

GAM 206 History of Games – DePaul University Winter Quarter 2015

GAM 206: History of Games (Section 201)
Tue. Thur. 09:40 AM – 11:10 AM
Levan Center Room 305

GAM 206: History of Games (Section 202)
Tue. Thur. 11:20 AM – 12:50 PM
Levan Center Room 305
Instructor: Jonathan Hey

Office Hours: Levan 305 or vicinity 1:00 PM -on Tue/Thu
Office Hours: CDM 526 4:45-5:45 Wednesdays
Office Hours: CDM 617 – Mondays 1pm-5pm or by arrangement
Office Hours: Lewis 1007 4:45-5:45 Tuesdays
Email (preferred): jhey@cdm.depaul.edu
[also jhey.depaul@gmail.com]
Jon Hey's mobile number – (voice and text) (773) 443-7877

Description

From "The Royal Game of Ur" (2500+ BCE) to "Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance" (2014) and beyond, games have been a constant in human history. The forms of games, their experiential qualities, and their cultural significance have varied enormously from era to era and place to place. This class will examine particular games and game genres in their historical context using a case study format. We will focus on "indoor" games, those of chance and skill, as opposed to physical games and sports. The examples will be chosen (i) to have global scope and historic diversity, (ii) to relate to games that students will find familiar, and (iii) to raise particular issues in historical interpretation, the use of primary sources and changing concepts of leisure activity. This course is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Understanding the Past (UP) domain.

Please read the more thorough description of Understanding the Past requirements further below in this document.

Textbooks and printed resources

Course Readings and Supplies

There is no textbook for the class. There will be a variety of readings made available on-line and/or distributed in class. Readings and Materials are subject to change, modification, additions and substitutions. D2L is the starting resource for all course material [see below].

Resources

Students in the class will have access to the game library housed in the CTI Computer Game Lab CDM 5th Floor

Students performing assignments have priority for the use of the games. See:
<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/LabsAndResources/Lab536.aspx>
You will be required to provide your student ID when checking out games.

Web Site

The D2L (Desire to Learn) web site will be an important resource for the course. All information, assignments, grading, readings, links will be on D2L.

Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

Prerequisites

None

Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

- 4 Quizzes 12.5% each (1 in-class, 2, 3 and 4 take home)
- Gameplay leader (written summary) 5%
- Attendance/Participation 5%
- Research project 40% (total as broken down below) Preliminary Topic - check-in
- 1st Bibliography - check-in
- Final paper 40%
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Organization and Assessment / Schedule

Organization and Assessment

GAM 206 is divided into four units. In each unit, we will study a particular culture and a game associated with it. Each unit will consist of four classes: a lecture covering the era with an emphasis on cultural issues, a lecture on the game genre and its history, an in-class game play session in which we play the chosen game, and a game discussion session in which we discuss the game and its milieu. There is no midterm or final exam, but there will be 4 quizzes covering the assigned readings.

Attendance at this class is extremely important. This is particularly true of the game play sessions. Students who do not attend the game play session will receive no credit for that unit. Please make every effort to attend class on these dates. I will take attendance at all class meetings. It is difficult to learn a new game without the guidance of someone who has played before. To make our gameplay sessions more efficient, the class will be divided into groups (usually four to six students) with a designated gameplay leader. Gameplay leaders will learn their respective games usually before others in their team. Attendance for this day's class is very important. Gameplay leaders are also encouraged to meet outside of class time and play the game among themselves before the in-class gameplay session. In class, after the gameplay sessions, we will discuss the games. Gameplay leaders will be expected to participate actively in these sessions. You must be present at the in-class gameplay session in order to receive credit for the gameplay leader component of the course.

FINAL:

Each student will be required to complete a research project (a written paper) on a historic game other than the ones we consider together in class. The game should originate from before 1945. I encourage you to look for a game that has particular relevance to your cultural heritage: games your grandparents (or great-great grandparents) might have played. There will be intermediate milestones for this project due throughout the quarter. Full details will be available on the assignment handout.

Introduction

Introduction to the Class. Syllabus and requirements. Why study games? Why study the history of games? Aims of the class. Resources: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources of history. History and Games. Historical methods. Games as primary sources. Components of a game.

Readings:

Salen, K. and Zimmerman, E. Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals. MIT Press, 2004.
Chapter 3 Meaningful Play
Chapter 7 Defining Games
Parlett, D. Chapter 1 Welcome Aboard, in The Oxford History of Board Games.

Unit 1: Ancient Egypt, Ur Valley [Mesopotamia], Indus Valley [Harappan Civilization]

History: Records, inscriptions, art, artifacts and other archaeological evidence from the Neolithic period and the Senet Game boards found in the burial site of King Tut.

Readings:

As On D2L including Piccione, Peter A. In Search of the Meaning of Senet.
Game: Senet. Descendants of Senet including Backgammon. Design principles of race games.
Play: Senet and assess rules for a Senet game or a race game that could be invented

Unit 2: Society in Medieval and Renaissance Europe

History: Society and Culture in the Late Middle Ages. Social structure and hierarchy. Spain and England.

Thomas Middleton- A Game At Chess / King James I / Ben Franklin and Chess.

Readings: As posted on D2L

History of Chess. Asian variants of chess. "The Turk"

Play: Chess Tournament (Double-Elimination)

Unit 3: America 1803 - Start of Civil War

History: Risk and tradition in 19th Century America. Gambling Games. The history of gambling. Divination, probability and risk. Typologies of gambling games. The boundary issues between gambling and play. The rise of professional gambling. Lincoln's "Lyceum Address". Civil War games. Native American Casino Gaming.

Readings:

As posted on D2L

Play: Faro, Texas Hold 'Em Poker, Blackjack (21)

Between Unit 3 and Unit 4 - Interjection: **MesoAmerican Ball Game**

Unit 4: Global Decades Series - Technological Emergence

Play: Gavitts Stock Exchange 1903 (Pit)

History: Baseball and Gambling, WWI, Roaring Twenties, Gambling/Prohibition, The Great Depression, WWII Enigma Machine / Turing, Marshall McLuhan, Early Electronic Games, Arcade Games and Pinball, Video Games (console, mobile)

Play: Invented Card Game: Saratoga Sabotage (if time permits)

Readings: On D2L

Conclusion. The changing role of games and leisure.

Final Day of Finals Week: Final paper due.

Policies and School Policies

Policies Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in in-class exercises. Class will start promptly. Students are individually responsible for material they may have missed due to absence or tardiness, including obtaining readings handed out in class. Students are responsible for reading assigned material before class. All assignments and class material will be submitted and available at the D2L site. Assignments (except for designated group assignments) must represent a student's individual effort. While students are permitted to discuss assignments at the conceptual level, under no circumstances should students share specific answers (electronically or otherwise). Papers must conform to the course guidelines on references and documentation. Use of sources without attribution constitutes plagiarism, a serious violation of academic integrity. Consult the assignment handouts or the instructor if you have questions about how or what to document.

School Policies

Online Instructor Evaluation

Course and instructor evaluations are critical for maintaining and improving course quality. To make evaluations as meaningful as possible, we need 100% student participation. Therefore, participation in the school's web-based academic administration initiative during the eighth and ninth week of this course is a requirement of this course.

Email

Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu/> is correct.

Plagiarism

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course requirements, should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Incomplete

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the School of Computer Science, Telecommunications and Information Systems. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd. Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

Understanding the Past

This course is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Understanding the Past (UP) domain. This Learning Domain studies human life in past societies (mostly pre-1945) as a process of continuity and change over time. It includes courses offered in a range of scholarly fields concerned with historical questions including but not limited to History, Archeology, Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Literature, and Sociology. Courses in this learning domain are distinguished by their interest in reconstructing the past through the analysis of primary evidence, in critically reflecting on the ways the past has been explained and understood, and in examining the ways human experience is shaped by diverse geographies and chronological periods.

Learning Outcomes

The central UP learning goal is to help students become literate about the past and the methods used to understand and interpret the past. We consider that Liberal Studies and domain learning goals are achieved if students are able to:

1. Describe and explain knowledge of prehistoric or historical events, themes, and ideas;
2. Examine and assess historical evidence and interpretations through analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis of a range of primary and secondary source evidence;
3. Recognize that there are different perspectives on the past, whether those be historical or methodological in nature;
4. Compose written work that expresses knowledge and an ability to reason effectively in writing.

Writing Expectations

Instructors of UP courses should assign at least six pages of written work that students complete outside of class. Such writing assignments should be designed to evaluate both content based knowledge and skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing; they should not be limited to "opinion" or "response" pieces. In lower-division courses, instructors are encouraged to favor

shorter, more frequent writing assignments over long end of term papers, to create more opportunities for students to practice writing and to receive comments and writing instruction from faculty. Revisions of papers are especially encouraged and will be counted toward fulfilling the page requirement above (i.e., a 4 to 6 page paper that is graded separately as a rough draft and as a revised paper would constitute 8 to 12 pages total outside writing).