

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by School of Creative Media
with effect from Semester A 2018 /19**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: Game and Play Studies

Course Code: SM2259

Course Duration: One semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: B2

Proposed Area: Arts and Humanities
(for GE courses only) Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations
 Science and Technology

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Precursors: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Equivalent Courses: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Exclusive Courses: Nil
(Course Code and Title)

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

The theory of play is a new and rapidly expanding field of academic research, which is closely connected to the rapid development of computer games as a cutting-edge art form. This course is an introduction to the basic theoretical questions concerning the nature of games and play. Rather than focusing exclusively on digital games, a broad spectrum of play activities will be discussed.

Students will reflect on fundamental concepts like “play” and “games”. Designing with constraints (rules or limitations) is a fruitful approach, not only to the design of games but also in cinema, literature, and other forms. Class discussions and exercises will encourage reflection on the nature, typology, and function of game rules. Students will analyze and modify existing games by changing their rules. The difference between play and everyday life will be considered through exercises that encourage students to design games for everyday public spaces. Social and cultural aspects of games will also be considered.

Although the nature of the course is essentially theoretical, students will be required to produce creative projects to fulfill course requirements. Students are free to choose their preferred creative medium. They can, for instance: design games or toys; create multimedia performances that play with urban space; or develop forms of play in literature, film, or interactive formats. The relationship between theory and practice will always be at the forefront. Students must demonstrate an ability to integrate critical reflection and practical creation; this is the core skill that this course aims to nurture.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs [#]	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Recognise and conceptualise (computer) games as a form of creative media		✓	✓	
2.	Describe the different types of play and to classify games according to these types.		✓	✓	✓
3.	Describe the difference between the metaphor of a game and its underlying formal rules and analyze the formal rules of games.		✓	✓	✓
4.	Recognise and conceptualise how interactive and digital artworks make use ideas, metaphors and material forms of games		✓	✓	✓
5.	Theorize about the social implications of games, the relevance of narrative to game design and the methodology of game analysis.		✓	✓	✓
6. [^]	Explore and theorize about how teaching and learning can become more playful or game-like.		✓	✓	✓
		100%			

* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

[#] Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

[^] Negotiated Learning Outcome (NLO) explicitly articulating the elements of Discovery oriented learning.

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 self-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.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)
(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
In-class presentation about their research/creation proposals	In-class presentation and critique of student projects. Students write short documents describing their research and justifying their design decisions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Gameplay analysis discussion	Play games in class and discuss the nature of gameplay in terms of the rules and challenges of the game.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Game modification exercise	Analysis of the rules of a simple board game and creation of a new game by modifying the rules of an existing game.			✓	✓			
Discussion on play and creativity	To debate in class how to design a course on creative thinking using game principles.						✓	

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)
(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Continuous Assessment: 100%								
Game modification exercise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Analyze the rules of an existing board game, comparing it with at least two other board games. Design a new game by modifying the rules of that existing game. Write a document that justifies your design choices
Research/creation proposal writing 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Write a short proposal for an artwork that uses self-generated constraints. It can be an interactive story, web site, video,

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
								installation, etc.
Research/creation proposal writing 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Write a proposal for an interactive narrative project. The project can be a game, but not necessarily so. The proposal must include a discussion of the problems involved in combining interactivity and story-telling. The proposal must explain how the work will take full advantage of the unique possibilities of digital media.
Research/creation proposal writing 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Write a proposal for a game that simulates the behavior of a real or imaginary system. It can be the weather, the army, a corporation, a neighborhood, etc.
Final project	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Expand one of the short exercises into a final project. This project can be a game, an interactive narrative, a movie, a street performance, a course with a full set of learning materials, etc.
Examination: 0% (duration: _____, if applicable)								

* The weightings should add up to 100%.

100%

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Game Modification Exercise / Final Project	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
		<p>and production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<p>equipment, etc)</p> <p>available and constructive feedback/ suggestions</p>			

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
2. Research/creation proposals	This assessment will grade on rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources – Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition – Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature – Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand – Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition – Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently – Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand – Fair organization with adequate structure and composition – Relevant points made to the subject matter in question – Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weak content, limited use of resources – Poor organization, structure and composition – Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions – Ability to respond to other comments in simple terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources – No organization, structure or/and composition – Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions – Fail to respond to other comments

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
		discussion – Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue	discussion			

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

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

1. Basic concepts: “Play”, “Game”, and “Toy”.
2. The Magic Circle: Play vs. Everyday Life.
3. The typology of play.
4. Game rules and the nature of challenge.
5. Creativity and constraint: the Oulipo group and “potential” literature.
6. Digital games: their unique characteristics.
7. The study of games: aesthetic and social issues.
8. Interactive narrative: debates about the role of story in games and interactive projects.
9. Games as simulation systems.
10. Games, learning, and cognition.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Morris, Pam (ed). <u>The Bakhtin reader : selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov</u> (London ; New York : E. Arnold, 1994.)
2.	Caillois, Roger. <u>Man, play, and games</u> (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 2001)
3.	Huizinga, Johann. <u>Homo Ludens : a study of the play-element in culture</u> (London : Routledge, 1998)
4.	Roopnarine, Jaipaul L. <u>Conceptual, social-cognitive, and contextual issues in the fields of play</u> (Westport, Conn: Ablex Pub., 2002).
5.	Salen, Katie and Zimmerman, Eric. <u>Rules of play : game design fundamentals</u> (Cambridge, Mass. ; London : MIT Press, 2004).

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Sutton-Smith, Brian. <u>The ambiguity of play</u> (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997)
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