

SM5339: ART AND ACTIVIST GAMES WORKSHOP

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Art and Activist Games Workshop

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5339

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This workshop-based course explores video games as a site for art practice and social critique. Through the analysis of existing artefacts and the design and implementation of games the course aims to situate video games within contemporary art and explore their potential as a space for intervention in political, social, and cultural dynamics. Rather than focusing exclusively on technical issues, the course examines the symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of the genre as a means for cultural production.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe the essential features of games	x	x	
2	Distinguish art games from other games	x	x	
3	Describe the role that art games play in contemporary culture	x	x	
4	Use concepts of art and game theory to describe and evaluate the salient aspects of an art game	x	x	
5	Use concepts of art, and game theory, and game design to design and develop their own art game		x	x
6	Use concepts of art, game design, and software engineering to implement a working prototype of their game		x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Explain key concepts, such as 'playability'	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Critiques	Evaluate/critique aspects of classmates' art/activist games in progress	4, 5, 6
3	Presentations	Explicate the salient aspects of 'successful' art/activist games by top practitioners	4, 5, 6
4	Projects	Create a game artefact, engaging in all steps, from design, to implementation, to user testing.	5, 6

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	15	-	Yes
2	Assignments	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	30	-	Yes
3	Presentations	4, 5, 6	20	-	Yes
4	Final project	5, 6	35	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Participation and Performance (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

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.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - 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

Good

(B+, B, B-) - 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

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - 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

Marginal

(D) - 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

Failure

(F) - 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
-

Assessment Task

Assignments (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, build up 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 daily experience.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - 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

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - 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

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - 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

Marginal

- (D) - 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

Failure

- (F) - 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
-

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

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.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - 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

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material 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

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - 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

Marginal

(D) - 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

Failure

(F) - 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

Assessment Task

Final Project (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature

- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production
- Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter-disciplinary project
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Marginal

- (D) - Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Failure

- (F) - No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
 - Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
 - Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available
-

Assessment Task

Participation and Performance (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - 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

Good

- (B+, B) - 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

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - Attentive 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

Failure

- (F) - 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
-

Assessment Task

Assignments (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, build up 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 daily experience.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - 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

Good

- (B+, B) - 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

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - 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

Failure

- (F) - 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 or missing bibliography

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - 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.

Good

- (B+, B) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material 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.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - 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.

Failure

(F) - 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.
-

Assessment Task

Final Project (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature

- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Work raises questions and instil insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production
- Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter-disciplinary project
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment

Good

(B+, B) - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Failure

(F) - No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium

- Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
 - Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available
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Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Games, Game design, Game theory, Art, Activism, Culture, Programming

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Ruth Catlow, Marc Garrett and Corrado Morgana. (2010). Artists re: thinking games. Liverpool University Press.
2	Ian Bogost . (2010). Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames. MIT Press.
3	Ian Bogost ,Simon Ferrari, Bobby Schweizer. (2010).Newsgames: Journalism at Play. MIT Press.
4	Noah Wardrip-Fruin,Pat Harrigan ,Michael Crumpton. (2006). First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game. MIT Press.
5	Jesse Schell. (2008). The Art of Game Design: A book of lenses. CRC Press.
6	Mary Flanagan. (2013). Critical Play: Radical Game Design. MIT Press.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Nil