

City University of Hong Kong

**Information on a Course
offered by School of Creative Media
with effect from Semester A in 2015 / 2016**

Part I

Course Title: Computer Games and Society

Course Code: SM6332

Course Duration: One semester (13 weeks)

No. of Credit Units: 3 units

Level: P6

Medium of Instruction: English

Prerequisites: (Course Code and Title) Nil

Precursors: (Course Code and Title) Nil

Equivalent Courses: (Course Code and Title) Nil

Exclusive Courses: (Course Code and Title) Nil

Part II

1. Course Aims:

This course aims at examining players' and developers' participation in game-related social activities that take place outside the formal play space. Computers games are interactive platforms requiring participants (players) who make game worlds come to life. Unlike a medium like television, a game does not requires some player input in order to unfold its structure and its content. This puts players in a unique position—as productive, learning, and collaborative users—which lends equity and opportunities to those who would take the time to improve these gaming environments.

Examples of activities examined in this course include modding, writing, moderating, organizing, practicing, competing, and socializing. The metagame, or gaming activities beyond the formal playspace, is not simply a sandbox for players. Game developers are also growing accustomed to consider the play communities—providing tools to and working with talented players—when they design their games. Especially with the popularization of new media, game designers cannot overlook the need to design for this expansive environments.

Students will read papers discussing relevant topics on various social and design features making up the metagame. Students will also be analyzing a specific metagame, e.g., an online forum or an electronic sport tournament, and write a report on their findings.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1.	Apply the appropriate methods and techniques for the analysis of social and societal activities involving computer games	
2.	Describe the societal impact of computer games and related phenomena	
3.*	Apply the appropriate theories and vocabularies for reflecting on issues pertaining to computer games and society	

* Negotiated Learning Outcome (NLO) explicitly articulating the elements of Discovery oriented learning.

3. Teaching and learning Activities (TLAs)

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

ILO No	TLAs	Hours/week (if applicable)
CILO 1-3	Lectures on computer games and society	
CILO 2-3	Short reflection text writing and discussion on readings	
CILO 1-3	Excercises on analysing metagame phenomena	
CILO 1-3	Presentations on their research findings	

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

ILO No	Type of assessment tasks/activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
CILO 1-3	Participation in in-class discussion		
CILO 1-3	Reflection texts		
CILO 1-3	Presentations		
CILO 1-3	Final essay		

5. Grading of Student Achievement: Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees.

100% coursework and in-class participation
 Grading pattern: Standard (A+, A, A-.....F)

Grading is based on performance in assessment tasks / activities

A. Participation and Performance

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials Interpret opinions effectively
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials Fair ability in interpreting opinions
D	1.0	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials Poor ability in interpreting opinions
F	0.0	Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials Minimal ability in interpreting opinions

Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

B. Presentation

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of ‘discovery’ lied in a student’s self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter• Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative• Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management• Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter• Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition• Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter• Fair organization, weak structure and composition• Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management
D	1.0	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter• Poor organization, structure and composition• Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management
F	0.0	Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter• No organization, structure or/and composition• Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

C. Essay and Short Paper

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, and to construct a well-organized argument and analysis. The threshold of ‘discovery’ lied in a student’s self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal experience.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates• Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative• Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis• Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize• Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools• Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions• Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand• Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently• Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts• Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand• Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions• Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic
D	1.0	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts• Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources• Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions• Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography
F	0.0	Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor grasp of materials• No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources• Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions• Irrelevant bibliography

Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

Part III

Keyword Syllabus:

Game cultures, society, online gaming, MMOs, participatory cultures, networks, real life, everyday life, cultural studies, ethnography

Recommended Reading:

Benkler, Y. (2007). *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Burk, D. (2009). Copyright and Paratext in On-Line Gaming. In C. Wankel, & S. Malleck, *Emerging Ethical Issues of Life in Virtual worlds*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Humphreys, S. (2008). Ruling the Virtual World: Governance in Massively Multiplayer Online Games. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11 (2).

Ito, Mizuko, Kris Gutiérrez, Sonia Livingstone, Bill Penuel, Jean Rhodes, Katie Salen, Juliet Schor, Julian Sefton-Green, and S. Craig Watkins. (2013). *Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design*. Irvine, CA: Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Media Consumers in the Digital Age*. New York: NYU Press.

Jin, Dal Yong. (2010). *Korea's Online Gaming Empire*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Kow, Yong Ming, and Nardi, Bonnie. (2010). User Creativity, Governance, and the New Media. A special issue. Selected papers. *First Monday*, 15, 5.
<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2954/2523>

Nardi, B., & Harris, J. (2006). Strangers and friends: Collaborative play in World of Warcraft. *Proceedings Conference on Computer-supported Cooperative Work* (pp. 149-158). New York: ACM Press.

Nardi, B., & Kow, Y. M. (2010). Digital imaginaries: How we know what we (think we) know about Chinese gold farming. *First Monday*, 15 (6).
<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3035/2566>

Nardi, B., & Kallinikos, J. (2007). Opening the Black Box of Digital Technologies: Mods in World of Warcraft. *23rd EGOS Colloquium*. Barcelona, Spain.

Nardi, Bonnie. 2010. *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*. University of Michigan Press.

Postigo, H. (2008b). Of Mods and Modders: Chasing Down the Value of Fan-Based Digital Game Modifications. *Games and Culture*, 2 (4).

Salen, Katie and Eric Zimmerman. (2004). *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Sotamaa, Olli (2003). *Computer Game Modding, Intermediality and Participatory Culture*. Retrieved January 13, 2010, from http://old.imv.au.dk/eng/academic/pdf_files/Sotamaa.pdf

Taylor, T.L. (2006). *Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture*. Cambridge: MI.T. Press.

Terranova, T. (2000). Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy. *Social Text*, 18 (2).

Boellstorff, Tom, et.al. (ed.) (2012). *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wirman, H. (2009). On Productivity and Game Fandom. *Transformative Works & Cultures*, Vol. 3.