

# GCIN2012 Introduction to Video Game Studies<sup>12</sup>

**Academic Year / Semester:**  
2019 - 2020 / 2nd

**Department / Faculty:**  
Global Creative Industries Programme / Arts

**Class Hours:**  
Tuesday, 1:30 pm – 3:20 pm

**Class Venue:**  
CDP-LG.59, Centennial Campus

**Instructors:**  
Ms. Karin L. F. Chau  
(kchau.gcin@gmail.com)

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## Course Descriptions:

This course is an introduction to the exciting new field of video game studies. The course starts with tracing the historical background and recent development of the video game industry, followed by discussions on the major methods and approaches used to analyse video games as cultural products. Through an in-depth and comparative study of video games, the course aims to engage students in a critical discourse on the major debates surrounding the digital medium through social, economic, aesthetic, cultural, gender and political perspectives

## Course Objectives:

- 1) To provide students a broad understanding of video games and video game studies
- 2) To familiarize students with the different approaches to the study of video games as cultural products
- 3) To introduce students to the major issues in the video games studies
- 4) To encourage students to engage in the debates surrounding the proliferation and consumption of video games

## Course Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) analyse and communicate effectively the central issues in the field of video games studies
- 2) delineate the historical background and recent development of the video games industry
- 3) explain the commercial as well as cultural dimensions of video games
- 4) reflect critically on the various social issues concerning video games

## Course Teaching and Learning Activities:

- 1) Lectures
- 2) Class discussions
- 3) Seminars
- 4) Critical readings

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<sup>1</sup> The original course syllabus was co-developed by Wendy W. Wei and Karin L. F. Chau.

<sup>2</sup> The course outline has been revised due to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus. Special arrangements have been made to cope with the unexpected situation. The course outline should be read together with the 'course arrangement and assessment guidelines' document.

### Course Assessment Methods:

Further details of the assessment can be found in the separate 'course arrangement and assessment guidelines' document

Assessment Method	Description	Weight
Class Participation	You are expected to attend lectures and seminars regularly and participate actively in class discussions.	20%
Individual Presentation	You will be asked to conduct and record a video presentation. In the presentation, you are expected to deliver a review of a game. The length of the video should not exceed 6 minutes. The deadline of submission (on Moodle): <b>5:00pm, 17 April 2020 (Friday)</b> .	40%
Essay	You will be asked to write a final essay of no more than 3000 words to reflect on the development of video games. In the essay, you have to answer the two questions:  1) What makes a successful video game today? 2) Can gaming make a better world?  The deadline of submission (on Moodle): <b>5:00pm, 22 May 2020 (Friday)</b> .	40%

### Essential Reading:

Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon, Jonas Heide Smith and Susana Pajares Tosca. 2016. *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*. Third Edition. New York; London: Routledge.

## Course Schedule (\*\*Subjected to Change)

<b>Week 01</b>	<b>January 21</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>Week 02</b>	<b>January 28</b>	<b>Lunar New Year</b>
No class		
<b>Week 03</b>	<b>February 4</b>	<b>Studying Video Games</b>
<p><i>Required Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "What is a Game?", pp. 31-52 only.</li> <li>Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "Studying Video Games", pp. 7-14.</li> </ul> <p><i>Recommended Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gee, James Paul. 2006. "Why Game Studies Now? Video Games: A New Art Form". <i>Games and Culture</i> 1(1), 58-60.</li> <li>Huizinga, Johan. 1949. "Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Phenomenon," <i>Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-element in Culture</i>, pp. 1-25. London: Routledge &amp; Kegan Paul.</li> <li>Caillois, Roger. 2001. "The Definition of Play," <i>Man, Play and Games</i>, pp. 3-10. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.</li> <li>Boellstorff, Tom. 2006. "A Ludicrous Discipline? Ethnography and Game Studies". <i>Games and Cultures</i> 1(1), 29-35.</li> <li>Shaw, Adrienne. 2010. "What Is Video Game Culture? Cultural Studies and Game Studies". <i>Games and Culture</i> 5(4), 403-424.</li> </ul>		
<b>Week 04</b>	<b>February 11</b>	<b>History and Genre of Video Games</b>
<p><i>Required Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "What is a Game?", pp. 52-59 only.</li> <li>Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "History".</li> </ul> <p><i>Recommended Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apperley, Thomas H. 2006. "Genre and game studies: Toward a critical approach to video game genres." <i>Simulation &amp; Gaming</i> 37(1), 6-23.</li> <li>Clarke, Rachel Ivy et al. 2017. "Why Video Game Genres Fail: A Classificatory Analysis." <i>Games and Culture</i> 12(5), 445-465.</li> </ul>		
<b>Week 05</b>	<b>February 18</b>	<b>Class Suspension</b>
No Class		
<b>Week 06</b>	<b>February 25</b>	<b>Class Suspension</b>
No Class		
<b>Week 07</b>	<b>March 3</b>	<b>Aesthetics and Narratives of Video Games</b>
<p><i>Required Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "Video Game Aesthetics".</li> <li>Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "Narrative".</li> </ul> <p><i>Recommended Reading</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jensen, Lucas John et al. 2016. "Toward Broader Definitions of "Video Games": Shifts in Narrative, Player Goals, Subject Matter, and Digital Play Environments" in <i>Examining the Evolution of Gaming and Its Impact on Social, Cultural, and Political</i></li> </ul>		

*Perspectives*, edited by Keri Duncan Valentine and Lucas John Jensen, pp.1-37. Hershey: IGI Global.

- Atkins, Barry. 2006. "What Are We Really Looking at? The Future-Orientation of Video Game Play." *Games and Culture* 1(2), 127-140.

<b>Week 08</b>	<b>March 10</b>	<b>Seminar I</b>
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Subclass A: 1:30pm – 2:20pm

Subclass B: 2:30pm – 3:20pm

<b>Week 09</b>	<b>March 17</b>	<b>Video Game Industry</b>
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*Required Reading*

- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "The Game Industry"

*Recommended Reading*

- Johns, Jennifer. "Video Games Production Networks: Value Capture, Power Relations and Embeddedness". *Journal of Economic Geography* 6(2), 151-180.
- Feijoo, Claudio. 2012. "An Exploration of the Mobile Gaming Ecosystem from Developers' Perspective. *The Video Game Industry: Formation, Present State, and Future*, edited by Peter Zackariasson and Timothy L. Wilson, pp.77-95. New York; London: Routledge.
- Marchand, Andre and Hennig-Thurau Thorsten. 2013. "Value Creation in the Video Game Industry: Industry Economics, Consumer Benefits, and Research Opportunities". *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 27, 141-157.
- Sandqvist, Ulf. 2015. "The Games They are a Changin': New Business Models and Transformation Within the Video Game Industry". *Humanities and Social Sciences Latvia* 23(2), 4-20.
- Crogan, Patrick. 2018. "Indie Dreams: Video Games, Creative Economy, and the Hyperindustrial Epoch." *Games and Culture*, 1-19

<b>Week 10</b>	<b>March 24</b>	<b>Glocalising and Regulating Video Games</b>
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*Required Reading*

- O'Hagan, Minako. 2009 "Putting Pleasure First: Localizing Japanese Video Games" *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction* 22(1), 1471-65.
- Ng, Benjamin Wai-ming. 2006. "Street Fighter and the King of Fighters in Hong Kong: A Study of Cultural Consumption and Localization of Japanese Games in an Asian Context. *Game Studies* 6(1).
- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "Video Games and Risks"

*Recommended Reading*

- Consalvo, Mia. 2006. "Console Video Games and Global Corporations: Creating a Hybrid Culture" *New Media & Society* 8(1), 117-137.
- Thayer, Alexander and Beth E. Kolko. 2004. "Localization of digital games: The process of blending for the global games market". *Technical Communication* 51(4), 477-488.
- Carlson, Rebecca and Jonathan Corliss. 2011. "Imagined Commodities: Video Game Localization and Mythologies of Cultural Difference" *Games and Culture* 6(1), 61-82.
- Bernal-Merino, Miguel A. "The Industrial Process of Game Localisation," *Translation and Localisation in Video Games: Making Entertainment Software Global*, pp. 155-222. New York; London: Routledge.
- O'Holleran, Jeffrey. 2010. "Blood Code: The History and Future of Video Game Censorship" *Journal on Telecommunications and High Technology Law* 8, 571-613

- Felini, Damiano. 2015. "Beyond Today's Video Game Rating Systems" *Games and Culture* 10(1), 106-122.
- Zhang, Xiaochun. 2012. "Censorship and Digital Games Localisation in China" *Meta* 57(2), 338-350.
- Ernkvist, Mirko and Patrik Strom. 2008. "Enmeshed in Games with the Government: Governmental Policies and the Development of the Chinese Online Game Industry" *Games and Culture* 3(1), 98-126.

<b>Week 11</b>	<b>March 31</b>	<b>eSport</b>
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*Required Reading*

- Seo, Yuri and Jung, Sang-Uk. 2016. "Beyond solitary play in computer games: The social practices of eSports" *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 16(3), 635-655.

*Recommended Reading*

- Jin, Dal Yong. 2010. "Professional Online Game Players as New Media Workers," in *Korea's Online Gaming Empire*, pp. 81-100. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Hamari, Juho and Max Sjoblom. 2017. "What is eSports and why do people watch it?" *Internet Research*, 27(2), 211-232.
- Hollist, Katherine E. 2015. "Time to be Grown-ups about Video Gaming: The Rising eSports Industry and the Need for Regulation." *Arizona Law Review* 57, 823-847.

<b>Week 12</b>	<b>April 7</b>	<b>Seminar II</b>
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Subclass A: 1:30pm – 2:20pm

Subclass B: 2:30pm – 3:20pm

<b>Week 13</b>	<b>April 14</b>	<b>Gamers, Identities and Communities</b>
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*Required Reading*

- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "Video Games in Culture", pp.168-198 only.

*Recommended Reading*

- Daniel, Muriel and Garry Crawford. 2018. "Video Games and Agency in Contemporary Society". *Games and Culture*
- Zimmerman, Joshua J. 2019. "Computer Game Fan Communities, Community Management, and Structures of Membership." *Games and Culture*, 14(7-8), 896-916.
- Kafai, Yasmin et al. 2010. "Your Second Selves Player-Designed Avatars". *Games and Culture*, 5(1), 23-42.
- Shaw, Adrienne. 2011. "Do you identify as a gamer? Gender, race, sexuality, and gamer identity", *new media & society*, 14(1), 28-44.

<b>Week 14</b>	<b>April 21</b>	<b>Gendered Gaming</b>
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*Required Reading*

- Mikula, Maja. 2003. "Gender and Videogames: The political valency of Lara Croft". *Continuum* 17(1), 79-87.

*Recommended Reading*

- Heeter, Carrie. 2014. "Femininity," in *The Routledge companion to video game studies*, edited by Mark J. P Wolf and Bernard Perron, pp. 373-379. New York: Routledge
- Newman, Michael Z. and John Vanderhoef. 2014. "Masculinity," in *The Routledge companion to video game studies*, edited by Mark J. P Wolf and Bernard Perron, pp. 380-387. New York: Routledge.

- Wirman, Hanna. 2014. "Gender and Identity in Game-Modifying Communities". *Simulation & Gaming*, 45(1), 70-92.
- Taylor, T. L. 2006. "Where the Women Are," in *Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture*, pp. 93-124. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press

<b>Week 15</b>	<b>April 28</b>	<b>Seminar III</b>
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Subclass A: 1:30pm – 2:20pm  
 Subclass B: 2:30pm – 3:20pm

<b>Week 16</b>	<b>May 5</b>	<b>Serious Games and Gamification</b>
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*Required Reading*

- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon et al. 2016. "Serious Games – When Entertainment is Not Enough".
- Deterding, Sebastian et al. 2011. "From Game Design Elements to Gamefulness: Defining "Gamification", Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments, September, pp. 9-15.

*Recommended Reading*

- Šisler, Vit. 2008. "Digital Arabs: Representation in video games", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11(2), 203-220.
- Neys, Joyce and Jeroen Jansz. 2010. "Political Internet games: Engaging an audience," *European Journal of Communication*, 25(3), 227–241.
- Bogost, Ian. 2006. "Playing Politics: Videogames for Politics, Activism, and Advocacy", *First Monday* (7).
- Breuer, Johannes and Gary Bente. 2010. "Why so serious? On the relation of serious games and learning." *Journal for Computer Game Culture*, 4(1), 7-24.
- Escribano, Flavio. 2012. "Gamification as the Post-Modern Phalanstère: Is the Gamification Playing with Us or Are We Playing with Gamification?," in *The video game industry formation, present state, and future*, edited by Peter Zackariasson and Timothy L Wilson, pp. 198-220. New York: Routledge
- Yee, Nick. 2006. "The Labour of Fun: How Video Games Blur the Boundaries of Work and Play." *Games and Culture* 1(1), 68-71.
- Bogost, Ian. 2014. "Why Gamification is Bullshit," in *The gameful world: approaches, issues, applications*, edited by Steffen P. Walz and Sebastian Deterding, pp. 65-79. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press

<b>Week 17</b>	<b>May 12</b>	<b>Seminar IV</b>
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Subclass A: 1:30pm – 2:20pm  
 Subclass B: 2:30pm – 3:20pm