LMC-4730 Experimental Digital Art
LMC-6318 Experimental Media

Experimental Game Design

1. Instructor Name, Contact Information and Office Hours
Instructor: Celia Pearce
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Meetings by Appointment

2. Course Prerequisites: Undergraduate: ENGL 1102/Graduate: (None)

3. Core Area/Attributes Fulfilled by this Class: (None)

4. Course Description
This section will focus on the experimental uses of video games in fine arts and activist applications, exploring how games created in such contexts interrogate traditional assumptions about video games to produce cultural, aesthetic and technical innovation. The course will look at the historical subversive, activist, experimental and avant garde uses of games. Twentieth Century practices of games as fine art and activist media will be explored, and their connection to other related practices, such as scores, performances, tactical media and public interventions, as well as art movements that explicitly included games as part of their oevre, such as Dada and Fluxus. The course will include a series of readings on the history of games in these alternative contexts, as well as a series of art-based studio assignments where students will engage practices of game-making in both analog, digital and hybrid forms. The course itself is experimental, and will include field trips, and innovative indoor and outdoor alternative play and game design exercises.

6. Learning Outcomes

Undergraduates
- Textual/Visual Analysis: Students will learn to read, analyze, and interpret not only cultural projects such as film, literature, art, and new media, but also scientific and technical documents.
- Interpretive Frameworks: Students will become familiar with a variety of social, political, and philosophical theories and be able to apply those theories to creative and scientific texts, as well as to their own cultural observations.
- Communication Skills: Students will be able to gather, organize, and express information clearly and accurately, with sensitivity to will be able to do so both by using traditional media and by tapping the potential of new digital media.
- Create Digital Artifacts: Students can create digital artifacts with an awareness of history, audience, and context.
- Teamwork: Students can work effectively in teams to accomplish a common goal.
- Evaluate Future Trends: Student can appreciate and evaluate future trends in the development of digital media.

Master's Students

Top Level
- Demonstrate knowledge, comprehension, and application of the tools and formal design elements of digital media design
- Demonstrate the ability to devise, design, create, and assess prototypical digital media artifacts, services, or environments and to contextualize them within recognized traditions of practice

Secondary Level
Application
- Demonstrate use of digital media to create prototypes
- Demonstrate good time management skills
- Demonstrate ability to set realistic goals
Analysis
- Can develop interactive media artifacts
Synthesis
- Can design and create digital artifacts that create the experience of agency for the interactor.
- Can design and create digital artifacts that segment and tag media to create meaningful organizational units
Evaluation of Works
- Can summarize their work orally and in written form using formal terminology
- Can justify the design choices in their works
- Can formulate and test design hypotheses

Additional Ph.D. Learning Objectives

Top Level
- Students have knowledge, comprehension and ability to apply historical, cultural, and theoretical concepts to the study of digital media.
- Students can formulate original interpretations and design original prototypes that reflect an understanding of the humanistic context of digital media.

Secondary Level
Knowledge
- Identify the historical and cultural roots of digital media
Application
- Apply theoretical concepts to specific digital media works

7. Required Texts

Books
Baas, Jacquelynn. (Ed.). (2011) *Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. The article "Fluxus: A Laboratory of Ideas" can be found here: http://www.academia.edu/2508994/Fluxus_A_Laboratory_of_Ideas

Carr, C. On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century. (1993/2008). Weslyan University Press. (Note: Entire book can be found on Google Books: http://tinyurl.com/Carr-On-Edge)

Kaprow, Allan

Leah Dickerman, Brigid Doherty (Eds.) (2005). *Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hanover, Cologne, New York, Paris.* Washington DC: National Gallery of Art.

Ono, Yoko. (1964) *Grapefruit.* (See T_Square for Excerpt)

Papers

Note: All papers are posted on TSquare. Additional readings may be added.

Beavin, Kirstie. (2012). "Performance Art 101: The Happening, Allan Kaprow." Tate Museum of Modern Art Blog. http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/performance-art-101-happening-allan-kaprow

Brand, Stewart. "SPACEWAR: Fanatic Life and Symbolic Death Among the Computer Bums," Rolling Stone, December 7, 2001. http://www.wheels.org/spacewar/stone/rolling_stone.html

Friedman, Ken. (2009). "Exquisite Corpose and Events," in *The Exquisite Corpse: Change and Collaboration in Surrealist's Parlor Game*. University of Nebraska Press.

Kaprow, Allen. (1990). *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life.* Berkeley: University of California Press. http://www.arts.rpi.edu/~century/MMC11/Kaprow-essays.pdf

Ludica: Fron, J., Fullerton, T., Morie, J. & Pearce, C. (2005). "Sustainable Play: Towards A New Games Movement for the Digital Age." Digital Arts & Culture Conference Proceedings, Copenhagen, December 2005. Download here: http://lcc.gatech.edu/~cpearce3/PearcePubs/DACSustainablePlay.pdf

Pearce, Celia. "Games as Art: The Aesthetics of Interactivity." Visible Language: Special Issue on Fluxus. January 2006. http://lcc.gatech.edu/~cpearce3/PearcePubs/fluxus-pearce.pdf

Poremba, Cindy. (2010) "Discourse Engines for Art Mods." *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture.* 2010; 4 (1), p. 41-56 http://www.eludamos.org/index.php/eludamos/article/view/vol4no1-4/155

Sharp, J. (2012). "A Curiously Short History of Game Art," in Proceedings Foundations of Digital Games, May 29-June 1, 2012 Raleigh, NC.

Web Sites/Archives/Exhibits
Select Parks http://ljudmila.org/~selectparks/
Cracking the Maze (1999 – First online game art exhibit)
http://switch.sjsu.edu/CrackingtheMaze/index.html
SHIFT_CTRL (2001) http://www.leonardo.info/gallery/gallery351/lafargeintro.html
Game Show (2001) http://www.massmoca.org/event_details.php?id=55
Trigger (2002) http://www.artabase.net/exhibition/128-trigger-game-art
ALT+CTRL (2003) http://www.beallcenter.uci.edu/virtualbeall/altctrl
Bang the Machine (2004) http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=22325
Super Tetricide (2012) http://homeroom101.org/exhibitions/super-tetricide
Joue le Jeu (2012) http://www.gaite-lyrique.net/en/theme/joue-le-jeu-play-along-summer-2012
XYZ (2013) http://www.xyzgameexhibition.com/

8. **Graded Assignments**

   Class assignments for this class will consist of a series of four art projects, the first two of which must be solo projects, and the remainder of which can be solo or collaborative.

   For each artwork:
   - Create the work and present in class during the scheduled presentation time
   - Create documentation of the work (you may also document your process if relevant) and post on the class blog. (See notes below regarding class blog.)
   - Write a short (500 words or less) artist's statement about the work's intention and influence. What are you trying to do with the work? How does the work pertain to works, readings and themes of the class?
   - Submit final project via class blog

   Artworks will be graded on the following criteria
   - Originality and creativity
   - Craftsmanship/execution
   - Relationship of the work to the art, readings and themes of the class

   Artwork 1: Score (10 points) – DUE WEEK 3
   Create an artwork that takes the form of a short set of instructions. The score should be an artwork in its own rite; in addition, the instantiation of the score by players can also be seen as a work of art. (Examples: Grapefruit, Water Yam)

   Artwork 2: Appropriate (20 points) – DUE WEEK 8
   In the spirit of the Dada and Fluxus movement, create a game, either digital or analog, that is comprised entirely of found objects or appropriated material. Use the transformation of these objects into the materials of a game to critique, subvert or call our attention to their original meaning. (Examples: La Fontaine," White Chess, Takako Saito's chess series, Mario Clouds, Flatlands)

   Artwork 3: Intervene (20 points) – DUE WEEK 12
   Create an art or activist game that intervenes in some way in an existing process, location or site. The game should operate on a tactical level to critique the existing process, and to subvert or otherwise question assumptions about agency embodied in the original process. This can be a pervasive game that takes place in the physical world, or can intervene in a digital process. This game may be a performance in the physical world or a digital space, such as a game or virtual world, or can entail intervening in or utilizing social media or other modes of digital communication in an innovative way. (Examples: Open Source, Re:Activism, Velvet Strike)

   Artwork 4 (Final Project): Create (30 points) – DUE WEEK 16
   Create an entirely original art game that captures a particular type of experience that is underrepresented in digital games. This game can be short, and can a capture a personal experience, such as spiritual awakening, falling in love, grieving or the experience of being enmeshed in a larger system, such as a game about poverty or discrimination. The game can operate at varying levels of abstraction so thinking about the way in which you want to abstract your idea is important. For this project, you may use an existing digital game technology, including Unity, Flash, Processing, or game authoring tools such as Gamemaker or Twine. The game may also be a pervasive game provided it has some digital component. Importantly, the game must use the platform to best capture the experience, so be sure that your platform is a good fit for the game you are trying to create. (Examples: Passage, Gravitation, dys4ia, Mainichi, Escape from Woomera, Aiti: The Cost of Life, Hush, Train, The Path or The Night Journey, Akrasia)

   Additional Grad Student Assignment
   Graduate students will be asked to give a presentation which covers either one of the following:
   - A research presentation one of the artists covered in class
   - An in-depth review of a digital art game

Class Blog
- Each artwork must be documented and posted on the class blog using your class persona/alias.
- Each post will include an artistic statement about the work (500 words, describing its intention and the influences of work explored in the class.
- Students who create manifestos may also post these on the blog using their persona/alias.
- In addition, you are invited and encouraged to post any additional writing you are inspired to concerning the readings, your projects, new art games you may have discovered or played, or anything related to the topic of the class.
- At the start of the semester, you will create

9. **Attendance Policy**
   Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a half grade point reduction. An **excused** absence is one in which permission is requested in advance and you have a legitimate reason to skip class, such as an illness. You are expected to make up what you missed by checking with other students and reviewing lecture materials on the web site. Chronic tardiness during the semester will also result in a half point grade reduction.

10. **Information for Students with Disabilities**
    Please notify the instructor if you have any disabilities with which you need special assistance or consideration. The campus disability assistance program can be contacted through ADAPTS: http://www.adapts.gatech.edu

11. **Honor Code Statement**
    Students are expected to adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code: http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9
    - Please note that since this class emphasizes team effort, collaboration is encouraged, but please bear in mind that part of your evaluation for teamwork will be made by your peers. This means it's important to fulfill your team responsibilities and complete your assignments on time.
    - Any works appropriated for your project (such as art assets or music) should be cited both within the project and the final design documents.

12. Course Schedule

Week #	Tue	Thu	Read [Due Thurs]
Week 1	Class Overview: Play/Design Exercise Surrealist Games	Introduction to Art Games	Friedman, Exquisite Events
Week 2	Play/Design Exercise	Lecture/Discussion Events & Happenings	Beavin on Kaprow Kaprow – Life and Art, 81-89
Week 3	Play/Design Exercise Stage a Happening	Lecture/Discussion Art as Play	Ono, Grapefruit; John Cage Reading (TBD)
Week 4	**Artwork #1: Score**	**Artwork #1: Score**	Pearce, Games as Art
Week 5	Play/Design Exercise Board Game Modding	Lecture/Discussion Appropriation	DADA: Zurich, Berlin
Week 6	Interim Presentations for Assignment #2	Interim Presentations for Assignment #2	DADA: Hannover, Cologne
Week 7	Play/Design Exercise	Lecture/Discussion	DADA: New York, Paris
Week 8 10/8,10	**Artwork #2: Appropriate**	**Artwork #2: Appropriate**	*Fluxus:* Ch. 4
Week 9 10/15,16	FALL RECESS NO CLASS	**Artwork #2: Appropriate**	Fluxus: Chs.1 & 5
Week 10 10/22,24	Interim Presentations for Assignment #3	Interim Presentations for Assignment #3	Brand, Spacewar; Ludica, Sustainable Play
Week 11 10/29,31	Play/Design Exercise New Games	Lecture/Discussion	C. Carr: p.3-9, 16-24
Week 12 11/5,7	**Artwork #3 Intervene**	**Artwork #3 Intervene**	C. Carr: p. 159-161,223-225
Week 13 11/12,14	Play/Design Exercise	Lecture/Discussion or Tutorial	(Possible Additional Readings TBD)
Week 14 11/19,21	Interim Presentations for Assignment #4	Interim Presentations for Assignment #4	(Possible Additional Readings TBD)
Week 15 11/26,28	Lecture/Discussion	THANKSGIVING NO CLASS	(Possible Additional Readings TBD)
Week 16 12/3,5	**Artwork #4 (FINAL) Create**	**Artwork #4 (FINAL) Create**	
Week 17 12/9,13	**FINALS WEEK NO CLASS**	**FINALS WEEK NO CLASS**	