

SM6332: COMPUTER GAMES AND SOCIETY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Computer Games and Society

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

6332

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 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 require 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.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Apply the appropriate methods and techniques for the analysis of social and societal activities involving computer games		x	x	x
2	Describe the societal impact of computer games and related phenomena		x	x	x
3	Apply the appropriate theories and vocabularies for reflecting on issues pertaining to computer games and society		x	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	Lectures on computer games and society	1, 2, 3	
2	Reflection writing	Short reflection text writing and discussion on readings	2, 3	
3	Exercises	Exercises on analysing metagame phenomena	1, 2, 3	
4	Presentations	Presentations on their research findings	1, 2, 3	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Participation in in-class discussion	1, 2, 3	10	-	No
2	Reflection texts	1, 2, 3	45	-	No
3	Final essay	1, 2, 3	45	-	No

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

Short Paper AND Final Essay (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, 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.

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

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)

- 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

Short Paper AND Final Essay (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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.

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)

- 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

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

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

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Benkler, Y. (2007). <i>The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom</i> . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
2	Burk, D. (2009). Copyright and Paratext in On-Line Gaming. In C. Wankel, & S. Malleck, <i>Emerging Ethical Issues of Life in Virtual worlds</i> . Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
3	Humphreys, S. (2008). Ruling the Virtual World: Governance in Massively Multiplayer Online Games. <i>European Journal of Cultural Studies</i> 11 (2).
4	Ito, Mizuko, Kris Gutiérrez, Sonia Livingstone, Bill Penuel, Jean Rhodes, Katie Salen, Juliet Schor, Julian Sefton-Green, and S. Craig Watkins. (2013). <i>Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design</i> . Irvine, CA: Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.
5	Jenkins, H. (2006). <i>Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Media Consumers in the Digital Age</i> . New York: NYU Press.
6	Jin, Dal Yong. (2010). <i>Korea's Online Gaming Empire</i> . Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
7	Kow, Yong Ming, and Nardi, Bonnie. (2010). User Creativity, Governance, and the New Media. A special issue. <i>Selected papers. First Monday</i> , 15, 5. http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2954/2523
8	Nardi, B., & Harris, J. (2006). Strangers and friends: Collaborative play in World of Warcraft. <i>Proceedings Conference on Computer-supported Cooperative Work</i> (pp. 149-158). New York: ACM Press.
9	Nardi, B., & Kow, Y. M. (2010). Digital imaginaries: How we know what we (think we) know about Chinese gold farming. <i>First Monday</i> 15 (6). http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3035/2566
10	Nardi, B., & Kallinikos, J. (2007). Opening the Black Box of Digital Technologies: Mods in World of Warcraft. 23rd EGOS Colloquium. Barcelona, Spain.
11	Nardi, Bonnie. 2010. <i>My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft</i> . University of Michigan Press.

12	Postigo, H. (2008b). Of Mods and Modders: Chasing Down the Value of Fan-Based Digital Game Modifications. <i>Games and Culture</i> 2 (4).
13	Salen, Katie and Eric Zimmerman. (2004). <i>Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals</i> . Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
14	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
15	Taylor, T.L. (2006). <i>Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture</i> . Cambridge: M.I.T. Press.
16	Terranova, T. (2000). Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy. <i>Social Text</i> 18 (2).
17	Boellstorff, Tom, et.al. (ed.) (2012). <i>Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press.
18	Wirman, H. (2009). On Productivity and Game Fandom. <i>Transformative Works & Cultures</i> ,

Additional Readings

	Title
1	http://www.digra.org/dl
2	Games & Cultural Journal (Sage Publishing)
3	http://www.gamestudies.org