

Revised DRAFT OF August 16 2017

Syllabus LMC 4720 Interactive Narrative / LMC 6317 Interactive Fiction

FALL 2017

T/Th 1:30 -3:00 PM

Skiles 002

Professor Janet H. Murray

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Office Hours Monday 4-6 PM TSRB 320A

Game Resources are available online and in the Game Archeology Lab (GAL), TSRB Room 113
VR Headsets and resources are in the new Digital Integrated Liberal Arts Center (DILAC) Skiles 318
Official web site for the course is on <http://tsquare.gatech.edu>
Refer to the tsquare site for revisions to this syllabus and for complete assignment details.

Course Prerequisites (4720)

- ENGL 1102
- LMC 2100 or LMC 2700 or LMC 2800
- CS 1322 or CS 1331

For LMC 4720 ad 6317

- Knowledge of CSS and JavaScript and Unity will be helpful.
- Familiarity with or ability to quickly master Twine 1.x or a similar rapid prototyping environment of your choice is essential. **If you cannot meet this requirement you should not take this course.**
- Please note: There is **no TA** for this course this semester so all tech support will be ad hoc through DILAC or through the kindness of your classmates. If you cannot teach yourself Twine including programming variables and changing page appearance, you should not be taking this class.

Core Area/Attributes

- Humanities/Fine Arts/Ethics

Course Description

The larger objective of this course is to contribute to the expansion of human expressive powers by creating and critiquing artifacts that exploit the affordances of the emerging digital medium for the purposes of the ancient human practice of storytelling. The course will survey multiple strategies for the representation of narrative in interactive, digital formats. It will present a structured approach for analyzing and creating coherent interactive storytelling systems that require the participation of one or more interactors. The course will be conducted through instructor presentations and active discussions, student oral reports, in-class discussion of students' written analytical and creative assignments, and in-class group workshop projects. Students will be responsible for multiple prototypes and design documents, and a substantial final project in the form of a digital interactive narrative.

Programmatic Learning Outcomes

- Students can create digital artifacts with an awareness of media traditions, audience, and context.
- Students can appreciate and evaluate future trends in the development of digital media

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend every meeting and to actively participate, including attentive and responsive engagement with the reports of other students. **Students will be asked to leave if they engage in any non-class activities during class**, such as web surfing, reading email, or texting, and will be expected to immediately leave the room for the duration of that class period. If you are sick, please do not come to class but send the instructor an email indicating why you are absent.

What to do if you fall behind

Everybody drops the ball sometimes, and students often find themselves unable to keep up due to an illness or family emergency. If this happens to you, come and see me about it as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements for work that has been missed, and continue coming to class.

Sharing of work

Participation in the course implies permission for sharing work with others in the class and with future students if your work is judged to be a good example. If you are not comfortable with this, please let me know. Unless I am informed by you in writing (email) that you do not want your work shared with others in the context of current and future versions of this course, I will assume that it is available.

Adapts Disability Services Program

Students with disabilities at Georgia Institute of Technology will find programs designated to coordinate academic accommodations and promote access to all phases of university life. Such programming is coordinated through the ADAPTS-Disability Services.

The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program is a functional part of the Office of the Dean of Students. ADAPTS-Disability Services Program personnel oversee and coordinate programs to ensure accessibility to students with disabilities on an individual basis. The Georgia Institute of Technology strives to provide equal access to a college education as well as support to students with disabilities in their experience in the university community.

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353 Ferst Drive, Suite 210
Smithgall Student Services Building
Atlanta, GA 30332-0285
404-894-2563 (V)
404-894-1664 (TDD)
404-894-9928 (FAX)

Honor code statement

The members of the Georgia Tech community believe the fundamental objective of the Institute is to provide the Students with a high quality education while developing in them a sense of ethics and social responsibility. We believe that trust is an integral part of the learning process and that self-discipline is necessary in this pursuit. We also believe that any instance of dishonesty hurts the entire community. It is with this in mind that we have set forth a Student Academic Honor Code at Georgia Tech.

You can find the Georgia Tech Honor Code at this address:

<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>

Some Special Applications of the Honor Code to Work in this Course

Students may use computer code, story elements, and images produced by others as part of their work in fulfillment of assignments for this course, if (a) they clearly identify and credit the source of any work not original to them and (b) they can point to a substantial part of the assignment that is their own original creation and is equivalent in creativity and effort to the work of others who have not included borrowed elements.

In collaborative projects, students should clearly identify who is responsible for each element of the design and implementation. Credits should be assigned by mutual agreement and any dispute about crediting should be brought to the attention of the instructors as soon as possible in the process.

Communications Center

The Communication Center is located in **Clough Commons 447**. Trained professional and peer tutors help undergraduate and graduate students with written and oral presentations. Take advantage of this resource in preparing your assignments.

Requirements and Grading

This is a workshop course, focused on design insights that can be immediately applied to the creation of interactive narratives. There are 4 short analytical assignments (2 for UGs) requiring responses to games, TV shows, and 4 brief and rapid prototypes for interactive narratives (2 for undergraduates), as well as 1 final project which is a substantial, playable individually created story/game that is also part of a shared Storyworld developed in groups of 5.

- 10% class participation. This includes active involvement in discussions, testing and responding to other students' prototypes and projects, coherent presentation of assignments when called on in class, constructive participation in group projects, and constructive critical responses to other students' creative and analytical work, as well as participation in the in-class design exercises.
- 20% for Rapid Interactive Prototype assignments Undergrads: do any 2 plus brief design concept statement the ones you skip (10 pts each, plus deduct 1 point if you do not hand in either a prototype or a design; up to 3 extra points if particularly strong prototype) (Grad students: do all 4 for 5pts each)
- 20% for analytical responses to media reading/viewing/playing assignments, UGs do any 2 of the 4 assignments for 10 pts each, with required briefer responses to those you skip (you must do the reading/viewing/playing whether you hand in the full assignment or just the brief response); Gs: do all 4 for 5pts each.
- 50% Final Project – A complete, individually created story/game that is also part of a larger storyworld created collectively by 5 students:
 - Group Planning Documents 5%
 - Individual Planning Documents 5%;
 - Mockup and response to user testing 10%
 - Group Oral / slide presentation 5%
 - Individual Oral / slide component of final presentation 10 %;
 - Working final project 10%;
 - Video documentation of a persuasive demonstration run of your individual final project, posted to a web page, illustrating the appropriateness of this approach for this particular story content, the experience of dramatic agency, and the exploitation of replay 5%.
- Bonus Credit: Helpfulness to other students (technical help, artistic contribution, etc.) up to 5pts bonus.
- **All work is to be handed in by uploading to your folder in the RESOURCES section of the website and then linking it to the tsquare class wiki page for that week's assignment. Grades will be returned in the Assignments tool of tsquare. Students will hand in final projects by uploading them to folders organized by Storyworld group. All work is due by noon of the first meeting day of the week they are due and students should always be prepared to discuss their work in class, including the weeks on which as an UG you have only handed in a brief written statement or conceptual design.**
- **Late submissions without prior excuse will be penalized by 1 point off .**

Required Texts

- Propp, V., *Morphology of the Folktale* 1928, Austin: University of Texas Press. (Intro to Second Edition and Chapter II, on tsquare)
- Jenkins, Henry, "[Transmedia Storytelling 101](#)," Confessions of an Aca-Fan, March 22, 2007
- for graduate students: Janet Murray *Hamlet on the Holodeck updated edition* MIT Press 2017 (*available on reserve and in ebook from Simon and Schuster 2016*)

Required Videos One of the Following:

- "Bowling," *Malcolm in the Middle*, Season 2, Episode 20 (2001) Episode available streaming from Netflix
- Alternate choice: "Remedial Chaos Theory" *Community* Season 3 Episode 4 (2011) episode available streaming from Hulu
- (also see Storyworld assignment)

Required Storygames

- Anna Anthropy, [Dys4ria](#) (2012) (Play online)
 - Pedercini, Paolo. "[Everyday the Same Dream](#)" (2009) (Play on line)
- One of the Following**

- The Fullbright Company, *Gone Home* (2013), PC or Mac game: purchase for download or play in GAL
- Inkle Studios, *80 Days* (2014) plus Vimeo: Meg Jayanth “Unfair Game” (2015)
<https://vimeo.com/149286981>

One of the Following Storyworld pairs

1 TV episode and 1 Telltale game episode from the same season of one of the following:– feel free to fast forward through violent or revoltingly gory scenes and substitutions accepted with prior approval of the instructor)

- *Game of Thrones*
- *Walking Dead*

Default game choice: *Game of Thrones: Fire from Ice (2014)* which is available in GAL.

Disturbing Content Warning – If you choose one of these storyworlds, feel free to fast forward through violent or revoltingly gory or prurient scenes; and substitutions of other storyworld paired media examples accepted with prior approval of the instructor

Default Authoring Environment for rapid prototypes: [Twine](http://twinery.org) – tutorials available on twinery.org. You are responsible for learning it on your own to the level required to fulfill assignments. Also accepted: Unitytutorial projects using VR or AR (available in DILAC and GAL) . See instructor for permission to use alternate platforms,

Recommended Story-games

- Leibling, D., et al. (1979). *Zork*, available on line at http://textadventures.co.uk/games/view/5zyoqrsugeopel3ffhz_vq/zork
- Weizenbaum, Joseph (1966). *Eliza*, (paper in Resources, good emulation of original here: <http://www.masswerk.at/elizabot/eliza.html>)
- Pope, Lucas. *Papers Please* (2013) (available in GAL)
- Chen, Jenova, *Journey* (2012) ThatGameCompany (available in GAL)
- Pedercini, Paolo and Jim Munroe. *Unmanned* (2012) Molleindustria

Recommended “Interactive Journalism” Examples (includes some VR)

- OpenDocs Project at MIT Media Lab: <http://opendoclab.mit.edu/interactivejournalism/>

Recommended VR Examples (these should be available in DILAC – Skiles 323 or GAL TSRB 113 – details to come)

- Nonny de la Peña (MIT Virtually There Conference Talks)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRkcxIQzd10&feature=youtu.be>
 - online versions of her projects <http://www.immersivejournalism.com/>
- Nonny de la Peña , *Out of Exile : Daniel’s Story*
- *WEVR Gnomes and Goblins*
- NYTimes VR (Viewable with Google Cardboard) <http://www.nytimes.com/marketing/nytvr/>
- *A Hard World for Small Things* (WEVR)
- *Clouds Over Sidra*

Additional Recommended Texts and Resources

See the folder on tsquare for extensive related recommended readings in pdf form, from many scholars and critics in this field including Brenda Laurel, Mary-Laure Ryan, and David Herman and see the blogs below for pointers to other interactive narratives and critical works:

- Campbell, Joseph (2008). *The hero with a thousand faces*. (excerpt) Novato, Calif., New World Library. Originally published 1949. (pdf on tsquare) (Part I – The Adventure of the Hero)
- Murray, J.H., *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* 1998, Cambridge MA; London UK: MIT Press. Chapters 3,4,5 (on tsquare) ; Recommended: ebook edition with updates published 2016. (Available on reserve in Library with their Kindle.)
- <http://emshort.wordpress.com/> Commentary on interactive storytelling by an inventive practitioner and

very perceptive critic

- <http://nickm.com/if/> Nick Montfort's page of Interactive Fiction resources
- <http://inventingthemedium.com> Janet Murray's blog with a section on interactive narrative, including video of [Janet's Ted Talk](#) (1998) ; Janet's Future of StoryTelling (FoST 2015) video on Dramatic Agency
<https://futureofstorytelling.org/video/janet-murray-dramatic-agency/>
- Janet Murray's Twitter feed posts focus on interaction design, interactive narrative, VR, and TV storyforms : @janetmurray
- Some related videos: <http://futureofstorytelling.org/films/>

Schedule and Assignments

Weekly Topics and Key Concepts	Assignments – Full details are on the tsquare wiki page for the appropriate week.
<p>Week 1 August 22, 24</p> <p>Interactive Storytelling in an emerging medium</p> <p>Key Concepts:</p> <p>Interactivity, Immersion, Dramatic Agency, Active Creation of Belief, Replay, Multiform vs Multisequential Narratives, Genre, Story World</p>	<p>Due Thursday at Noon A webpage identifying a digital story/game that offers the experience of dramatic agency - SEE WIKI FOR COMPLETE ASSIGNMENT</p> <p>Note: This assignment counts toward your class participation grade</p> <p>Discussed in class</p> <p>Anna Anthropy, Dys4ria (2012)</p> <p>Eliza http://www.masswerk.at/elizabot/ http://textadventures.co.uk/games/view/5zyoqrsugeopel3ffhz_vq/zork</p> <p>Paolo Pedercini, “Everyday the Same Dream” http://www.molleindustria.org/everydaythesamedream/everydaythesamedream.html</p> <p>The default authoring environment for the rapid prototypes is Twine. Try it out this week using whichever tutorial environment you find most useful .</p> <p>Begin thinking about what story genre you want to focus on for your major project and whom you want to form a Storyworld Group with.</p> <p>Do Twine tutorial here: http://www.adamhammond.com/twineguide/ and hand in Twine exercise by end of this week –</p>
<p>Week 2 August 29, 31</p> <p>Spatial Storytelling</p> <p>Key Concepts:</p> <p>Space v Place Navigation as dramatic agency Journey episodic narratives Room architecture in interactive narrative design Hiding/Unlocking Spatial segmentation of narrative elements Enclosure/Escape Navigation as Investigation, Secret-Seeking</p>	<p>Due Tues Week 2 noon on tsquare:</p> <p>Spend at least 2.5 hours playing either <i>Gone Home</i> or <i>80 Days</i> and then explore videos and descriptions of alternative plays online. (available in GAL or for purchase online) Substitutions OK with prior approval of instructor</p> <p>Draw a diagram indicating how specific story elements are associated with specific places. Indicate barriers to reaching the places and differences in routes through the space if relevant.</p> <p>Undergrads <i>Gone Home</i> (2013) The Fullbright Company</p> <p>Grad Students: 80 Days (2014) Inkle Studios and also view Meg Jayanth “Unfair Game” (2015) https://vimeo.com/149286981 Your chart should indicate how well the game exemplifies the principles she discusses.</p>

<p>Week 3 Tuesday 9/5 Thursday 9/7</p> <p>Spatial Story Structures Prototype I</p>	<p>Prototype I Due Noon Tuesday Week 3</p> <p>Create a Spatial Story Prototype using Twine or Unity for Virtual Reality with at least 2 locations within a common story scenario and at least 1 clickable object with high story-telling value. See Wiki for full assignment details.</p>
<p>Week 4 Sept 12, 14</p> <p>Temporal Story Structures</p> <p>Key Concepts:</p> <p>Time Steps Story Beats Parallelism Markers Time Lines Point of View Epistemological v Ontological Variation Time Travel Simultaneity Replay with substitution of narrative elements</p>	<p>Due Tuesday Week 4 Create a diagram illustrating the time scheme and parallel events of one of the assigned TV episodes.</p> <p>"Bowling," <i>Malcolm in the Middle</i>, Season 2, Episode 20 (2001) (available streaming on Netflix)</p> <p>Alternate: "Remedial Chaos Theory" from the TV show <i>Community</i> Season 3 Episode 4 (2011)</p> <p>Discussed in class:</p> <p>Ramis, H. (1993). <i>Groundhog Day</i>. USA, Columbia Pictures.</p>
<p>Week 5 September 19, 21</p>	<p>Due Tuesday Week 6 Noon Create a Temporal Story Prototype See details on wiki</p>
<p>Week 6 Sept 26,28</p>	<p>No regular class meetings - lab exploration week, and watch online talks and comment</p>
<p>Week 7 Oct 3 Oct 5</p> <p>Genre Fiction as a Substitution System</p> <p>Key Concepts</p> <p>Genre Plot Formulaic writing Procedural Substitution Episodic Composition Hero's Journey Story Formalisms</p>	<p>Due Tuesday Week 7 at Noon Read the Propp assigned text and create a schematic representation of a similarly formulaic set of stories, such as a TV sitcom or drama.</p> <p>Propp, V., <i>Morphology of the Folktale</i> 1928, Austin: University of Texas Press. (Intro to Second Edition and Chapter II, on tsquare)</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct 10 -FALL RECESS no Tuesday class</p> <p>October 12 Thursday Genre-Based System for Recombining Plot Elements PROTOTYPE DUE</p>	<p>No Tuesday Class: Fall Recess</p> <p>Due THURSDAY Week 8 at Noon Genre Substitution System Prototype Due</p>

<p>Week 9 October 17,19</p> <p>Analysing Storyworlds</p> <p>Key Concepts</p> <p>Backstory Story Arc Character Arc</p> <p>Character Roles</p> <p>RPG Formalism: Act – Scene – Setup/Resolution -Tilt- Aftermath Relationships Objects (Props) Locations Character Needs</p>	<p>Due Tuesday Week 9 NOON</p> <p>Read Henry Jenkins' essay on Transmedia Storytelling. Then watch any episode of <i>The Walking Dead</i> or <i>Game of Thrones</i> TV show and play any episode of the corresponding Tell-Tale Game for at least 2 hours. Create a diagram that you can use to describe what makes them part of the same storyworld.</p> <p>Henry Jenkins, "Transmedia Storytelling 101," Confessions of an Aca-Fan, March 22, 2007</p> <p>Telltale Games, <i>The Walking Dead I Season 1</i> (2012) or 400 Days or Season 2 (2013). Purchase for download or play in TSRB Game Lab OR Telltale Games. <i>Game of Thrones: Fire from Ice</i> (2014) Purchase for download or play in TSRB Game Lab</p> <p>Graduate Students Recommended: Janet Murray, "Transcending Transmedia" from blog Inventing the Medium</p>
<p>Week 10 October 24,26</p> <p>Character Prototype</p>	<p>DUE TUESDAY WEEK 10 NOON</p> <p>Character Dialog Prototype – see Wiki for details on assignment</p> <p>Note: These characters will be a first draft of part of your final project: 1. the basis for your self-sorting into groups to create shared story worlds 2.a first pass at a dramatic event within your individual final project. Therefore, if you choose this as one of the prototype assignments you are skipping, write a brief description of your character and the key elements of the dramatic situation instead so that it can help you and your classmates see how your story might fit into a shared story-world.</p>
<p>Week 11 Oct 31, Nov 2</p> <p>Forming STORY WORLD GROUPS for Final Project –group conferences during class time</p>	<p>By end of class on Thursday, group will have posted: Group Storyworld Documentation</p> <p>Exercises in class to form groups and refine stories for final projects Format for group planning documentation is on the wiki</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov 7, 9</p> <p>INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES</p>	<p>No regular class meetings</p> <p>Sign up on tsquare for individual conferences</p> <p>Individual Conferences on Stories – bring your individual storygame planning documentation which should be posted by Noon on MONDAY Nov 7 and finalized by Thursday Nov 10 3pm</p> <p>Format for individual story planning documentation is on the wiki.</p>
<p>Week 13 Nov 14,16</p> <p>PLAYABLE MOCKUPS</p>	<p>Due Tuesday Week 13 at Noon</p> <p>A playable version of one narrative sequence from your individual final project story/game that affords dramatic agency for playtesting. This will be an excerpt from the final story/game that lets you see how the interactor will engage with it. You will be testing one another's story/games, providing feedback, and recording the results of the test runs of your own story/game. This will also be the opportunity to adjust the correspondences among the group's separate versions of the Story World. WE WILL MEET IN SKILES 346 TUESDAY AND THURSDAY for testing.</p>
<p>Week 14 Nov 21, 23 (Thanksgiving HOLIDAY)</p>	<p>–Work on your final projects this week . Week 14 Nov 22, 24 (Thanksgiving)</p>

<p>Week 15/16 Tuesday Nov 28,30, and Tuesday Dec 5 FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS and final user testing</p>	<p>Tuesday Nov 28 – final group meetings to coordinate presentation of storyworld</p> <p>Thursday November 30 – first 2 groups oral presentations with complete flowcharts, and brief live demos</p> <p>Tuesday December 5 – final 2 groups presentations with complete flowcharts, extensive screen capture walk-through, and brief live demos</p>
<p>There is no final exam</p>	<p>By Monday December 11 all the story/games should be playable in final form and all documentation should be complete, including 3 minute videos of edited play session demonstrating dramatic variation an dramatic agency, with smoothly delivered, scripted voiceover indicating key design features.</p> <p>Students will also hand in team member evaluations by confidential email including self-evaluations for final project work.</p>