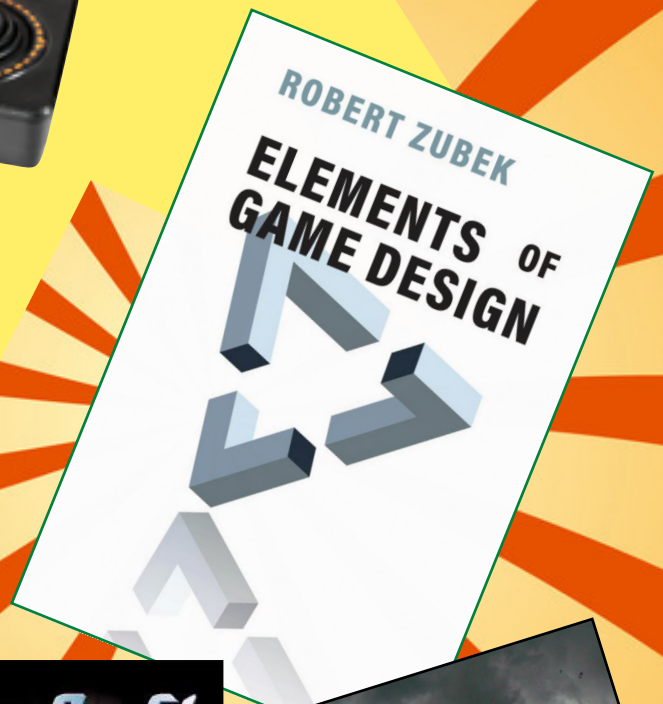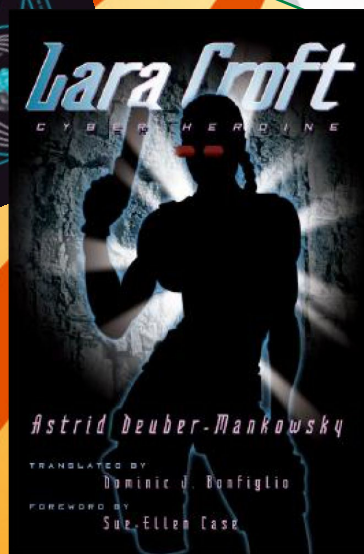VIDEO GAMES THEORIES & HISTORY

Fall 2020 taught in cyberspace via Zoom, Slack, Basecamp & Steam by Dene Grigar

ROBERT ZUBEK
ELEMENTS OF GAME DESIGN

VIDEO GAME HISTORY
GAME ON!
FROM PONG AND PAC-MAN TO MARIO, MINECRAFT, AND MORE
DUSTIN HANSEN

Lara Croft
CYBERHEROINE
Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky
TRANSLATED BY
Dominic J. Bonfiglio
FOREWORD BY
Sue-Ellen Case

Current play mode
/wordless/
whispers
story
{ begin }
about
help & options
feedback
★

LIFE IS STRANGE
SQUARE ENIX
M

A Creative Media & Digital Culture Production ©2020

# VIDEO GAMES THEORIES & HISTORY

Fall 2020
F 11:10 p.m.-2:00 p.m.
Classroom: Virtually on Zoom and online at Slack and Basecamp
3 hours credit
Taught by Dr. Dene Grigar, Professor & Director of the CMDC Program
Office: Dene's Digs on Zoom
360-546-9487
Slack: @dgrigar
dgrigar@wsu.edu
Office Hours: M, 3:00-4:00 p.m.;  F, 2-3 p.m.;  by appointment

## Part 1. Course Information

DTC 392 is described in the WSU Course Catalog as the "[h]istory and
theory of video games with a focus on innovation and cultural impact."
Part of the CMDC Program's Game Studies and Design Certificate, the course
works in tandem with DTC 492 Engines and Platforms taught in the spring
semester each year to provide students with a deep understanding about
best practices in video game design and development.

## Course Materials

- Game On! by Dustin Hansen, McMillan Publishing, 2016,
978-1-250-29445-6. $8.79

- Elements of Game Design, by Robert Zubek, The MIT Press, 2020,
978-0262043915 (It will be released in August.) $30

- Lara Croft: Cyber Heroine, by Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky, U of Minnesota
Press, 2005, 9780816643912. $17.39

- Life Is Strange (free on Steam) You are not required to purchase games
for this course, but note that many of the games listed on the course
schedule are available for purchase via Steam.

- Steam (free at [https://store.steampowered.com/about/?](https://store.steampowered.com/about/?)
gclid=EAIaIQobChMIi4LKkuuQ6wIVyB6tBh026AK1EAAYASAAEgJYL_D_BwE

## Major Projects

Project 1: Analyzing a Video Game through the Lens of Elements of Game
Design

Project 2: Evaluating a Video Game through the Lens of Elements of Game Design

Project 3: Creating a Video Game through the Lens of Elements of Game Design

## Course Instructional Methods

This course is taught primarily synchronously. This means you are expected to attend class at the time it is scheduled. We will use Zoom for our virtual class experience. Additionally, we will use Slack for communicating on the fly with one another outside of class and while we are working in Zoom Break Out rooms during class. Basecamp will be the site where you can find documents you need for the course and where you can upload and access projects.

## Assessment

Work will be assessed for its quality. Other factors include being turned in on time, uniqueness, and, of course, content. Components that will be assessed are:

Project 1: 25%
Project 2: 25%
Project 3: 25%
Collegiality & Community Building: 25%

Items turned in late will be penalized a letter grade per day (not class day but each day) late. Final grades will be calculated in this way:

94-100:  A
90-93:  A-
84-89:  B
80-83: B-
74-79:  C
70-73:  C-
>69:  F

## Attendance Policy

This class meets once a week; this means that one absence amounts to two class meetings in a normal schedule. For this reason, you should plan to attend all classes. Keep in mind that the definition of an excused absence follows within the guidelines of the university. Absences due to a vacation, wedding, a family reunion, and a special "gig" do not count as excused absences. You will see your grade drop one letter grade per two classes missed. If you miss more than three weeks in a row, for any

reason, you will be asked to withdraw from the course and retake it when you are better able to participate.  You are also expected to be in class on the first and last class day.

If you have received permission for flex-time consideration, know that you are still responsible for all class assignments on the due date and time. You are also responsible for your portion of your team's contribution to the project at the due date and time.

For anyone missing class for any reason, you are always responsible for the work that is due.

Tardies count as missing a portion of a class.  Students coming to class late more than two class days will see their grades drop one letter grade per every two days of tardiness.

Keep in mind that one of the questions potential employers generally ask me when inquiring about hiring a DTC grad is if he or she completes work on time and shows up to class.  I cannot recommend you for a job if you have not conducted yourself responsibly in my class.

## Learning Goals for This Course

| Student Learning Outcomes: at the end of this course, students should be able to: | Required Course Topics/Dates The following topics/dates will address this outcome: | Evaluation of Outcome: This outcome will be evaluated primarily by: | CMDC's Goals |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Critical and Creative Thinking**<br><br>Combining and synthesizing existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways | Project 2: Evaluating a video game through the lens of the elements of game design: November 20, 2020 | 300-500 word essay | Goal 1: Demonstrate competency with computers for designing, distributing, researching, retrieving, and preserving digital works in various mediums for humane and effective human-computer interactions;  Goal 2: Synthesize media forms for multimedia contexts |
| **Information Literacy**<br><br>Using information to accomplish a specific purpose | Project 3: Creating a video game through the lens of the elements of game design: December 18, 2020 | 30-60 minute playthrough of the assigned game using OBS (Open Broadcast Software) uploaded  to the class Basecamp site and on YouTube | Goal 4: Understand the production and assessment of media objects; Goal 8: Appreciate the history of technological development, from local to global perspectives, and its implications for a variety of mediums |
| **Communication**<br><br>Speaking confidently and effectively in front of groups | Project 3: Creating a video game through the lens of the elements of game design: December 18, 2020 | Formal presentation of the scene produced in Adobe XD to the class using Zoom | Goal 10: Be practiced and capable communicators in all mediums |

| Diversity<br><br>Assessing one's own core values, cultural assumptions, and biases in relation to those held by other individuals, cultures, and societies | Project 1: Analyzing a video game through the lens of the elements of game design: October 2, 2020 | 300-500 word essay | Goal 6: Question the way digital media functions in multiple cultural contexts; Goal 7: Recognize various forms of language processing and their implications for media authoring |
|---|---|---|---|

# Part 2. University Policies

## Reasonable Accommodation

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities or chronic medical conditions. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center website to follow published procedures to request accommodations: https://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/access-center. Students may also call or email the Access Center to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor; Phone: 360-546-9238; Email: van.access.center@wsu.edu. All disability related accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center. If you have a disability and need accommodations, we recommend you begin the process as soon as possible. It is a university expectation that students with approved accommodations visit with instructors (via email or Zoom) within two weeks of requesting their accommodations to discuss logistics.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. As such, all members of the university community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Students who violate WSU's Academic Integrity Policy (identified in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 504-26-010(3) and -404) will receive a 0 for the first assignment and will fail the course if they are caught doing it a second time and will not have the option to withdraw from the course pending an appeal, and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students, WAC 504-26-010(3). You need to read and understand all of the definitions of cheating: http://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=504-26-010. If you

have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course, you should ask course instructors before proceeding. If you wish to appeal a faculty member's decision relating to academic integrity, please use the form available at [https://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct](https://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct). If you have any questions about the process on the Vancouver campus, please call Eric Scott at 360-546-9530.

## COVID-19 Policy

Students are responsible for ensuring that they attend all class meetings and complete all in-class and out-of-class work as assigned by the instructor. Students are also responsible for communicating with the instructor should they need to be absent. During the fall semester it is likely that some students will be required to quarantine or will fall ill for an extended period. Many students will also have challenges related to access to technology and internet or quiet spaces to attend a remote class. Faculty should exercise understanding and generosity in responding to students' requests to keep up with the coursework or make up missed work. It is the expectation of the Provost's Office that instructors will reasonably accommodate students who are absent for an extended period. Regularly using Panopto or recording zoom sessions will assist students in keeping up with the course. "Reasonably accommodate" means coordinating with the student on scheduling examinations or other activities necessary for completing course requirements and includes offering different times for examinations or activities. Instructors may determine that the missed work and/or class time is so extensive that the student cannot make it up without taking an Incomplete grade. Students have one year to complete the work, unless a shorter interval is specified by the instructor. The Incomplete grade will administratively convert to an F grade after one year. There are no extensions beyond the one year.

## Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment (EP-15)

This policy expresses WSU's commitment to maintaining an environment free from discrimination, including sexual harassment. This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, or others having an association with the University.

Discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct (including stalking, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence) is prohibited at WSU (See WSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment (Executive Policy 15) and WSU Standards of Conduct for Students).

If you feel you have experienced or have witnessed discriminatory conduct, you can contact the WSU Office of Civil Rights Compliance & Investigation (CRCI) and/or the WSU Title IX Coordinator at 509-335-8288 to discuss resources, including confidential resources, and reporting options. (Visit crci.wsu.edu for more information).

Most WSU employees, including faculty, who have information regarding sexual harassment or sexual misconduct are required to report the information to CRCI or a designated Title IX Coordinator or Liaison. Visit https://crci.wsu.edu/reporting-requirements/ for more information.

## Accommodation for Religious Observations or Activities

Washington State University reasonably accommodates absences allowing for students to take holidays for reasons of faith or conscience or organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Reasonable accommodation requires the student to coordinate with the instructor on scheduling examinations or other activities necessary for course completion. Students requesting accommodation must provide written notification within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course and include specific dates for absences. Approved accommodations for absences will not adversely impact student grades. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who feel they have been treated unfairly in terms of this accommodation may refer to Academic Regulation 104 – Academic Complaint Procedures.

## SAFETY & Emergency Notification

Please sign up for emergency alerts on your account at MyWSU. For more information on this subject, campus safety, and related topics, please view the FBI's Run, Hide, Fight video and visit the classroom safety page https://provost.wsu.edu/classroom-safety/.

Emergency Closure/Adverse Weather Bus Information for WSU Vancouver Campus:
- WSU Vancouver VanCoug ALERTS: www.vancouver.wsu.edu/alerts
- Weather Closure Media Web Sites: http://www.oregonlive.com/
- During adverse weather conditions when C-Tran is operating on snow routes, the WSU Vancouver campus will not be served as the snow route ends at 20th Ave.
  For more information on bus routes and C-Tran scheduling, please visit their website at:
  http://www.c-tran.com/

WSU Vancouver Home Page (Announcements and Alerts):
- http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/

WSU Vancouver Police:
- http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/police
- Police Services
- Campus Safety Plan: http://admin.vancouver.wsu.edu/clery-act/annual-security-report
- Campus Alert Information

Emergencies:
Hostile Intruder:
- Campus Lock Down — Exterior doors will lock
- Apply "RUN-HIDE-FIGHT" personal safety protocol
  If sheltered or hiding; silence electronics, turn out lights, stay away from windows, barricade or lock doors, make a plan to fight if necessary
  Active Shooter Training links: https://oem.wsu.edu/emergency-procedures/active-shooter/
  https://oem.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1081/2015/10/active-shooter-training-2016.mp4?_=1
- WSU Vancouver VanCoug ALERTS: www.vancouver.wsu.edu/alerts
- Mass notification system: WSU Vancouver Home Page — myWSU (under the PROFILE Tab) to update info

## Inclement Weather Policy

In the event that we can return to campus for f2f instruction and an adverse weather event (e.g., snow or ice) or natural hazard that poses a safety risk occurs, you should take personal safety into account when deciding whether you can travel safely to and from campus, taking local conditions into account. If campus remains open and your instructor decides to cancel the face-to-face meeting and substitute an alternative learning activity, you will be notified by your instructor via email or through Blackboard within a reasonable time after the decision to open or close campus has been made. Instructions regarding any alternative learning options or assignments will be communicated in a timely manner. If travel to campus is not possible due to adverse regional conditions, allowances to course attendance policy and scheduled assignments, including exams and quizzes, will be made. Students who attempt to gain advantage through abuse of this policy (e.g., by providing an instructor with false information) may be referred to the Office of Community Standards for disciplinary action. If a student encounters an issue with an instructor, the student should first talk with the instructor. If the

issue cannot be resolved, the student should follow the reporting violations of policies outlined on the [student affairs](#) website. Finally, in case of class cancellation campus-wide, please check local media, the WSU Vancouver web page ([https://www.vancouver.wsu.edu](https://www.vancouver.wsu.edu)) and/or [http://www.flashalert.net/](http://www.flashalert.net/). Individual class cancellations may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

## Cougar Food Pantry

We know that it can be hard to make ends meet when you're paying for college and living on a tight budget. If you are struggling to feed yourself or your family, the Cougar Food Pantry can help. The pantry provides free, nonperishable food items for WSU Vancouver students in need. The process is simple, anonymous and judgement-free. Learn more and request food at vancouver.wsu.edu/fooddrive or stop by the Cougar Center in the Student Services Center. Help your fellow Coug; refer a friend in need!

## Recording Sensitive Topics

In this class, students are encouraged to both express and evaluate multiple points of view. A key aspect of a college education is exposure to and engagement with the complexity of various issues. Therefore, it is important that we listen and respect one another. We do not have to come to consensus, but we do need to agree to honor the privacy and educational processes of our classmates. Because this class is virtual, that commitment includes digital privacy, meaning that if the course is recorded and shared with students in this course in order to extend their learning opportunities, students are not allowed to make, remix nor share or post course recordings, nor in any way capture, manipulate, or circulate the likeness of a classmate.

# Part 3: Course Schedule

August 28: Intro to course, workshop in Slack, Basecamp, Zoom, OBS, Twine; inventory students' game access; introduce Project 1

September 4: Arcade Games
Chapter 1 of Elements of Game Design entitled "Elements"

Pages vi-25, 35-38, 131-133, 235-237, 259-261, 285-287 of Game On!

Pong (1972): Jazz Jackson
Space Invaders (1978): Andrew Thompson
Pac-Man (1980): Bayleigh Parsons
Donkey Kong (1981)
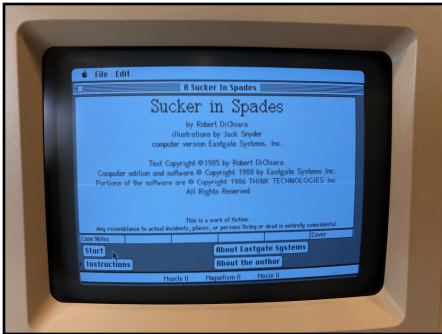



## September 11: Desktop Gaming
Special event: A live play-through of Robert DiChiara's A Sucker in Spades (1988) on a Macintosh Classic via YouTube
Read the blog post, "Why I Care about Early Interactive Media": http://dtc-wsuv.org/wp/ell/2020/02/22/why-to-care-about-early-interactive-media/.
Event: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzeZQ05p_1Tli0lDBeWMxOA/live

## September 18: Interactive Fiction
Chapter 2 of Elements of Game Design, "Player Experience"
Pages 27-33 of Game On!


Zork (1980): Ruth Woodcock
Ad Verbum (2000): https://nickm.com/if/adverbum.html (Choose the "browser version"
Galatea (2000): Playthrough on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6AGNgPvmjY


## September 25: The Rise (and Fall) of the Console
Chapter 3 of Elements of Game Design, "Mechanics"
Pages 39-63, 87-92, 152-155, 204-205 of Game On!

Super Mario Bros. (1985): Joseph Schacher
The Legend of Zelda (1986): Matthew Francisco
Sonic the Hedgehog (1991): Betsy Hanrahan
E.T. (1982): Greg Philbrook, guest speaker

## October 2: Narrative Games
Chapter 4 of Elements of Game Design, "Systems"
Pages 119-123, 253-259, 298-305, 327-335 of Game On!

Myst (1996): Julie Pahukoa
Portal (2007): Brandon Touhy
Uncharted 2 (2009): Grayson Goodwin
The Walking Dead (2011): Elyse Mollahan
Life Is Strange (2015): Sierra O'Neal

## October 9: Guest Speaker, Erik Loyer of Opertoon at 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.



Pages 315-317 of Game On!
Watch Erik Loyer's interview about "the art in video games": https://youtu.be/cApshBRTjcw.
Read about Strange Rain at Loyer's project site: http://opertoon.com/2010/11/strange-rain-for-ipad-iphone-ipod-touch/

## October 16: Competitive Games
Chapter 5 of Elements of Game Design, "Gameplay"
Pages 93-109, 307-314 of Game On!

Street Fighter II (1991): Drew Swanson
Mortal Kombat (1992): Viet Nguyen
League of Legends (2009): Barysh Agaliev



## October 23: FPS Games: Guest Speaker Ben Cammarano, Wizards of the Coast
Chapter 6 of Elements of Game Design, "Macrostructure"
Pages 125-130, 167-176, 207-217, 229-234 of Game On!

Doom (1993): Nix Pendergast
Half-Life (1998): Dave Sabrowski
Grand Theft Auto (2001): Preston Reed
Halo 2 (2004): Ransom Reed

## October 30: Role Playing Games, MMOs, and World Building Games
Chapter 7 of Elements of Game Design, "Prototyping and Playtesting"
Pages 157-165, 197-203, 219-227, 289-297 of Game On!
    Final Fantasy (1997): C. J. Maldonado
    The Sims (2000): Jennifer Matthews-Souza
    World of Warcraft (2004): Craig Vesterby
    Minecraft (2009): Katya Farinsky

## November 6: Hand-Held and Mobile Gaming
Pages 77-85, 189-195, 271-284 of Game On!

    Tetris (1989): Templeton Templin
    Pokémon Yellow (1999): Keegan Walden
    Farmville (2009): LaShay Wesley
    Angry Birds (2009): Alyona Bobrik

## November 13: Physical and RFID Games
Pages 179-187, 239-243, 319-325 of Game On!

    DDR (1999)
    Guitar Hero (2005)
    Skylander (2011): Kathleen Zoller, guest speaker

## November 20: Sports & Racing Games
Chapter 4 of Elements of Game Design, "Systems"
Pages 67-75, 111-117, 147-151, 245-251 of Game On!
Essay for Project 2 is Due at the beginning of class. Make sure you upload it to the Project 2 folder in Basecamp by 11:10 a.m. today

    John Madden Football (1988)
    Super Mario Kart (1992): Quin Tran
    Gran Turismo (1997)
    WII Sport (2006): Dimitri Myers

## November 27: Holiday

## December 4: Tomb Raider 1996
Lara Croft: Cyber Heroine
Pages 135-146 of Game On!

    Tomb Raider (1996)

## December 11: Work on Project 3 during class

## December 18: Present Project 3

Essay and presentation for Project 3 are due at the beginning of class. Make sure you upload them to the Project 3 folder in Basecamp by 11:10 a.m. today