

## Communication 3513: Video Games & the Individual Spring 2013

**Instructor:** Jesse Fox, Ph.D.

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**Email:** fox.775@osu.edu [Please put “Comm 3513” in the subject line.]

**Class Information:** MWF 11:30-12:25, Journalism 216

### Course Objectives:

1. To present the history and content of video games.
2. To provide an overview of the effects of video game play on the individual.
3. To apply communication concepts and theories to video games.
4. For students to get hands-on experience designing a gaming interface.
5. For students to develop the critical skills to analyze and interpret video games and video game research.
6. To improve students’ research and writing skills.

### Required texts:

\*Egenfeldt-Nelson, S., Smith, J. H., & Tosca, S. P. (2012). *Understanding video games: The essential introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.

\*A video game of your choosing.

\*Additional readings will be made available on Carmen. This content is not covered in your text. Some readings are magazine articles to spark discussion. All are required.

**Additional Resources:** During the course of this class and throughout your university career, you may find the following helpful:

\*The Writing Center. This may be the last time in your life that you have easily accessible, free help available for your writing skills—use it. Being a good writer will give you an advantage in every walk of life, and if you are a Communication major, it is expected. Visit <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter> to learn more or to schedule an appointment.

\*Strunk & White’s *The Elements of Style*. If you are uncertain of what constitutes good writing, this classic book is very straightforward and extremely helpful. The advice and direction offered in this book applies to writing in all fields. Find it at the campus bookstore or at a used bookstore for cheap.

\**The American Psychological Association (APA) Style Manual*. For those of you pursuing a degree in social science, this book is what will dictate many of the expectations for your research writing. It includes guidelines on citations, formatting, tone, etc. APA style will be required for assignments submitted in this class.

**Grading:** The course will consist of 400 total points:

*Midterm exam:* 100 points

*Game diary assignments:* 125 points

*Other assignments & in-class participation:* 75 points

*Final exam:* 100 points

There will be two exams consisting of multiple choice questions and short answer written responses. Written assignments will be elaborated on the dates outlined in the syllabus. In-class work includes meaningful participation in evaluations, discussions, exercises, handouts, and/or quizzes. Your final grade will depend on the total number of points earned and will be reported in accordance with the plus/minus system that is standard for the College of Arts & Sciences.

\*Additionally, please note that your final grade is final. Do not ask me to reconsider your grade when the quarter is over; applying subjective standards after the fact invalidates the standards applied to the class and is unfair to every student.

**Attendance & Make-up Policy:** Only students enrolled in this section are permitted to attend class. Attendance (both physical and mental) is key to your success in this class. Your grade is largely contingent on your continued presence in class. Listen, take notes, and ask questions. Much of the material presented in lecture is not found in your readings. If you miss class for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate; the instructor will not provide notes in any circumstance. If you miss class, you will not be able to make up any in-class work or extra credit opportunities.

\*The exams **MUST** be taken at the scheduled time. The dates are clearly identified on the schedule below; if you foresee a conflict with the exam time, you will need to reschedule your conflict or reconsider your enrollment in this class. Make-up exams will not be given except in cases of extreme, unforeseen, and convincingly documented emergencies (notification within 24 hours of the exam time is required) or official University related absences (instructor must be notified at least two weeks in advance). Your instructor reserves the right to determine what qualifies as extreme and what documentation is required. Unacceptable excuses include, but are not limited to: being out of town, having a note from the health center (flu excepted), oversleeping, having to work, not being able to find a parking space, car trouble, and flight delays or cancellations.

\*Homework assignments should be turned in as hard copies at the beginning of class the day they are due or beforehand. *Be aware that if you show up to late to class on the due date and assignments have already been collected by the instructor, your assignment will be considered late.* You may only use email as insurance if you are afraid you will be late to class on the due date—that is, you can send me a time-stamped copy beforehand, and show up to class with the hard copy. If you do not submit a hard copy, however, your assignment will not be graded.

**Academic Integrity:** I take academic dishonesty very seriously. All students are subject to the student code of conduct (see [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)), including the student code of academic integrity. Violations of the code will result in severe penalties in this course and all violations will be reported to the School of Communication and the Committee on Academic Misconduct. For this course, *academic dishonesty* includes (but is not limited to):

- Use of someone else's ideas or expression (e.g., writing) without proper acknowledgment of the source. Proper acknowledgment (e.g., citation, quotation, footnote) should make clear both the **extent** and **nature** of the use. If you have used someone's exact words, you should use "quotation marks" as well as a (citation). If a large portion of your writing

uses another person's ideas, argument structure, or narrative form then you should make clear where the "borrowing" begins and ends. Note that *paraphrasing* someone, summarizing their *arguments*, or using their *ideas* are all plagiarism if the source is not acknowledged. Plagiarism is more than just using someone else's exact words. Also, be aware that "someone else's ideas" here includes text books, articles, web pages, your professor's notes, your roommate's assignment from another class, and *anything else other than your own ideas and your own writing*. There is no outside source that it is OK to use without citing.

- Collaborating with other students on any assignment, homework, class project, etc., without the clear consent of the instructor is also academic dishonesty. If work is not assigned as a group project, you must do it entirely on your own. **Check with your instructor if in doubt.**
- In most instances, taking your own work from one course and submitting it in a different course is also considered academic dishonesty. It is simply not appropriate to claim that work was done for one class when in fact it was written for a different class. **Check with your instructor if in doubt.**
- Exchanging information with another individual during a test, quiz, or examination is clearly academic dishonesty, as is the use of any materials not permitted for the exam.

It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules of academic dishonesty—ignorance is not a defense. ***When in doubt, consult your instructor before doing anything about which you are uncertain.*** You should also read through the "Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity" available at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/ten-suggestions.html>. **In this class, the penalty for academic dishonesty consists of a failing grade for the class; a report to the School of Communication and the Committee on Academic Misconduct; and other potential consequences, including expulsion from the University.**

**Disruptions:** Disruptions and distractions (including talking during lecture; text messaging or other phone use; nonclass computer activity; or reading nonclass materials), threatening behavior, and negative participation (e.g., use of inappropriate language or derogatory speech) will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in such behavior may be asked to leave class, suffer grade penalties, and be reported to the Department Head, the Dean of Students, and/or University Police. Cell phones are considered a disruption. **Turn your cell phone off completely before the start of class. Not just the ringer—completely off.** Any student who is observed consulting or using their phone or whose cell phone rings, beeps, or audibly vibrates during class will suffer grade penalties (1% of the overall class grade for each offense) and may be asked to leave class.

**Computer Policy:** Computers will be used for in-class activities only. If you require a computer for notetaking due to a disability, please see the disability portion below and make an appointment with me to discuss arrangements.

**If you object to these policies or do not feel that you can adhere to them, please do not enroll in this class.**

**Web/Email Policy:** For this course, you are required to have online access regularly (i.e., at least 2-3 times a week). As far as emailing, email should be used for quick administrative questions and emergency contact **only**. Additionally, emails should be written using standards of courtesy (address, proper tone, and signature) or they will be returned to you. If you have questions or concerns (e.g., about an assignment or material covered in class, regarding your grade) make an appointment or drop by my office hours. Updates or changes to the course schedule or readings will be announced in class and also on the course website; it is your responsibility to stay apprised of these changes.

**Inclement Weather:** Unless the University is closed, you should assume class will be held. However, I know winter weather in Columbus can be beastly, and there is a possibility that I may not be able to make it to campus as a result of some unforeseen weather-related circumstance. If I do not show up 30 minutes after the start of class, consider the class canceled. If the weather is bad, please check your email or contact a classmate with access; if conditions prevent me from making it to campus on time I will do my best to inform everyone via Carmen.

**Disability Accommodations:** If you anticipate the need for accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, please contact the Office for Disability Services, Pomerene Hall, Room 150, or phone (614) 292-3307. Students with documented disabilities can meet with me privately within the first three weeks of class to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

**My Expectations:** This is a Communication class, so I expect that as a student in this field, you have mastery of communication-related skills including but not limited to: the ability to express and argue an idea using proper language and logic; the willingness to speak publicly and civilly in class; the aptitude to write a formal and appropriate email; the capability to conduct yourself in a civil and professional manner when interacting interpersonally with classmates, teaching assistants, administrators, guests, and your professor; and the proficiency for clear and grammatical written work. In addition, I expect you to have developed the time management and study skills to ensure your success in this class.

## Grading Criteria

**A:** All work is outstanding. Work is rich, creatively presented, well-structured, and error-free (or close to it). Content of presentations is accurate, on topic, presented in a professional and highly engaging fashion, and provides genuine enlightenment to the audience. Work reveals a deep understanding of the content of the course as well as the ability to work with concepts beyond the level of simply regurgitating facts and definitions. Overall, work demonstrates a solid grasp of all content and a high level of ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**B:** All work is of high quality. Work is clear, well-structured, and largely error-free. (Grades of A and B are not possible for work that does not demonstrate mastery of basic writing skills including spelling, grammar, organization, and logic.) Work conforms to all required elements, as well as maintaining the audience's attention and interest. Content demonstrates a thorough understanding of all elements of the course. Overall, work demonstrates a solid grasp of all content, and some ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**C:** All work is of acceptable, average quality. Work is on topic, responds to the requirements of the assignment, and is not rife with errors. A grade of C is not possible for work that demonstrates significant departure from basic writing skills (spelling, grammar, etc.) Work addresses the requirements of the assignment and includes some elements of good style and structure. Content demonstrates a basic understanding of most elements of the course. Overall, work demonstrates a reasonable grasp of all content, but limited ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**D:** Some work is of unacceptable quality. Work addresses the topic in a broad sense, but misses some key points or contains an unacceptable level of errors. Work addresses the assignment at a basic level, but lacks fundamental elements of professional presentation, structure, or organization. Content reveals some key areas of the course material in which knowledge is lacking. Overall, work demonstrates a weak grasp of content and little ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**E:** A majority of the work is of unacceptable quality. Work fails to meet the basic requirements of the assignment, lacks basic elements of professional presentation, or is otherwise unresponsive to instructions. Errors are probably frequent. Content reveals a widespread lack of knowledge. Overall, work demonstrates little grasp of the material.

*These guidelines were adapted from materials provided by the University of Arizona Department of Communication.*

*This syllabus is an agreement between the instructor and the student. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. By staying enrolled in this class, the student agrees to abide by the policies described herein.*

## Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
M 1.7		Introduction	
W 1.9		Defining games	ch. 3
F 1.11		Game genres	ch. 3
M 1.14	*	Game genres/history	ch. 4
W 1.16		History	ch. 4
F 1.18	[Ongoing asst.]	Game development	
M 1.21	<b>NO SCHOOL—MLK Jr. Day</b> Be thankful for equality we have, and mindful of equality we don't have yet		
W 1.23	[Paper Assts.]	Game development	
F 1.25		Research & writing workshop	
M 1.28		Theories	ch. 1, ch. 9
W 1.30		Theories	Konijn
F 2.1		Theories	
M 2.4		Methods	Weber, Ritterfield, & Kostygina
W 2.6		Methods	
F 2.8	Asst. 1 due	Effects	Lee & Peng
M 2.11		Effects	Lee & Peng
W 2.13	* [Asst. 2]	Effects & content	
F 2.15		Content	Bogost, ch. 7 & 9
M 2.18		Content	Smith
W 2.20		Exam review	
F 2.22	<b>MIDTERM</b>		
M 2.25		Design	ch. 5; Bartle ch. 4
W 2.27		Design	Bogost ch. 1; Bartle ch. 3
F 3.1		Design	Bogost ch. 1; Bartle ch. 3
M 3.4		Design/Kodu intro	
W 3.6	Asst. 2 due	Kodu	
F 3.8		Kodu	
M 3.11	<b>SPRING BREAK (NO SCHOOL)</b>		
W 3.13			
F 3.15			
M 3.18	*	Kodu	

W 3.20		Kodu	
F 3.22		Kodu	
M 3.25	[Asst. 3]	Narrative	Cow Clicker; Lee, Park, & Jin
W 3.27		Narrative	Cow Clicker; Lee, Park, & Jin
F 3.29	Kodu due	Paper workshop	
M 4.1		MMOs/online games	Chan & Vorderer; Yee
W 4.3		MMOs/online games	Chan & Vorderer; Yee
F 4.5		VG industry	ch. 2
M 4.8		VG industry	ch. 2
W 4.10		Applications	ch. 8; Gee; Reeves et al.
F 4.12		Applications	ch. 8; Gee; Reeves et al.
M 4.15		Applications/users	ch. 8; Gee; Reeves et al.
W 4.17		Users & gamer culture	ch. 6; Chain World
F 4.19	Asst. 3 due	Flex day/catch up	
M 4.22	*	Exam review	

**FINAL EXAM: Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 12-1:45 pm**