English 2367.08

Instructor: [Instructor Name, pronouns]

Email: [linked instructor email]

Office Hours: [Office Location, Times]

You will be expected to read the textbook and supplemental articles posted on Carmen. Readings provide:
- Research and writing techniques
- Content and background for your assignments
- Opportunities for participation
- Credit for discussion posts and journals

Required Texts and Materials

Who Says? By Deborah H. Holdstein and Danielle Aquiline. Third Edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780197525494. **Required.**

Primary and supplementary readings made available online and through Carmen, as listed in the course schedule.

OSU email account and flash drive (or cloud storage) to save and store work.

“Well met, adventurer. You seem like a curious sort who enjoys the finer things. Permit me to thrust upon you my latest masterwork, years in the making. I think you’ll find it well worth your time and money.

First, a warning: here there be monsters!” – Volothamp Geddarm, Volo’s Guide to Monsters.

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Course Overview

Course Format (Lecture/Discussion)

This course will meet two times per week in [Location]. On a typical week, the following structure will apply to our readings an in-class activities:

Tuesdays: Following discussion board posts which will be due on Monday, Tuesdays will typically focus on discussing our course theme readings, analyzing primary sources during class, and applying what we learn in our readings during in-class activities.

Thursdays: Since most of our major assignments will be due on the weekends, Thursdays will be the time set aside for discussing writing and research techniques, including engagement with our *Who Says?* textbook readings. Thursdays will also often be the day for peer review workshops and in-class work on our major writing assignments.

Running the Adventure (Preparing for Class)

To prepare for our class, you'll want to start by reading our syllabus. You'll also need the *Who Says?* textbook as one of your core rulebooks.

This syllabus contains information about course policies, basic descriptions of our major assignments, and includes a detailed week-to-week calendar. Please review the syllabus carefully before running the adventure!

Most Active Carmen Pages

Carmen Modules / Home Page: Our Carmen Home page defaults to displaying our Modules page. All readings, weekly checklists, and assignments will be displayed on this page, and this is reflected in our Syllabus as well. If updates are needed, adjustments will be made on Modules and announced during our in-person class.

Announcements: Important updates will be announced in Announcements. Announcements are displayed on our Home page and can also be accessed via the Announcements tab.

Files: You can find a full list of PDF readings, handouts, PowerPoints, and other materials available under files.

Discussions: The full list of discussion boards is available here [linked to course Carmen page]. These are also linked on Modules and under assignments.

Assignments: The full list of assignments is available here [linked to course Carmen page]. These assignments are also linked on Modules under the week that they are due.

Grades: You can see your current grade for the class here [linked to course Carmen page]. If you ever notice anything that seems off about your class grade, please do not hesitate to contact me. If I am still working on grades for an assignment, you will see a message that says the grade is currently muted and unavailable.

Course Description and Objectives

In this three-hour writing course you will develop and refine your skills in analysis, research, and composition. This course emphasizes persuasive and researched writing, revision, and composing in various forms and media. In addition, you will build upon and improve your mastery of academic writing with and from sources; refine your ability to synthesize information; create arguments about a variety of discursive, visual, and/or cultural artifacts; and become more proficient with and sophisticated in your research strategies and employment of the conventions of standard academic discourses.

This course will address theories in game studies, focusing on tabletop and digital roleplaying games. Students will interrogate virtual lived environments through an analysis of character development and creators, plot and story, non-player characters (NPCs) and party interactions, narrative structures, gameplay mechanics, worldbuilding and more. We will approach gameplay and story choices as *intentional* and *rhetorical.* For example, while Gary Gygax defended D&D as being neutral "make-believe," fantasy and science fiction has a history of reproducing and reinforcing systemic oppressions. Many mainstream Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TTRPGs) and video games have a fraught history, with imaginary worlds and scenarios often not deviating from white supremacist, oppressive, colonial realities. While many creators and players have taken significant steps towards separating their own tabletop and video games from this problematic history, others continue to perpetuate harmful imagery or gameplay. This course gives students the opportunity to investigate how games reinforce or reject harmful stereotypes and violent discriminatory practices in virtual lived environments. We will ask ourselves how we can imagine decolonized, accessible, non-discriminatory game worlds.

Game Studies Minor
3015 can be taken for credit towards the undergraduate game studies minor. Please see the game studies minor overview for more information.

GE: Lived Environments—Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes

Goals:

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. [Note: In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, reply on research or cutting edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.]

2. Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

3. Successful students will explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g., agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.

4. Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations, and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Successful students are able to:

- 1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.
- 1.2. Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.
- 2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.
- 2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.
- 3.1. Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.
- 3.2. Describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.
- 4.1. Analyze how humans' interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors.
- 4.2. Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact.
- 4.3. Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments.

This course meets the Lived Environments theme goal and expected learning outcomes by enabling students to explore issues related to humans and their lived environments through both objective and subjective lenses inclusive of physical, biological, cultural and aesthetic space that individuals and groups occupy, and the relationship between humans and these environments. This course contextualizes video games and their virtual worlds, alongside other popular role-playing games (RPGs) as lived environments. This course defines video games and virtual worlds as texts that: allow humans to experience various scenarios of environmental change, explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or

more types of environment, and develop an understanding of lived environments by making connections between out-of-classroom experiences and academic knowledge. Through a range of scholarly and popular readings, class discussion, short written responses, and in-depth research, this class will engage you in scholarly conversations and activities to meet the goals and expected learning outcomes (ELOs) for the lived environments theme. For example, you will engage in critical and logical thinking by reflecting on prior experiences and assumptions through academic discourse to build awareness of individual, cultural, and environmental representation within video games and virtual worlds. By the end of this course, you will have conducted an in-depth study of video games as lived environments and explored a range of perspectives on and representations of those environments, as per the GE goals and expected learning outcomes below. As detailed in the Lived Environments table below, note the explicit connections between the goals, ELOs, and course content.

Theme: Lived Environments Course Content		
Goals	**Expected Learning Outcomes**	**Related Course Content**
GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. [Note: In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, reply on research or cutting edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.]	Successful students are able to: **1.1.** Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.	• Students complete a scaffolded set of formal writing assignments practicing critical analysis of and engagement with lived environments at an advanced level (Major Research Project) • Students analyze concepts of lived environments at an advanced level through in-class writings, online discussion activities, and reflective assignments that facilitate logical and critical thinking (Informal Writing Assignments and Participation)
	1.2. Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.	• Students engage in advanced research to understand the importance and rationale behind searching for and using current, relevant, and proven scholarship to build ethical and responsible discourse (Major Research Project Part 1) • Students read and discuss scholarship that integrates approaches to academically understanding video games and virtual worlds as lived environments (Weekly Course Schedule, Discussion Boards)

GOAL 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.	**2.1.** Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.	• Students engage with lived environments through video games studies on topics such as race, gender, culture, sexuality, ability, class, and technology. Students synthesize academic and authoritative sources with their previous understanding of and implicit biases surrounding contemporary social issues represented in video games as lived environments (Weekly Course Schedule) • Students analyze an artifact and its interactions with game studies, applying this analysis to larger conversations of contemporary social issues and environments, such as perspectives of race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, technology, etc., represented through the video game platform. In doing so, students make connections to their own out-of-the-classroom experiences as they engage with approaches to virtual worlds and video game studies (Major Research Project Part 5)
	2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.	• Students complete written self-reflection on their own implicit biases in order to better understand and make connections with out-of-classroom experiences, which they generate via advanced analysis of lived environments (Informal Writing Assignments and Participation) • Students consider and evaluate ways in which to apply research into a creative, multimodal project. Students pick a topic surrounding video games and virtual worlds, answer researchable questions they create, and produce a visual and/or auditory component to their analysis and research methodologies (Major Research Project Part 6) • Students write a justification essay to explain their design decisions for the creative project, sharing their developing sense of themselves as learners, interpreting their original responses to these lived environments, and reflecting on and self-assessing their own challenges or biases from prior experiences (Major Research Project Part 6)

GOAL 3: Successful students will explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g., agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.	**3.1.** Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.	• Through readings on contemporary social topics (such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, access, etc.) that rhetorically situate and analyze the complexity and uncertainty of lived human-environments represented in video games, students explore the following questions: what are video games in their entirety? How might we position landscapes, both fictional and real, to cultivate a wider range of academic discourse surrounding video games and gaming culture in general? What are the elements of production that maintain and contribute to the industry and culture of video and tabletop games? How can we read these games as a text and discuss them as such? What aspects of our own lives and lived environments are reflected through this medium? In what ways do video games give us introspection into our realities and lived environments; and, how can these observations carry into our daily lives? (Weekly Course Schedule) • To engage with these topics and theoretical frameworks for evaluating lived environments, students practice skills in rhetorical analysis of the story worlds (whether fictionalized or realistic) they engage with and the various modes of production within video game culture (Major Research Project Part 4, Discussion Board Posts)

	3.2. Describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.	• Students complete a review of scholarship that reflects on the kinds of changes currently and historically occurring in video game studies and virtual environments that transform representation for a more socially just world. Students find and assess examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change via video games and how they have transformed over time and across virtual spaces (Major Research Project Part 2) • Students reflect on private and public lived spaces by completing a written entry for each of the games they interact with in the course, describing and analyzing examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and space (Informal Writing Assignments and Participation) • Through course readings, discussion, and informal writing assignments students will engage with narrative representations of human-environments, both fictionalized or realistic, through the video game genre and gaming culture as a whole. They will reflect on virtual participation and fictional experiences to discuss and generate ideas regarding environmental change in regard to bodies (such as the absence of diverse representation in video game characters) and place (possibilities of global environmental disaster). This engagement allows students to interact with the changes they face culturally and ideologically in today's society within narrative possibilities and industry standards (Weekly Course Schedule, Informal Writing Assignments and Participation)

GOAL 4: Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations, and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.	**4.1.** Analyze how humans' interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors.	• Students analyze the variety of representations and perceptions these virtual worlds contain historically and currently, learning to contextualize video games as an interactive narrative lived-environment and interpret/challenge these representations in order to evaluate shared attitudes and common beliefs surrounding industry standards regarding diverse representation (Weekly Course Schedule) • Students explore how the gaming industry has adapted and evolved to alleviate problematic representations of race, gender, sexuality, and ability, engaging with course readings to understand the impact theoretical scholarship and a diverse audience can have on an industry (Weekly Course Schedule, Informal Writing Assignments and Participation) • As students experience "living" (playing) through virtual and fictional environments, they also analyze and synthesize how their own attitude and beliefs have been shaped through previous interactions and where their new knowledge wants to see growth in the gaming community (Informal Writing Assignments and Participation)
	4.2. Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact.	• Students analyze video game industry standards of representation for a variety of perceptions that are generally the core concepts of academic discourse. Students will discuss, write about, and produce a multimodal project that covers how industry participates in human perception, understanding, and even biases, such as perspectives of race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, technology, etc., represented through a platform our modern world interacts with daily. Students unpack and develop new perspectives in relation to game culture, representation, and how these spaces speak to their own real-world perceptions and interactions. Students analyze how human perceptions are represented and perceived through the virtual environments (video games) they interact with (Major Research Project) • Students give thoughtful feedback to their classmates' projects, exploring alternate viewpoints and ideologies as they peer review their classmates' presentations. Through peer-to-peer feedback, students will gain experience in understanding and working alongside various perceptions framed through and by their own lived environments and the environments they play through (Major Research Project Part 3)

	4.3. Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments.	• One critical focus of this course is to grant students the opportunity, resources, and tools to engage with an often-criticized genre of popular culture: video games/gaming culture. By placing video games as primary texts alongside scholarship regarding race, dis/ability, and other aspects of identity, students will learn about the significance of critical analysis in order to critique standard conventions and ideologies surrounding this popular genre and the environments it creates and represents (Weekly Course Schedule, Informal Writing Assignments and Participation) • As part of the Major Research Project students conduct research and writing that facilitates critical thinking on and analysis of a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them, considering the various ways discourses can engage with and influence diverse lived environments and how to be critical observers in these spaces (Major Research Project)

GEL: Writing and Communication, Level 2

1. Through critical analysis, discussion, and writing, students demonstrate the ability to read carefully and express ideas effectively.
2. Students apply written, oral, and visual communication skills and conventions of academic discourse to the challenges of a specific discipline.
3. Students access and use information critically and analytically.

Through course readings, discussions, and writing assignments students will learn to analyze and describe a frequently undertheorized and understudied cultural object: video games. Scaffolded writing assignments will teach students both how to critically examine cultural texts and to express critical arguments about such texts. They will also be introduced to research methods and skill that are essential to both academic and public writing.

Additional Learning Outcomes

1. Rhetorical Knowledge: Students will further develop their understanding of rhetorical situations as they read academic texts and practice tailoring their work for specific audiences.

2. Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing: Students will further develop their critical thinking skills as they analyze and synthesize academic texts. The writing course should reinforce students' critical reading and thinking skills.

3. Knowledge of Composing Processes: Students will continue to hone their revision

Revising is a key component of this class. Writing is a process, and our strongest writing results from talking about our writing, revisiting writing, refocusing and reconsidering arguments, etc. rather than seeing writing as the "product."

strategies and reflect critically on their writing practices. The writing class should reinforce the fact that writing is a flexible and recursive process. Because students often write more scholarly texts in a writing class, practice in generating ideas and text, drafting, revising, and editing are important course components.

4. Knowledge of Conventions: Students will study academic conventions and apply appropriate conventions to their own work. The writing course should reinforce and expand students' knowledge of conventions.

5. <u>Minimum Course Requirements</u>

Students must compose a substantial amount and variety of work in order to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes for writing courses. In this course, students will engage in both writing-to-learn and learning-to-write activities. To that end, they will:

- Compose a variety of texts with opportunities for revision and response.
- Produce a minimum of 5000 total words of text (including a research project) that have been revised and copyedited for applicable rhetorical situations. Multimodal texts may be included as part of the overall body of work students produce in the course.
- Complete frequent low-stakes or writing-to-learn activities such as single-draft reading responses, journals, and in-class efforts, as well as discovery drafts.

<u>Please Note</u>: The points listed above indicate just some of the objectives that will guide your learning in this course. Students should also identify and set their own goals as students ==and as citizens who will write in and for various communities== throughout their lives.

Rules as Written (Course Policies)

> This small room is filled with computers and desks. The seating is cramped. The dull, neutral tones of the walls and floors close the space in further. One of the windows is opened just enough to let a pleasant breeze enter the room.

The Classroom: At OSU, you've encountered classroom spaces before – of different shapes, orientations, and seating capacities. Sometimes, when we enter a new classroom with a new instructor, it's difficult to predict what we might encounter. In my classroom, I want us to speculate about an ideal learning environment, one where you feel supported, encouraged, and safe to practice what you're learning. I want us all to consider the following questions as we enter this space for the first time:

- What could be an ideal classroom situation for you?
- How do you learn best?
- What has worked well for you in past classes?
- When do you feel most comfortable?
- What can I do as an instructor to help you with your own learning goals?

Accessibility: Your instructor is committed to making this course accessible to all students. Please feel free to contact her to discuss your learning needs, or any aspects of the course that could be made more accessible, such as class material, resources, or activities. Even if you do not have a documented disability, remember that you can receive support outside of class during office hours and that university services like the

Writing Center are available to all students. If a student cannot afford groceries, are unable to access sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please contact the Dean's Office of Undergraduate Education for support as soon as possible. Furthermore, if you are comfortable doing so, please notify your professor to help get connected with local resources.

Official University Disability Statement: The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID- related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Diversity: The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Academic Misconduct: **Plagiarism** is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic

> In most cases, plagiarism occurs because a student is in a rough place with time commitments, grades, etc. If you are feeling like you are in a tough situation, contact me rather than risk plagiarizing.

misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/.

Please email me concerning missing work or class absences; in most cases, I will excuse the absence – life happens! However, excessive missed classes or late work will affect your participation and success in class. These late work and attendance policies as written will stand if there is no communication from the student.

Attendance: **Attendance** is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Therefore, each unexcused absence after three will result in the lowering of your final grade by a third of a grade. Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade. It is your responsibility to contact your instructor as soon as possible if you miss class. **It is program policy that nine unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.**

Mental Health Services: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614--292--5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Title IX: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu

Land Acknowledgement: We would like to acknowledge the land that The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of

Greeneville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. As a land grant institution, we want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that has and continues to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

Major Assignments, Assessment, and Grading

The assignments in this course explore and address GE Lived Environments goals and expected learning outcomes. Additionally, assignments are:
- Scaffolded – writing, research, and reading build up skills and content for your final paper.
- Multimodal – assignments offer various ways to present information.

As a student of 3015 you are asked to participate in higher-level writing assignments that incorporate different mediums and audiences, contextualizing video games as lived environments and representations of larger social issues. You will critically analyze, discuss, and evaluate video games and virtual worlds through role playing performances in online and in-person environments. Taken together, these assignments support the belief that academic research writing involves much more than learning to write grammatically; it also requires us to inquire into and learn about the rhetorical and cultural expectations that come with writing for particular audiences in an academic setting—and thus enter into a "conversation of ideas" in the scholarly community. By the end of the semester, you will have engaged an advanced repertoire of video game studies by finding, evaluating, and linking cutting-edge research discussing larger social topics such as gender and sexuality, disability studies, and the environment.

Major Research Project: "Creating an Analytical Adventure Campaign"

Skills: Identification of appropriate primary sources for analysis, accessing university library databases, application of analytical frameworks and rhetorical methods, analysis of primary sources and secondary sources, synthesis of multiple critical viewpoints into new interpretations, critical thinking on topics that analyze environments and humans within them, thesis development, composing process, style and grammar, composing in multimodal environments, revision practices, peer response.

Part 1: "Roll a History Check: Researching RPGs and TTRPGs" (50 points)
- o Collaborative Annotated Bibliography
- o *Research Component*: Students will work together to contribute to a collaborative annotated bibliography (at least 2 secondary sources). All students will contribute two secondary sources on some aspect of gaming studies with annotations to our group bibliography.

- The collaborative annotated bibliography is an opportunity for you and your colleagues to work together to contribute to a bibliography which would include summaries of each of your sources, justifications for the inclusion of the source in your essay, and descriptions of why this source is useful for your argument. We will work together in a collaborative document, where your source contributions will add to a growing list of resources gathered by you and your colleagues. ==This assignment asks you to utilize and develop your research skills, using OSU's library databases to identify credible sources. These sources will serve as the foundational scholarship on which we will build our discourse surrounding video games and their environments.==

> The annotated bibliography not only is a good practice to engaging with your resources but collaborating together with your colleagues provides a possible list of resources for future writing assignments.

Part 2: "A Sage Background: Exploring the Scope of the Field" (50 points)
- Literature Review
- *Research Component:* Students will begin incorporating secondary source materials (at least 4 secondary sources) to support their understanding of game studies more broadly, ==its connection to a social issue or lived environment, and their analysis of their primary source / artifact.== They will show a growing understanding of not only the scholarly conversation around their topic, but also begin to make connections between this conversation and the rhetorical impact of their artifact.
- The Literature Review (at least two pages) is a formal writing focusing on demonstrating connections between your research, the scope of the field, and your research tipids. It asks students to begin articulating not only their understanding of game studies more broadly, but also what scholarship will inform and connect to their own engagement with the field and the analysis of their artifact. Students may also choose to begin applying their analysis of their artifact as part of our grading contract. ==The review should reflect on the kinds of changes in video game studies and virtual environments that will transform representations for a more socially just world.==

> While the annotated bibliography will give you and your colleagues a chance to begin engaging with your sources, the literature review allows you to demonstrate the connections between your sources and your larger research topic.

Part 3: "(Not a) Performance Check: Writing as a Party" (100 points total)
- Brainstorming Presentation and Peer Review
- *Research Component:* Students will pitch some of their ideas and interests for their research project this semester. ==Students will begin gathering a series of research questions that explore games as lived environments== and will have the opportunity to dig into initial research (at least 4 secondary sources). Students' preliminary brainstorming will show a starting engagement with analyzing their primary sources as well as the scholarly conversation. Students will share their

> The formal presentation gives you an opportunity to propose your potential research focus for the semester. This includes possible arguments and points of analysis. Your focus may change, and you should keep your minds open to how these initial discussions will change over the course of the semester.

brainstorming presentation with their peers and receive / offer feedback on their initial proposals.

o Components:
- Formal Presentation (4-5 minutes): describes your possible plans for research while building on your literature review and contributions to the annotated bibliography.
- Peer Review: offering responses to your colleagues' formal presentations and offering suggestions about your possible plans.

Part 4: "Roll for Investigation: Analyzing Role-Playing Artifacts" (150 points)

o Analytical Paper (4-5 pages)
o *Research Component*: ==Students will begin incorporating secondary source materials (at least 5 secondary sources) to support their analysis of their primary source / artifact. They will show a growing understanding of not only the scholarly conversation around their topic, but also begin to make connections between this conversation and the rhetorical impact of their artifact.==
o The Analytical Paper asks students to begin analyzing their selected artifact. Artifacts can include texts (excerpts from video games, campaign books, TTRPG rules, etc.); streams, live shows, or recorded actual play; or a focused analysis of a smaller component of brands, companies, etc. Specific examples of artifacts

> While your brainstorming presentation addresses the potential scope of your project for the course, the analytical paper focuses on one component of that larger project: the analysis of an artifact.

will be provided in class and on Carmen, and you are welcome to discuss any and all possibilities and interests you may have.

o Components:
- Workshop and Peer Responses: Students will be asked to post an excerpt from their artifact to Carmen along with their initial analysis. Peers will then add their own analysis and offer feedback.
- Analytical Paper (4-5 pages): formal, analytical paper focusing on the analysis of your artifact.

Part 5: "Roll for Persuasion: Analytical Interventions" (200 points total)

o Argumentative Analytical Paper (8-10 pages)
o *Research Component*: ==Students will be asked to analyze an artifact and its interactions with game studies as lived environments. Students will apply this analysis to larger conversations of contemporary social issues and environments, such as perspectives of race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, technology, etc., represented through the video game platform.== Their paper should articulate a researched, original argument, integrating at least 7 secondary sources.
o The Argumentative Analytical Project will 1) analyze an artifact and its interactions with game studies and topics of their choice, and 2) articulate a

> Your project should engage with:
> - Course readings and content
> - Writing as a process – revision strategies and activities
> - Scholarly research and joining a conversation
> - Game studies, ==close readings of video game lived environments==, and diversity

researched, original argument using close-reading and analysis of their primary source as evidence.

- o Components:
  - Workshop and Peer Responses: following the feedback guides, providing your colleagues with responses to their papers, including suggestions of different avenues they might consider for their research, new avenues of analysis, or different arguments to consider.
  - Argumentative Analytical Project (8-10 pages) (200 points): formal composition which thoroughly addresses the analysis of your artifact and your argument.

Part 6: "How Do You Want to Do This?: RPGs, Redesigned" (200 points total)

- o Multimedia Project
- o *Research Component*: While research is not a required component of the multimedia project, students will be encouraged to use secondary sources as justifications for their design decisions for their creative project. ==The creative project should, ultimately, reflect students' understanding of and perspectives on a social issue and lived environment.==
- o Students will consider ways in which to apply their semester-long research into a creative, multimodal project. Students will *create* of a visual and/or auditory supplement to your analysis. In some way, this creative project would demonstrate what you've learned throughout the semester about game studies, RPGs, and the analysis your primary source / artifact. This creative project would, in some ways, reimagine your analysis in a new medium, such as designing a video game or tabletop campaign. Students will write an informal supplement to explain their design decisions for the creative project.

> The multimedia project can take a number of forms; you should consult with your professor about your plans for the project, and she will guide you. Be creative!

- o Components:
- • Multimedia Project: the visual and/or auditory project, created by the student.
- • Justification Essay (at least 3 pages): the informal essay which describes the student's choices and why

Informal Writing Assignments and Participation

Discussion Boards (150 points)

Discussion boards are used by the professor, fellow classmates, and students to share initial impressions about class readings. You may choose to post to the discussion board, send your impressions via email to your instructor, or discuss with your professor

an alternative way to share. ==The discussion boards serve as an opportunity for you to reflect, throughout the course, on your growing understanding of video games as lived environments, gaming culture, and the complexities these productions contain as fictional-interactive texts==.

> You may prefer to participate in class in various ways. Do not hesitate to have a conversation with your professor about the possibilities for participation in this course.

- Discussion Boards: posting one takeaway and one question from the readings. Responding to your colleagues' questions. Discussion boards will be due weekly and can cover any of the readings throughout the week. There are a total of 15 discussion boards for the semester, but students need to only complete 10 for full credit.

Collaborative Notetaking (50 points)

Students will help each other by taking and sharing notes once per semester. We will talk at the beginning of the semester about how to take notes. The importance of this task is to not only provide an additional avenue for participation, but to also practice notetaking skills. ==This assignment is an opportunity for you to share what you have found analytically and rhetorically about issues identified when exploring lived environments through video games and virtual worlds.==

> By having us share collaborative notes, you will be able to see and learn about new notetaking methods as well as have better access to the discussions we have in class.

- Collaborative Notetaking: once per semester, posting notes on our class discussions, synchronous class meetings, readings, and important announcements.

In-Class Participation (50 points)

> Participating in class can include taking notes, participating in discussion, working in groups, completing activities, listening attentively, asking questions, and taking notes.

Our class will be very hands-on in our analytical approach to TTRPGs and video games. Students will be expected to participate in our class and come prepared for our discussions and activities. While participation is an expected component of any class, students who take on an active role in our classroom will benefit your overall grade.

Please Note: You will receive more instruction and handouts regarding writing exercise assignments, major papers, peer review, and other assignments, generally, the completion of which will be essential to your success as writers in this course and beyond. Should you ever have questions about anything—this syllabus, this class, basic or any other requirements—do not hesitate to ask.

Assessment and Grading

You will complete several assignments for this course, some of which will be weighted differently. Final grades for this course will be determined as follows:

Project	Points	Percentage	Total
Scaffolded Formal Writing Assignments			
Collaborative Annotated Bibliography	50	5%	
Literature Review	50	5%	
Brainstorming Presentation / Peer Review	100	10%	75%
Analytical Paper	150	15%	
Argumentative Analytical Paper	200	20%	
Multimedia Project	200	20%	
Informal Writing Assignments and Participation			
Discussion Boards	150	15%	
Collaborative Notetaking	50	5%	25%
In-Class Participation	50	5%	

Grading Scale	**A** 100% to 93%	**A-** < 93% to 90%
B+ < 90% to 87%	**B** < 87% to 83%	**B-** < 83% to 80%
C+ < 80% to 77%	**C** < 77% to 73%	**C-** < 73% to 70%
D+ < 70% to 67%	**D** < 67% to 60%	**E** < 60%

Assignment Submission & Late Work: All assignments will be due on the day and time specified by the course outline (electronic copies). For each calendar day a paper is late, starting immediately after the stated deadline, the grade on that paper will be reduced by a full letter grade (e.g., from a "B" to a "C" to a "D" to an "E"). The course instructor will provide students with additional information about all assignments in class and through Carmen (OSU's course management technology). Although the instructor is open to offering extensions on assignments, requests for extensions must be submitted via email at least 24 hours before the assignment is due, and requests may be denied as per the instructor's best judgment. Students, therefore, should always prepare to have their assignments completed by the deadline.

> Please never hesitate to ask for an extension on an assignment. Most assignments' deadlines can be extended, except for presentations, workshops, and the final assignment of the semester.

Writing and Student Resources

Community Resources: Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to use the different resources on campus and in the community. We encourage you to use the following services. (Due to Covid-19, in-person services may have changed).

This is only a beginning list of possible resources. Please contact me if you encounter anything this semester that negatively impacts you. If I cannot personally assist, I can work to find someone who can.

- Buckeye Food Alliance
  https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/
- Food Pantry Lincoln Tower, Suite 150, 1800 Cannon Drive, 614-688-2508 (Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays from 6-8 pm, Fridays 12-3; Check as times may vary)
- Hands On Central Ohio https://www.211centralohio.org/ (Housing and Utility Assistance, Food Pantries, Emergency Clothing, Furniture, Disaster Services) Dial 2-1-1 or 211centralohio.org
- Homeless Hotline: 1-888-4-SHELTR
- Foodline: 614-341 2282 (Phone), 614-702-7772 (Text)
- Ohio Benefit Bank Assistance applying for Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, HEAP & other programs
  Email CSW-OBB@osu.edu to ask questions or set up an appointment.

Research Help in Thompson Library
If you need additional help with your research for this class, including finding articles, organizing your research, or citing your sources, you can visit the reference desk on the first floor of Thompson Library. You can also visit libanswers.osu.edu (Links to an external site.) and use the contact information there to call, email, or chat with a reference team member (please let them know you are taking English 3015).

The Writing Center offers free help with writing at any stage of the writing process for any member of the university community. During our sessions, consultants can work with you on anything from research papers to lab reports, from dissertations to résumés, from proposals to application materials. Appointments are available in-person at 4120 Smith Lab, as well as for online sessions. You may schedule an in-person or online appointment by visiting WCOnline or by calling 614-688-4291. (For spring 2022, the Writing Center will conduct both in-person and virtual appointments. Please schedule through WCOnline.) You do not have to bring in a piece of writing in order to schedule a writing center appointment. Many students report that some of their most productive sessions entail simply talking through ideas.

Writing Programs Contact
Any conflicts regarding instructors, students, and Writing Programs can be mediated by Dr. Beth Hewitt, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Dr. Beverly Moss, the

Director of Writing in the Themes. You may contact Dr. Hewitt by emailing hewitt.33@osu.edu and/or Dr. Moss by emailing moss.1@osu.edu.

The Student Advocacy Center (as they note in their mission statement) is committed to assisting students in cutting through campus bureaucracy. Its purpose is to empower students to overcome obstacles to their growth both inside and outside the classroom, and to help them maximize their educational experience while pursuing their degrees at The Ohio State University. The SAC is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. You can visit them in person at 001 Drackett Tower, call at (614) 292-1111, email advocacy@osu.edu, or visit their website: http://studentlife.osu.edu/advocacy/

OSU Counseling and Consultation Services is able to see students on an urgent basis during most hours of the business day from 9-5pm. You can reach them at (614) 292-5766. 24-hour crisis services include NetCare Access (614) 276-2273 and OSU Hospital Emergency Department (614) 293-8333.

Campaign Overview (Weekly Course Schedule)

This schedule gives due dates for most assignments and activities, but it does not list every one. Keep in mind, then, that the schedule is not chiseled in stone. If we need more time to complete at task, we will—within reason—take it. All changes to the schedule will be reflected and announced on Carmen.

Week 1	•	•
Introduction to the Course: "You Start in a Tavern."		
Tuesday	**Required *Who Says?* Readings:** • Chapter One: What is Information?	**Class Plan:** • Introduction to the Course • Discussion of Syllabus and Course Policies • Introduction to Role-Playing Games. In-Class Activity
Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "The Evolution of the RPG" by Aaron Birch • "History & Evolution of RPGs" by FilmComicsExplained	**Class Plan:** • Discussion of the History of RPGs and TTRPGs. • Finding Artifacts, Research Suggestions. In-Class Activity. **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due

Week 2	•	•
War Games and Modern Video Games		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "The Wargame Legacy: How Wargames Shaped the Roleplaying Experience from Tabletop to Digital Games" by Dimitra Nikolaidou • Read/Skim *The Player's Handbook.*	**Class Plan:** • Introduction to Dungeons and Dragons, TTRPGs. In-Class Activity. • Introduction to Collaborative Annotated Bibliography Assignment.
Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "Genre and game studies: Toward a critical approach to video game genres" by Thomas Apperley **Required *Who Says?* Readings:** • Chapter Five: The Wikipedia Problem: Evaluating and Trusting Sources in a Digital Age	**Class Plan:** • Introduction to online resources and research methods. • Tertiary vs. Secondary vs. Primary sources. • Quest: Find different kinds of sources. In-Class Activity. **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due

Week 3	•	•
Worldbuilding, Characters, and Narrative Studies		
Monday	**No Classes – Labor Day**	
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "Worldbuilding in Role-Playing Games" by Karen Schrier, Evan Torner, and Jessica Hammer • Read/Skim *The Dungeon Master's Guide.*	**Class Plan:** • Introduction to Literature Review assignment. • Discussion of worldbuilding in *The Dungeon Master's Guide.* • Discussion of world building, character development, and storytelling.

| Thursday | **Required Thematic Readings:**
• "The Importance of Character Design in Digital Games" by Cheyenne Webb

Required *Who Says?* Readings:
• Chapter Six: What Counts and Why? Finding and Engaging Sources | **Class Plan:**
• Introduction to Character Creation. In-Class Activity.
• Continued work with research and finding resources.

Assignments:
• **"Roll a History Check: Researching RPGs and TTRPGs"** Collaborative Annotated Bibliography (2 sources) Due
• Discussion Post Due |

Week 4	•	•
Dice and Button Inputs, "What are the Rules?"		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "Playing by the Rules: instruction and acculturation in role-playing games" by Bryn Neuenschwander • "The Semiotics of the Game Controller" by Johan Blomberg	**Class Plan:** • "Explaining a Board Game" by Aunty Donna • Discussion of Game Mechanics, Rules, and Inputs.
Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Read/Skim *The Player's Handbook*, looking specifically for "rules." • "How to Play Dungeons and Dragons" by Dungeons and Dragons. **Required *Who Says?* Readings:** • Chapter Seven: Yours, Mine, and Ours? Integrating Resources	**Class Plan:** • Analyzing Game Design. In-Class Activity. • The "Rules" of Academic Writing and Citation • Review integrating sources, introducing research, quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing. **Assignments:** • **"A Sage Background: Exploring the Scope of the Field"** Literature Review Due • Discussion Post Due

Week 5	•	•
"Dungeons and Dragons Teaches that Diversity is a Strength"		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • ==**"D&D Must Grapple With the Racism in Fantasy" by Cecilia D'Anastasio**== • Read/Skim *The Monster Manual*	**Class Plan:** • Introduction to Racist, Sexist, and Ableist Histories in RPGs. In-Class Activity. • Introduction to Brainstorming Presentation
Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** Choose one of the article options available on Carmen: • "Playing With Prejudice…" by Melinda Burgess et al. • "Decolonizing the Dungeon: Gatekeeping" by Nick Masyk • "The Player and the Avatar: Performing as Other" by Anelise Farris • "The Power of Play: The Portrayal and Performance of Race in Video Games" by Anna Everett and S. Craig Watkins • "Blackless Fantasy: The Disappearance of Race in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games" by Tanner Higgin **Required *Who Says?* Readings:** • Chapter Four: Who Cares? Identifying the Problem	**Class Plan:** • Small group / full group discussion of diversity or discrimination in video games and TTRPGs. • Creation and identification of research questions. **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due

Week 6	•	•
Decolonizing D&D and "Non-Combat Encounters"		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "Redesigning the Tabletop: Queering Dungeons and Dragons" by Lee Hibbard • "Decolonization and Integration in D&D" by Graeme Barber	**Class Plan:** • Discussion of non-combat encounters in TTRPGs and RPGs. *Disco Elysium* and *Animal Crossing.*

Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** Choose one of the article options available on Carmen: • "Reimagining Disability in Role-Playing Games" by Elsa S. Henry. • "D&D Disability Mechanics" by sleepyspoonie • "Ridding Your Monsters of Ableism" by Fay Onyx • "Respectfully Depicting a Character Adapting to a Disability" by Fay Onyx • "Play with us however you roll: combat wheelchair rules for D&D 5e" by Sally Davis **Required *Who Says?* Readings:** • Chapter Nine: What's Appropriate? Citing Sources and Citation Formats • Part of Chapter Ten: What Now? Revising, Presenting, Reviewing	**Class Plan:** • Creating Accessible Presentations • Accessible Gameplay **Assignments:** • **"(Not a) Performance Check: Writing as a Party"** Brainstorming Presentation and Peer Review Due • Discussion Post Due

Week 7	•	•
Dungeons and Dragons and Discrimination		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "The Misogyny at the Core of Our Hobby" by Michael Wolf. • "Privilege, Power, and Dungeons & Dragons: How Systems Shape Racial and Gender Identities in Tabletop Role-Playing Games" by Antero Garcia.	**Class Plan:** • Discussion of gender and sexuality in video games and TTRPGs. • Introduction to Analytical Paper.

| Thursday | **Required Thematic Readings:**
• "Check Your Inventory: A Critique of Hypermasculinity and Creative Potential in Video Games" by Kevin Thomas Kincaid.
• "Activision Blizzard: How a 'frat house' workplace led to a sexual harassment lawsuit" by Owen Good.

Required *Who Says?* Readings:
• Chapter Eight: Now I Have Evidence: Writing and Crafting Your Research | **Class Plan:**
• Analytical labeling – examining secondary sources and close-reading with evidence. In-Class Activity.
Assignments:
• Discussion Post Due |

Week 8	•	•
Workshop and Peer Review		
Tuesday	**Required *Who Says?* Readings:** • Chapter Three: But You Said This Was Collaborative: Plagiarism	**Class Plan:** • Workshop for Analytical Paper **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due
Thursday	**No Classes – Fall Break**	

Week 9	•	•
"Into the Motherlands": Afrofuturism and BIPOC (Players of Color)		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "Into the Motherlands" Excerpt • "Diversity and Dungeons & Dragons" by Wizards of the Coast	**Class Plan:** • Discussion of diversity in digital and tabletop gaming.

| Thursday | **Required Thematic Readings:**
• ==“We Are the Caretakers is an indie game where you save a rhino-like species from poachers” by Stephany Nunneley.==
• ==“Afrofuturism Explained: Not Just Black Sci-Fi” by Inverse.==

Required *Who Says?* Readings:
• Chapter Two: Says Who? The Writer’s Authority, the Writer’s Voice | **Class Plan:**
• Identifying authorial voice.
• Practicing primary source analysis and company communication. In-Class Activity.

Assignments:
• **“Roll for Investigation: Analyzing Role-Playing Artifacts”** Analytical Paper Due
• Discussion Post Due |

Week 10	•	•
Adventures in Analysis		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Review the submitted excerpts and take notes for our collaborative analysis of artifacts.	**Class Plan:** • Students will submit excerpts from their own artifact, and we’ll discuss them and analyze them in class together.
Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Review the submitted excerpts and take notes for our collaborative analysis of artifacts.	**Class Plan:** • Students will submit excerpts from their own artifact, and we’ll discuss them and analyze them in class together. **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due

Week 11	•	•
In-Class Research Practices		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Choose one of the “Reverse Design” texts to skim: Half Life, Final Fantasy VI and/or Diablo II	**Class Plan:** • Discuss the “reverse design” in the context of analysis and argument. • Researching Arguments. In-Class Activity.

Thursday	**Required *Who Says?* Readings:** • Chapter Ten: What Now? Revising, Presenting, Reviewing	**Class Plan:** • Practicing revisions strategies (labeling, reverse outlines, cutting, etc.). **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due

Week 12	•	•
Workshop and Peer Review		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Reading through colleagues' drafts, reflections, and questions.	**Class Plan:** • Discussion of questions, drafts, and reflections. In-class preparation for Argumentative Analytical paper. **Assignments:** • **"Roll for Persuasion: Analytical Interventions"** Argumentative Analytical Paper Due • Discussion Post Due
Thursday	**No Classes – Veterans Day**	

Week 13	•	•
Indie Interventions: Becoming Creators		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "Indie RPGs show roleplaying can - and should - be far more than Dungeons & Dragons" by Sharang Biswas. • Choose an indie game and dig into it! Come to class with notes and ideas.	**Class Plan:** • Introduction to Multimedia Project. • Discussion of your investigations in indie / freelance work.
Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • "The Future of Diversity and Inclusion in Video Games" by Nicola Dall'asen. • Choose a different indie game and dig into it! Come to class with notes and ideas.	**Class Plan:** • Continued discussion of indie games – mechanics, development, diversity, etc. **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due

Week 14	•	•
Creative Innovations in Games		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Come prepared to talk about different design programs, and options for the multimedia project. • Offer feedback on your colleagues' multimedia drafts.	**Class Plan:** • Brainstorming Workshop for Multimedia Project. **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due
Thursday	**No Classes – Thanksgiving Break**	

Week 15	•	•
Games as Performative Entertainment		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Choose one of the chapters from *Watch Us Roll.* • "Setting the digital stage: Defining game streaming as an entertainment experience" by Jih-Hsuan Tammy Lin, Nicholas Bowman, Shu-Fang Lin, Yen-Shen Chen.	**Class Plan:** • Discussing actual play and streaming. • Analysis of actual play / streaming session. In-Class Activity.
Thursday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Choose one stream or actual play performance. Bring notes / ideas to discuss.	**Class Plan:** • Analysis of actual play / streaming session, especially as it relates to fandom and entertainment. In-Class Activity. **Assignments:** • Discussion Post Due

Week 16	•	•
Final Presentation and Reflections		
Tuesday	**Required Thematic Readings:** • Review your choice of reading or artifact from this semester.	**Class Plan:** • Reflection on the semester. In-Class Activity. • Discussion of final projects, questions, or concerns. **Assignments:** • Final Presentation Due

Thursday	**No class—Exams Begin**	**Assignments:** • **"How Do You Want to Do This?: RPGs, Redesigned"** Multimedia Project (4-5 pages) Due