

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
DEPARTMENT OF ART

COURSE OUTLINE

Art (ART) 311.02
Topics in Art
“The Art of Interactive Storytelling”
Summer 2016 (July 5 – August 17)
M, W, 9:00 - 11:45 PM; SS 018

Instructor: *Angus Leech*
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Office Hours: *M, W, 1-2pm (or by appointment)*

Course Description

This course explores storytelling for new and emerging platforms like video games and the internet, interactive fiction and cinema, mobile apps and VR (Virtual Reality). Students will learn fundamental concepts related to interactive storytelling, reflect on interactive digital narratives from multiple genres, and complete practical storytelling assignments using accessible tools and techniques.

Prerequisites &/or Co-requisites

None.

Objectives of the Course

The age-old art of storytelling is being transformed by digital media and interactivity. This course explores how storytelling is changing (and staying the same) as it migrates from more traditional “legacy” media (books, film, etc.) to new digital platforms like the web, video games, mobile apps and VR.

The broad objective of this course is to enhance the student’s understanding of interactive digital narrative as a contemporary art form, particularly with respect to how the art and practice of storytelling is changing as it migrates to new digital platforms that incorporate interactivity and audience participation. Students will develop new knowledge and awareness of digital media as a vehicle for fiction and non-fiction storytelling, become familiar with concepts and properties underlying interactive digital narrative, and learn important elements of the history and craft of interactive storytelling.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should:

- Recognize interactive digital narrative (IDN) as a new and distinct narrative art form distinguished by the audience’s ability to influence the story; an art form rooted in the medium of the computer and still in the early stages of its evolution, that has diversified into many platform-specific variations (e.g., video games, VR, locative media, etc.).
- Understand key practical and theoretical concepts related to IDN, as well as the unique characteristics that differentiate this art form from other types of storytelling.

- Recognize the unique properties of computer media, and understand the basics of how they transform storytelling.
- Understand how interactivity in particular transforms storytelling in digital works—especially, how it impacts audience experience, participation, authorship, character, story structure, immersion, and so on.
- Be able to analyze, describe and evaluate specific works of digital storytelling with regard to how individual artefacts express the characteristics, concepts and phenomena associated with IDN.
- Be able to apply some specific practical tools and techniques useful in the creation of interactive digital narratives, and be able to apply practical and theoretical concepts explored in the class to support such activities.

Textbooks and Readings

Main course texts:

Digital Storytelling: A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment (*3rd Edition), by Carolyn Handler Miller, Focal Press, 2014. (Available online at UofC Library.)

Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace, by Janet H. Murray, 1998. (Held on reserve at Taylor Family Digital Library.)

*Both of the above texts are available in hardcopy from the University of Calgary Bookstore. It is essential to have the most recent update of Miller's text for this class (3rd Edition), as it contains updates crucial to the course. Optionally, students purchasing *Hamlet on the Holodeck* may wish to get the 2016 edition, which is available only as an ebook, but which does contain useful updates appended to each chapter.

Readings for this course will also include excerpts from the following books:

Interactive Digital Narrative: History, Theory and Practice (Routledge Studies in European Communication Research and Education), edited by Koenitz, Ferri, Haahr, Sezen, and Ibrahim, (2015).

The New Digital Storytelling: Creating Narratives with New Media, (Praeger Publishers) by Bryan Alexander, 273 pages (2011).

The Language of New Media, by Lev Manovich, MIT Press, 2001.

Half-Real: Video Games Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds, by Jesper Juul, MIT Press, 2005.

Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals, by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, MIT Press, 2003.

*Wherever possible, the above books will either be on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library, or will be available in electronic form from the U of C library web site. If not available in electronic form, excerpts from these texts will be provided to students by the instructor.

Assignments and Evaluation

There is no final examination in this course. Marks are based on term work.

Quizzes: There will be three multiple choice quizzes (closed book) held approx. every 2 weeks (see schedule below). These will cover topics and concepts discussed in class readings, lectures and activities.

In-Class Assignments: Except for the final two classes, there will one short in-class assignment per lecture that students will need to complete in electronic form and upload to D2L before the end of class. These will be short analytical, reflective or creative exercises that students will complete individually or, more often, in small groups. (Often they will involve taking a look at some piece of interactive media and then analyzing it based on concepts covered in class.)

These assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis; i.e., students who complete the assignments to minimum standards will receive full points.

Homework Assignments: There will also be 10 short take-home assignments that students will need to complete in electronic form and upload to D2L. These will be short analytical, reflective or creative exercises that students will complete individually. In some cases, this will be an opportunity for students to analyze works of interactive digital storytelling chosen by themselves. In other cases, students will be asked to journal their own personal reflections on course-related topics, and/or complete short exercises that invite creativity (e.g., character design exercises, creation of branching narratives using free software, and so on).

These assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis; i.e., students who complete the assignments to minimum standards will receive full points.

Mid-Term Assignment: Early on in the course, students will be assigned a short creative development exercise that will be due part-way through the term (July 29th by 5p.m.). This assignment will ask students to brainstorm and develop a “core concept” for an interactive digital narrative project of their own choosing, and connect this proposed idea with practical and theoretical concepts explored in the course. The idea proposed in the Mid-Term Assignment will be further developed in the Final Project Assignment.

Final Project Assignment: The Final Project will be assigned no later than August 10th and due on August 22nd by Noon. Students will begin with the project idea proposed in the Mid-Term Assignment, then develop it further, creating either a more complete “concept document” or a small piece of interactive media (using free and accessible media authoring tools) that expresses their project idea in greater detail. Again, part of this exercise will require students to connect the proposed project with practical and theoretical concepts explored throughout the course.

Grading for the class will be weighted as follows:

Quizzes (x3) Approx. every 2 weeks	30% (to be graded equally)
In-class assignments	10% (to be graded equally)
Homework assignments	20% (to be graded equally) Due: July 8; July 10; July 15; July 17; July 22; July 24; Aug 2; Aug 7; Aug 12 and Aug 14
Mid-Term Assignment	15% Due Friday July 29 by 5p.m.
Final Project	25% Due August 22 by Noon

Please complete all assignments in electronic form and submit directly to D2L as per instructions provided by the instructor. Special permission and arrangements should be requested if you wish to submit anything in physical form.

All due dates are final unless otherwise negotiated with the instructor.

Students are not required to receive a passing grade on any one single component of the course in order to pass the course as a whole. However, students will need to complete the Mid-Term Assignment in order to move on to the Final Project assignment.

Writing

Not applicable.

Registrar-Scheduled Final Exam – NO

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of or any relevant documentation regarding each submitted assignment.

Please complete all assignments in electronic form and submit directly to D2L as per instructions provided by the course instructor. *Special permission and arrangements should be requested if you wish to submit anything in physical form.*

Late Assignment Policy

Due dates are final unless otherwise negotiated with the instructor.

In-Class and Homework assignments will not be accepted late.

Completion of the Mid-Term Assignment is required prior to students receiving the Final Project Assignment. Students submitting the Mid-Term Assignment late will receive a grade penalty of 5% per day of lateness.

The Final Project assignment will not be accepted late unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor, or unless due accommodation has been made in the case of medical and other emergencies (see Academic Accommodation below). Even if accepted, the final assignment may incur a grade penalty of 5% per day of lateness, dependent upon the cause.

Additional Information

There will be no additional costs required for course supplies or other materials.

In some cases, students may wish to make personal purchases in order to use a specific piece of media as the subject of an assignment. (e.g., they may wish to purchase interactive games or mobile apps via an online app store, acquire a Google Cardboard headset to view a VR experience, or similar). However, such personal purchases are NOT generally a requirement for this course, and all course assignments and exercises should be possible to complete using interactive media experiences available free of charge on the internet and elsewhere.

Course Activities

There will not be any scheduled field trips for this course.

Students may individually wish to visit interactive exhibits, play location-based games, or access other media experiences based off campus in order to analyze them for this course. However, this is not required, and students wishing to do so will be expected to make their own arrangements and explore these options at their own time and expense.

ART 311 – The Art of Interactive Storytelling, SUMMER 2016 Schedule

	Topic	Date	Quizzes
Day 1	Introduction to Story	Wednesday, July 6th	
Day 2	Digital Storytelling: A New Medium with an Old Soul	Monday, July 11th	
Day 3	A Brief History of Digital Storytelling + Interactive Fiction & Hyperfiction	Wednesday, July 13th	
Day 4	The Properties of the Computer and How They Shape Digital Storytelling	Monday, July 18th	Quiz #1 (Covers material from Classes 1-3)
Day 5	Interactivity and its Effects	Wednesday, July 20th	
Day 6	Characters, Role-playing and Immersion	Monday, July 25th	
Day 7	Interactive Cinema and Documentary	Wednesday, July 27th	
<i>Mid-Term Project</i>		<i>Due: Friday, July 29th</i>	
<i>Holiday</i>	<i>No class</i>	Monday, August 1st	
Day 8	Story Structure and Transformation: The Rhizome and the Kaleidoscope	Wednesday, August 3rd	Quiz #2 (Covers material from Classes 4-7)
Day 9	Games vs. The World, Round 1	Monday, August 8th	
Day 10	Games vs. The World, Round 2	Wednesday, August 10th	
Day 11	A Theory of IDN + Recent Trends	Monday, August 15th	
Day 12	“Thank You for Playing” (Final Quiz, Course Evaluations and Final Project Consultations)	Wednesday, August 17th	Quiz #3 (Covers material from Classes 8-11)
<i>Final Project</i>		<i>Due: Monday, August 22nd</i>	

*Required readings and/or other media will be assigned for each class. For more information, see the full course schedule (this will be made available on D2L).

Grading Method/Grading Scale:

Percentage	Grade	G.P.V.	Grade Definition
96-100	A+	4.0	Outstanding
90-95	A	4.0	Excellent-superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
85-89	A-	3.7	
80-84	B+	3.3	
75-79	B	3.0	Good – clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
70-74	B-	2.7	
65-69	C+	2.3	
60-64	C	2.0	Satisfactory – basic understanding of the subject matter.
55-59	C-	1.7	
53-54	D+	1.3	

50-52	D	1.0	Minimal pass – marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
0-49	F	0	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Studio Procedures

The creation of art can be a dirty process and a studio (in this case, a computer lab) is only workable if everyone cooperates in keeping it clean. Out of respect and consideration for your class mates and other users of the space, it is expected that everyone will participate in keeping the space clean and tidy.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information

Due to the nature of this course, use of electronic devices (laptops, phones, tablets, VR headsets, etc.) may sometimes be required and/or encouraged during classroom exercises. Students wishing to use such devices to take notes, capture media in support of their studies, etc., are also welcome to do so. However, students are not required to bring such devices to class (the computers provided in the computer lab should be sufficient for most of our media-viewing activities, and other arrangements will be generally made in cases where they are not). However, the use of electronic devices will be restricted to classroom purposes only. Personal use of digital devices, or uses that are distracting to students or their peers, are not permitted. Please turn all mobile phone ringers and other alerts off during lectures. Electronic devices must also be turned off and stored out of sight during all in-class quizzes (which are not “open book”).

Academic Accommodation

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (S.A.S.); S.A.S. will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

Academic Standing

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f.html>

Deferral of Exams/Term work

It is possible to request a deferral of term work or final examination(s) for reasons of illness, accident, family or domestic affliction, or religious obligations. Please check with Enrolment Services if any of these issues make it impossible for you to sit an exam or finish term work by stated deadlines.

For more information go to http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/deferred_final

F.O.I.P.

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Writing/Plagiarism

Writing skills are not exclusive to English courses and, in fact, should cross all disciplines. The University supports the belief that throughout their University careers, students should be taught how to write well so that when they graduate their writing abilities will be far above the minimal standards required at entrance. Consistent with this belief, students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their University courses and, where appropriate, members of faculty can and should use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Support Services can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance.

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support> or <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. Visual art projects submitted for course credit must be produced by the student specifically for this class. Students must not submit projects if credit has or will be provided for it in another class. This includes re-worked assignments from previous or concurrent courses, unless permission is provided in writing by the instructor. Additionally, the student is asked to be mindful of using visual sources from the internet, ensuring that that material is not derived from any on-line or other available source, and that appropriate copyright permission is granted, when required.

For more information go to:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

Student Misconduct

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Student Union

For more information go to <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/>

Student Ombudsman

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Lockers

The Art Building lockers are administered through the Student's Union's used bookstore, Bound and Copied. Lockers are rented on a first come, first served basis. Due to the shortage of lockers, and the high demand, students cannot hold more than one locker at a time. All of the details on renting a locker and your responsibilities can be found on the Locker Rental Agreement at

https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/locker_rental_agreement_2010.pdf

Lockers for all sessions can be rented through my.ucalgary.ca. Once you're in the Student Centre, click on **Other Academic Services** and choose **Locker Reservation**.

Lockers must be vacated by the end of term.

For more information go to <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/>

Models

Not applicable.

Portfolios and Assignments

The Department of Art will not assume responsibility for lost or stolen portfolios or course work given to instructors for grading, or for work posted on bulletin boards in the art building.

Note - All unclaimed work will be disposed of.

Note - Studio spaces, bulletin boards and display areas need to be cleared 2 weeks after the last day of classes.

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e., surveys, interviews or observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research.

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-5.html>

or

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/research/researchers/ethics-compliance/chreb>

Campus Security/Safewalk

Call 220-5333 anytime. Help phones are located throughout campus, parking lots and elevators; they connect directly to Campus Security - in case of emergency, press the red button.

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>

Emergency Evacuation

For more information go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

Have a question but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in the Faculty of Arts. Stop by SS102, call us at 220-3580 or email us at ascarts@ucalgary.ca or artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at 220-5881 or visit them on the 3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.