

Art Games Bootcamp

Schedule and Assignments

Winter 2018

Week 1 – 1/2/18

In class

- Overview of class
- Personal Discussion
 - Personal motivations. Beyond the practical side, beyond income, what are your personal / creative or social / cultural drives regarding games? If you're not seeing yourself work in games, what are the analogous draws you have to put energy into whatever field of practice you foresee yourself creating in?
- Games Discussion
 - What is your take on the state of games and game culture today? What will change in 5 years? What will change in 10 years? What do you feel you must do that no one else, or not enough people are doing in games?
- Introductory Lecture on Games as a Field

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Read these PDFs from **Avant-garde Videogames: Playing with Technoculture**:
 - Introduction and Radical Formal chapter
 - Radical Political chapter
 - Engage in “active reading” as you work through the book chapters. Draw connections between the reading and your own interests. Understanding games as a formal art and political art may open up ways of approaching the medium that will advance the field. Scholars and artists often strive to advance the field of their chosen medium as part of their professional practice. Based on the reading, identify opportunities for you to advance the field of games by focusing your own creative drives towards what “needs to be made” or “needs to be done” in games. If there are erroneous arguments or major oversights, make note of them so we can discuss them next class.
- **Prepare 2 Minute Presentation: Creative Self in 2018**
 - Due and presented next class Tuesday night.
 - Format is entirely up to you: extemporaneous speech, or power point, etc.
 - Imagine yourself as an artist, author, curator, or other creative practitioner working in games in 10 years. What will motivate you creatively? Are you making political games to progress society? Or you making radical fare that experiments with the form of the medium for its

own sake? A different direction entirely? What kind of work will feel vital for you to make in 2028? If you foresee a major component of your creative work will be writing about games, what will you be writing about? If you're curating games, what will be your curatorial drives and interests? Imagine you're making enough money to live on without money stress. This exercise isn't about a study in entrepreneurship, economics, or career planning. The purpose of the exercise is to help you tap into and focus your creative drives that will help you construct a satisfying potential future of what you could be doing and why.

- **Design a Simple Non-Digital Game-a-Day** from 1/2/18 to 1/16/18
 - 1-2 sentence description. Image is optional.
 - Could be public on Instagram, Twitter, etc., or could be private. If private could post on Slack, etc.
 - React to what you're thinking about with regard to course materials and discussions. The games don't need to have a rational connection with current topics. Simply framing your creative intent is enough. Designing games in this way allows you to process course knowledge and learn to integrate thinking into practice in a continual way. We often hobble ourselves by valuing large projects, major deliverables, final builds, etc. more so than steady progress, process and iteration.
 - Reference to other student work designing a game a day:
http://molleindustria.org/files/63_microgames.pdf

Week 2 – 1/9/18

In class

- Discussion on Reading
- Presentations
- Short Discussion on Game-a-Day Exercise

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Read these PDFs from **Avant-garde Videogames: Playing with Technoculture** before doing the writing assignment below (A New Games Movement):
 - Complicit Formal
 - Complicit Political
 - Conclusion
- Author **A New Games Movement**
 - Avant-garde Games lays out a theoretical field of games as a medium on page 35. Using that field as a backdrop, as well as your understanding of the various areas within the field from your chapter readings, invent a new way to create, see, or understand games should exist but does not. What games does culture need? Try not to rehash your topics from your presentation last week. The future is in flux. Brave into new territory discovering insights and ideas by building on the discussions, homework, and chapter readings as a whole.

- Rather than write the usual essay describing your New Games Movement, you'll write a 200-300 word manifesto about games instead which you will read to the class next week.
 - Format is entirely up to you: extemporaneous speech, or power point, etc.
 - Some historical manifestos if you want references:
 - Futurist Manifesto by Marinetti:
http://391.org/manifestos/1909-the-futurist-manifesto-f-t-marinetti.html#.WksabRNSw_V
 - Dada Manifesto by Jean Arp:
http://391.org/manifestos/1962-dada-jean-hans-arp.html#.WkseXRNSw_U
 - Browse many more manifestos here: <http://391.org/dada-manifestos.html>
 - Game Ideas "No One Wants to Make" by Lode
"I don't want to make racing games ... or fighting, shooting, action, dragon-slaying, strategy games fulfilling default human power fantasies," she said. "I go to a lot of game jams and I always run into this problem that most default humans want to make games about silly jokes in oversaturated genres, which of course is normal when you're just starting out..."
<http://www.polygon.com/2016/3/19/11266692/gdc-microtalks-game-jam-henrike-lode>
 - Fuck Festivals by Ryerson
<http://ellaguro.blogspot.com/2013/10/fuck-festivals.html>

Week 3 – 1/16/18

In class

- Students present New Games Movements
- Discussion on Reading
- Lecture on Course Project

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Read PDF from JF Martel's **Art in the Age of Artifice**
- Students begin their Avant-garde Games, the major project for the course. Your games could be formal, political, narrative, etc. Try to pick games that advance the field in some way, but don't let that stop you from trying something, anything that tickles your fancy and activates you in some inexplicable way. So far this quarter you've been delving into the field of games as an art form. You've been designing a game a day to get your creative juices flowing. Now focus your energies into something conceptually daring that may very well fail because there is no game blueprint, guide, or predecessor to imitate or follow. Don't plan to make games that are so complex that your experience will be dominated by stress, overwork, fear, or crunch this quarter. Make games that you can finish. Games you can sort of finish in some way in one week. Yes, this is possible, your

game ideas a day proved that you can conceive of games that are compelling as well in scope.

- Next week's deliverable is your game iteration, something that is both a prototype and a little complete experience in and of itself. Lots of art is not made through suffering but by tapping into your subconscious and coming up with something that pleases you simply by making it. Something simple that packs a little sweet punch, a little gag, an interactive joke, a scream into a pillow, a hobo's delicious pot of stew, a melody sung in a bathroom stall, distant church bells ring as you sit in the recondite corner of an untended garden sensing the glorious, fleeting nature of this world, a little supernova illuminating what lurks beneath your polite veneer. The games could be digital or non-digital, however, don't shy away from digital if it seems that's a better fit for the project. Just make sure it's technically super simple so you can reasonably prototype it given your current resources, skills, and time. Trynn is in the tutoring lab again this quarter if you need help.
- Prepare to have peers play your rough, radical, weird, problematic games in next class.

Week 4 – 1/23/18

In class

- Avant-garde Game Pitches
 - Students receive in-depth feedback and direction
- Discussion on Reading

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Read PDF from Ziarek's **Force of Art**
- Idea Iteration and Prototypes of Avant-garde Games:
 - Games should probably receive major changes as students try things out and see what works. Prototype behaviors, choices, actions and system reactions if you're making a playable game. If you're designing an unconventional game that uses events, protests, etc., please meet with the instructor to go over the development goals for the week.

Week 5 – 1/30/18

In class

- Prototype Playtest
- Discussion on Reading

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Read PDF from Foster's **Return of the Real**
- Contexts and Level Design of Avant-garde Games
 - Build up contexts and moments in your game that delivers the core experience. If your core mechanic and functions are in place, you can start iterating on level design. If you're designing an unconventional game that uses events, protests, etc., please meet with the instructor to go over the development goals for the week.

Week 6 – 2/6/18

In class

- Context and Level Design Playtest of Avant-garde Games
- Discussion on Reading

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Level Design Iteration on Avant-garde Games

Week 7 – 2/13/18

In class

- Level Design Playtest of Avant-garde Games

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Visual and Audio Iteration on Avant-garde Games

Week 8 – 2/20/18

In class

- Visual and Audio Playtest of Avant-garde Games

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Final Sprint on Avant-garde Games

Week 9 – 2/27/18

In class

- Work on Avant-garde Games

Homework Due by Next Tuesday Class at 5:45pm

- Final Sprint on Avant-garde Games

Week 10 – 3/6/18

In class

- Work on Avant-garde Games

Homework Due at Final Exam

- Submit Final Builds of Avant-garde Games

Week 11 – 3/13/18 from

Final Exam: March 13, 2018, from 6:00 PM to 8:15

