

VIDEO GAMES AND VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS

CMN 076

Fall 2015

TR 9:00 – 10:20am

Scrub Oak Hall Auditorium 160

Professor

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Overview

This course examines the impact of video games on players and society. Topics include motivations for playing games, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects, including violence, addiction, and representation issues. The course also discusses interpersonal and community processes in online games, along with the use of video games for education.

Course objectives

- To review scientific studies investigating the uses of playing video games.
- To empirically examine claims regarding the effects of gaming technologies.
- To learn and apply basic social science research principles.

Required readings

Each week's required readings will consist of research and news articles related to each topic. Each reading is associated with an entry in the schedule provided below. Read according to the schedule provided below. Download from SmartSite (in PDF format).

Prerequisites and grading system

There are no prerequisites. Course is open to majors. This is a letter grade course.

Grading summary

- Midterm: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
- Class activities: 35%
- Class engagement and technology policy: 5%
- Extra credit.

Student evaluations

- (1) *Midterm, final exam, and attendance policy:* The midterm and final exam consist of multiple-choice and short essay questions. They will cover information seen in class and in the readings. The final exam is not a comprehensive examination. Both examinations will account for 60% of your final course grade. Bring a Scantron Form 2000, along with a pencil and eraser. There are no makeup exams except in cases of documented illness or personal crisis. Job interviews and doctor appointments do not count as excused

absences. Students should contact Dr. Peña well in advance before missing an examination because of illness or family issues. There will be no makeup exams if you fail to provide prior notice to the instructor. There will be no alternative exam dates; if you have exams in other classes then please plan ahead. Use of electronic devices during examinations is not allowed. The instructor will assume students are cheating and, thus, using devices will result in failing the exam. Cheating in any other form will also result in failing the exam. There will be no extra time for students arriving late to an exam.

- (2) *Class activities and discussion sections:* Students will engage class content in discussion sections. In addition, students will answer quizzes and turn in a final report addressing the topics and questions proposed by the instructor. There will be no makeups; students that miss a class or laboratory activity cannot turn in their work later on. You need to be in class to be able to turn in your work. Being more than 10 minutes late for a discussion section is equal to being absent. Some class activities do not appear in the schedule below in order to discourage students from skipping lecture and lab sessions. There will be no extra time for students arriving late. Class activities account for 35% of your final grade.
- (3) *Class engagement and distractive technology policy:* Students will be rewarded for actively participating in class discussions (e.g., asking questions, showing effort, following instructions, etc.). Students are expected to arrive on time, participate, and work on class activities during lecture and discussion sections. Students are also expected to turn in their work during lecture and discussion sections. Students are welcome to take notes using electronic devices. However, students are not allowed to use social media during lectures and discussion sections, as it is distracting. Please consider taking a different class if you disagree with this policy. Teaching assistants will make sure students are not using social media in the class. Students will receive fewer points if they disrupt the class by repeatedly using social media. The class engagement and technology policy accounts for 5% of your final grade.
- (4) *Extra credit:* Your participation in ongoing faculty or student research is highly appreciated and encouraged. For each hour you participate in this research (up to a maximum of two hours), you will receive one extra point to your final total course score for the semester (up to a maximum of two extra points per semester). There are no guarantees that extra credit opportunities will be available for all students. If available, please sign up early for extra credit. There will be no alternative extra credit options; you can only get extra credit by participating in research studies.
 - Please sign up here if you need or want to earn extra credit: <http://ucdavis.sona-systems.com>.
 - You can find more information about Sona here: <http://pscresearch.faculty.ucdavis.edu/extra-credit/>

Academic Integrity

In this course, any work submitted by a student for academic credit will be the individual student's own work. Any work submitted by students must be crafted specifically for this course, unless you have permission from the instructor. Plagiarism, or any other type of unethical behavior, will result in dismissal from the course and related disciplinary actions.

Grade grievance policy

Students have two weeks after final grades are officially posted to communicate and file grade complaints. I will not make comments about grade grievances after this period in person or electronically.

Schedule of Activities*

Topic	Readings
Introduction September 24	
Motivations September 29	Yee, N. (2006). Motivations for play in online games. <i>CyberPsychology & Behavior</i> , 9, 772-775.
Motivations October 1	Graham, L. T., & Gosling, S. D. (2013). Personality profiles associated with different motivations for playing World of Warcraft. <i>CyberPsychology, Behavior, & Social Networking</i> , 16, 189-193.
Motivations October 6	
The virtual self October 8	Peña, J., & Kim, E. (2014). Increasing exergame physical activity through self and opponent avatar appearance. <i>Computers in Human Behavior</i> , 41, 262-267.
The virtual self October 13	Lee, J.-E.-R., Nass, C. I., & Bailenson, J. (2014). Does the mask govern the mind? Effects of arbitrary gender representation on quantitative task performance in avatar-represented virtual groups. <i>CyberPsychology, Behavior, & Social Networking</i> , 17, 248-254.
The virtual self October 15	
Cognitive effects October 20	Bavelier, D., Green, C. S., Pouget, A., & Schrater, P. (2012). Brain plasticity through the life span: Learning to learn and action video games. <i>Annual Review of Neuroscience</i> , 35, 391-416. doi: 10.1146/annurev-neuro-060909-152832
Cognitive effects October 22	
October 27	Midterm examination
Cognitive effects October 29	Yoo, S.-C., & Peña, J. (2011). Does violence in video games impair in-game advertisement effectiveness? The impact of game context on brand recall, brand attitude, and purchase intention. <i>CyberPsychology, Behavior, & Social Networking</i> , 7-8, 439-446.

Problematic effects November 3	Anderson, C. A., Gentile, D. A., & Dill, K. E. (2012). Prosocial, antisocial, and other effects of recreational video games. In D. G. Singer & J. L. Singer (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Children and the Media, 2nd Edition</i> (pp. 249-272). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Problematic effects November 5	Williams, D., Martins, N., Consalvo, M., & Ivory, J. (2009). The virtual census: Representations of gender, race and age in video games. <i>New Media & Society, 11</i> , 815-834.
Problematic effects November 10	
Online games November 12	Williams, D., Ducheneaut, N., Xiong, L., Zhang, Y., Yee, N., & Nickell, E. (2006). From tree house to barracks: The social life of guilds in World of Warcraft. <i>Games and Culture, 1</i> , 338-361.
Online games November 17	
NCA conference November 19	No class.
Online games November 24	
Thanksgiving November 26	No class.
Serious games December 1	Graesser, A., Chipman, P., Leeming, F., & Biedenbach, S. (2009). Deep learning and emotion in serious games. In U. Ritterfeld, M. Cody, & P. Vorderer, <i>Serious games: Mechanisms and effects</i> (pp. 83-102). New York: Routledge.
Serious games/ Review session December 3	
Final exam December 8	Final exam @ 6:00pm