Games: Design, Strategy, Philosophy, and Society

Syllabus (Tentative – schedule subject to change!)

Opening days: Game identity / Personal significance / Gaming ritual

Reading: Leigh Alexander Life Hacks: A Netrunner Story, Brendan Caldwell Brendan’s Correct Way to Scratch, Dave Hickey The Heresy of Zone Defense

Writing: Game with personal significance

Playing: Selected from Bring Your Own Book, Say Anything, Telestrations, But Wait There’s More, Time’s Up: Title Recall, Reverse Charades, Spyfall

Week 1: Game design / Systems thinking

Reading: Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, Rules of Play Commissioned essay and games from Reiner Knizia, Richard Garfield, Frank Lantz, Kira Snyder, and James Ernest

Writing: Complex game player aid

Playing: Selected from Sibling Rivalry, Ironclad, Sneak, Caribbean Star

Week 2: Game design / Systems thinking, continued

Reading: Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, Rules of Play Chapters 14, 17, 20, 23

Writing: Complex game review

Playing: Selected from Concordia, Snowdonia, Village, Louis XIV, Rococo, London, Hansa Teutonica, Race for the Galaxy, Ghost Stories, Bruges, Castles of Burgundy

Week 3: Game philosophy

Reading: Bernard Suits Grasshopper Chapters 1–3, Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman Rules of Play Chapter 7

Writing: Game design prototype, first iteration

Playing: Student designed games

Week 4: Gaming community

Reading: Bernard DeKoven The Well-Played Game Chapters 1–4, 6, 7

Writing: Prototype feedback

Playing: Selected from Zap Zorch Boing Perfigliano, Thar’s a Bar, Lemonade, Dho Dho Dho, Catch the Dragon’s Tail, Smaug’s Jewels, Go-Tag, Red Handed, Hagoo

Week 5: Storytelling / Narrative / Performance

Reading: Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman Rules of Play Chapter 26, Sarah Lynne Bowman Connecting Role Playing, Stage Acting and Improvisation

Writing: David Schirduan’s 200 word role-playing game design challenge

Playing: Selected from Kaleidoscope, The Quiet Year, Ribbon Drive, Fiasco, Fall of Magic
Week 6: Game strategy / Probability
Writing: Backgammon strategy tips
Playing: Backgammon

Week 7: Gaming societies / Subcultures
Reading: A. Alvarez *The Biggest Game in Town* Chapters 2–5, 10–11
Writing: Game design prototype, second iteration
Playing: Selected from Poker, League of Legends, Ingress, Minecraft

Week 8: Gaming privilege
Reading: Anita Sarkeesian *Tropes vs. Women* videos, Liz Losh *GamerGate 101*, Ian Shanahan *Bow, N*****
Writing: Prototype feedback
Playing: Student designed games

Week 9: Games for good / Serious games
Reading: Jane McGonigal, *Reality is Broken* Introduction, Chapters 7, 9, 10
Writing: Games in society
Playing: Selected from Bounce, Chore Wars, Cruel 2 B Kind, Fold It, Radix Endeavor

Week 10: Games for good / Serious games, continued
Reading: Jane McGonigal, *Reality is Broken* Chapters 11, 14, Brenda Romero *Gaming for Understanding* video
Writing: Student game final product
Playing: Never Alone

Week 11: Student games showcase

Extra topics, as time permits: Social interaction / Psychology; Game-based learning / Gamification; Games as art / Gaming criticism; Algorithms / Computers that game