb 1 “Ultimate Concern and World Views”

Read: Reading #7 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (1958), *excerpts*
Ninian Smart, *Worldviews* (1983), *excerpts*

Evaluation: Quiz

Wed Feb 3 “Play and the Sacred”

Read: Reading #8 Eliade and Caillois

Evaluation: Quiz

Fri Feb 5 Meet in DMC

Handout: QuestLab_3

Week 5: What is Popular Culture?

Mon Feb 8 “Understanding Theology and Popular Culture”

Read: Reading #9 Lynch

Evaluation: Quiz

Wed Feb 10 “FanFic”

Read: R10_Jenkins

Evaluation: Quiz

Fri Feb 12 Meet in DMC

Handout: QuestLab_4 or 4a

Week 5: Meaningful Play

Mon Feb 15 “Religion is Playing Games, Playing Video Gods, Playing to Play”

Read: Reading #11 Plate

Evaluation: Quiz

Wed Feb 17 “Playing with Reality”

Read: Reading #12 Huizinga and Winnicott

Evaluation: Quiz

MIDTERM

Fri Feb 19 Brain Storm for Midterm “Unboard Project”

Read: R13_Structure of Board Games, R14_Meaningful Play

Mon Feb 22 Construct Unboard Exam

Wed Feb 24 Play and Evaluate Unboard Exam

Fri Feb 26 Traditional Midterm

Section II — Middie: Judge, Analyze, and Evaluate

Week 7 Method Ludagraphy

Mon Feb 29 Lets Play and New Game Journalism

Evaluation: Super Reading Quiz

Watch: Let's Play: "Dark Plays,"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT748kPXXhQ> [watch about 10 minutes]

Read: Reading #15_Shanahan

Wed March 2 Close Reading and Autoethnography

Evaluation: Super Reading Quiz

Read: Reading# 16_Poulos

Read: "How to Do a Close Reading,"

<http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>

Listen: Paul Simon — Graceland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDXzLeFUkpc>

Watch: "Paul Simon's Graceland: A Close Reading"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqO_umy11YQ

Fri March 4

Meet in DMC

Handout: QuestLab_5

Spring Break March 5 — March 14

Week 8 Bioshock: First Person, Religion and The Sacred

Mon March 14

Video: "Rise of the Video Game: Level 1"

Wed March 16

Evaluation: Super Reading Quiz

Read: Reading #17 _ Girad

Reading # 18 _ Roof

Handout: March 18

Handout: QuestLab_6

Week 9: Tomb Raider: Second Person, Religion and Gender

Mon March 21

Evaluation: Super Reading Quiz

Read: Reading #19 _Ouellette

Read: Reading # 20 _Berger

Wed March 23

Evaluation: Super Reading Quiz

Read: Reading #21 _ Goffman

Week 10, Minecraft: Sandbox and Religion

Mon March 28

Evaluation: Super Reading Quiz

Read: Reading #22 _ Sacred Architecture

Handout: QuestLab_7

Wed March 30

Evaluation: Super Reading Quiz

Read: Reading #23 _ Michell

Friday April 1

Meet in DMC

Handout: QuestLab_8

EndGame: Play, Create, Imagine

Mon April 4 IN CLASS Brainstorming = Final Assignment!

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Proposal Due

Friday April 8 IN CLASS: Paper Workshop

Mon April 11 IN COMPUTER LAB: Video Training

Paper Due

Wed April 13 IN DMC: Video Workshop

Friday April 15 IN DMC: Video Workshop

Mon April 18 IN COMPUTER LAB: Website Training

Video Due

Wed April 20 IN DMC: Website Workshop

Friday April 22 IN CLASS: Power Point

Website Due

Mon April 25 IN DMC: IN DMC: Powerpoint Workshop

Tuesday April 26 = IN CLASS Friday class "Popsicle Stick Assignment"

The Boss! Final Presentations RCO 203 = Wednesday May 6, 8 am to 11:00 am

Due: Power Point, Presentation and Popsicle Stick

Final Presentations HSS 206 = Monday May 4, 3:30-6:30