

ENG 156-M001 (11310): Interpretation of Games Fall 2026

Lecture: 11:40am-12:35pm, Monday and Wednesday, Hall of Languages (HL) 202¹

Discussion Sections:

Section M002 (11316): 11:40am-12:35pm, Friday, HL 115 (TA 1 Name)

Section M003 (11317): 12:45pm-1:40pm, Friday, Eggers 070 (TA 1 Name)

Section M004 (11402): 11:40am-12:35pm, Friday, HL 101 (TA 2 Name)

Section M005 (11403): 12:45pm-1:40pm, Friday, Tolley 204 (TA 2 Name)

Course Information:²

What is this class?

Almost everybody plays games, and they play them for different reasons: to relax, compete with others or themselves, be with friends, unwind by themselves, practice skills, or even just to have fun. Like novels, films, or television shows, games can tell stories and carry meaning that can be unpacked and tell us about who made them, who plays them, and why. ENG 156 is an introduction to studying and analyzing games and their components to help break them down to help understand how we interpret them.

Why do I teach this course?

Quite simply, I teach this course as I love games. I strongly believe that games are an important part of who we are and how we understand the world. I have taught hundreds of students at SU over the past 16 years (and even more at other universities before coming here) about games, how and why they are designed, and how we play them. I love teaching, but I also love learning about new games and why people like them. One of my favorite things is introducing people—or being introduced myself—to new games and new ways to think about games.

What do we do in ENG 156 Interpretation of Games?

We learn and practice different approaches together and to critically analyzing and interpreting games to understand how they become meaningful to their players—namely us! I want you to succeed in this course and have fun learning while you build your interpretive skills. Games are often fun and can challenge and push us to think in ways we did not anticipate—which is exactly how I want us to approach learning about games in this class!

Course Description:

How do we “read” and interpret a game such as *Baldur’s Gate 3* (Larian Studios, 2023), *Super Mario Bros.* (Nintendo, 1985), or Chess? How do games shape and change our interactions with the world and vice versa? How does the rapid growth of the video games industry in the last 50

¹ To make my syllabus more inviting from the start, I have relocated some course information such as the information about two screening meetings to below to move up the introduction of myself and the Teaching Assistants in the course, following the suggestions from warming up the syllabus on CRI Day 2.

² I added this “Course Information” section to introduce and explain the course more clearly in less staid language and to humanize my reasons for teaching the class and what I hope that students might get out of the class. I have tried to convey my own enthusiasm for the class, as well as my love for teaching and learning. This was also informed by CRI Day 2, and my self-reflection in the CRI about how better to help encourage students to engage by explaining up front my own interests in both teaching and learning.

years shape our interpretation of games and their place in the world, and how do smaller, secondary industries and communities such as esports and competitive gaming contribute to games and culture? This course will explore the evolving form of digital and analog games, tracing their historical roots in board games and other associated cultural modes of play to current and possible future iterations of video games. We will employ a range of critical approaches to gaming; games will be “read” and critically interrogated as texts, and the relationships between game, player, design, software, interface, and structures of play will be discussed. As we examine the development of games and their associated genres, we will investigate the historical, social, political, cultural, and economic contexts of individual games, and consider the relationship of games to other media forms and texts. In addition to games, we will also study screen-based media texts which explicitly or implicitly engage with the concepts of game studies.

Your Teaching Team

Instructor: Prof. Christopher Hanson (he/him) <cphanson@syr.edu>

Student Support Time: Mondays 8:30am-10:30am, 413 HL, & by appointment³

In this class, you are assigned a Teaching Assistant who will be your primary contact in the course to answer questions, provide regular individualized feedback and support, and generally help you succeed in the course. Your Teaching Assistant will run your Friday Discussion Section meetings, and I work closely with all of the Teaching Assistants to ensure that we are working together to best support your learning success. You are encouraged to reach out to your TA to introduce yourself and schedule times to meet with them during their student support time.

Teaching Assistants:

Teaching Assistant 1 Name 1 (they/them) <TA1Email>, Sections M003, M004

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm, 400 HL

Teaching Assistant 1 Name 2 (she/they) <TA2Email>, Sections M002, M005

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00pm-3:00pm, 400 HL

We want to be sure when we see your emails so we can respond to them! Always reach out to your Teaching Assistant first with questions, and when contacting any of us, please include the course number (ENG 156) in the subject of your email. We get a lot of emails every day and this helps us find and identify your emails so we can respond promptly. We will do our best to respond to your email within 48 business hours (i.e. Mon-Fri).⁴

Required Reading

These books will be available at the SU Bookstore, and both books are available electronically

³ I changed “Office Hours” to “Student Support Time” to reflect the strategies of from the CRI Day 2 discussion of warming up the syllabus, and I was also inspired by a sample syllabus and used its renaming. I appreciate how it emphasizes that this time is not simply when a student is allowed to come by an instructor’s office, but instead time that we each dedicate each week to providing direct student support outside of the usual class meeting times.

⁴ I altered this language to clarify that these guidelines are actually to help the students get a prompt response by streamlining the process for me and the Teaching Assistants to identify course-related emails, per discussions in the CRI around encouraging student engagement.

via the SU library. **New and used copies are also available online. You are welcome to use other/older/cheaper editions of these books, but please note that the page numbers and some content may be different and you will be responsible for the content of the edition listed below.**⁵ So if you decide to use a cheaper/earlier edition, please be sure to compare yours to the edition assigned on the syllabus when doing your reading. To help follow along with the discussion and complete in-class work, you are required to bring physical (e.g. printed) copies of the readings to the Friday discussion section class meetings. You are strongly encouraged to obtain a printed copy of the books as there may be publisher restrictions on the number of pages that you can print of the library ebooks!⁶

(IGA) Fernández-Vara, Clara. *Introduction to Game Analysis*. Third Edition. New York:

Routledge, 2024. ISBN: 978-1032318349

Library e-book link: <https://libezproxy.syr.edu/login?url=https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003355779>

(RP) Salen, Katie and Eric Zimmerman. *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-0262240451

Library e-book link:

https://search.syr.edu/view/action/uresolver.do?operation=resolveService&package_service_id=8100777210008496&institutionId=8496&customerId=8495&VE=true

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard. Please complete all readings by the class on the date for which they are assigned, and bring printed copies of the readings assigned for that day to your Friday discussion section. Please note that this syllabus may be revised, and course meeting structure, readings, assignments, screenings/screening format, and other elements of the course may change. The updated version of the syllabus will always be available on Blackboard, and anything beyond minor modifications will be announced to ensure that everyone is aware of them.

Course Schedule⁷

Week 1: Course Introduction & Studying Games

Screening: *Run Lola Run* (Tom Tykwer, 1998, 80min)

M 8/25

First day: No reading

W 8/27

RP: Foreword: Frank Lantz, Preface (ix-xv, available electronically via SU Library link above)

F 8/29

Before your first discussion section, you are required to fill out the form on your discussion section's Blackboard site with your preferred name, preferred gender pronouns (e.g. she/her/hers), favorite screen media text (a film, television program, or game), and reason(s) for taking this course. Please note that we will meet in person for a couple of

⁵ Here I tweaked the language and emphasized that students have the option to purchase used/cheaper copies of the books or access them through the SU Library to save money.

⁶ I changed the language here and emphasized different parts of the required reading section to clarify that bringing the readings to class makes it easier for students to do well in the class and complete in-class exercises.

⁷ I moved the course schedule much closer to the front of the syllabus from where it used to be at the end. I have moved information about the course, specific assignments, and general policies to the end and tried to use "I/We" phrasing to replace "you" in a number of places per discussions of inclusive syllabus language.

screenings from 7:00pm-9:45pm, Wednesday, on 9/24 and 11/12. Please keep these clear on your calendar and you need to notify your Teaching Assistant by noon on Friday 9/5 if you will have a conflict at this time.

RP: 1. About this Book, 2. The Design Process, Commissioned Essay: Reiner Knizia (1-27, available electronically via SU Library link above)

9/2: Registrar's Academic Add Deadline

Week 2: Core Concepts: Meaningful Play, Semiotics, & Making Meaning

Screening: *Hair Nah* (Momo Pixel, 2017)

M 9/1 Labor Day: No Class Meeting

W 9/3

RP: Core Concepts Intro, 3. Meaningful Play, 4. Design, & 5. Systems (28-55)

Paper Assignment #1 Handed out in Lecture

F 9/5

RP: 6. Interactivity (57-69)

***In-Class Feedback*⁸**

9/8-9/12: Early-Semester Progress Report

Week 3: Defining Analog & Digital Games

Screening: *The Game* (David Fincher, 1997, 128min)

M 9/8

RP: 7. Defining Games (70-83)

W 9/10

IGA: 1. The Whys and Wherefores of Game Analysis (1-27)

First Part of Paper Assignment #1 due by Thursday 9/11 10:00pm via Turnitin Link in your Discussion Section's Blackboard Site and four (4) printed copies due at start of Friday 9/12 Discussion Section

F 9/12

RP: 8. Defining Digital Games (84-91)

9/15: Registrar's Academic/Financial Drop Deadline

9/15: Religious Observance Notification Deadline

Week 4: The Magic Circle & Three Schemas

Screening: *Tag* (Jeff Tomsic, 2018, 101min)

M 9/15

RP: 9. The Magic Circle (92-99)

W 9/17

IGA: 2. Preparing for the Analysis (28-68)

F 9/19

RP: 10. The Primary Schemas, Commissioned Game: Richard Garfield (100-115)

In-Class Feedback Session

⁸ I have added several in-class opportunities early in the semester to incorporate early bi-directional course feedback per the presentation on and discussions about this practice on CRI Day 2.

Week 5: Formal Components: Rules & Systems I

*******IN PERSON Screening (Meeting details will be posted on Blackboard): *One Night Ultimate Werewolf* (Ted Alspach & Akihisa Okui/Bezier Games, 2014)**

M 9/22

RP: Rules Intro, 11. Defining Rules, 12. Rules on Three Levels (116-139)

W 9/24

RP: 13. The Rules of Digital Games, 14. Games as Emergent Systems (141-171)

F 9/26

RP: 15. Games as Systems of Uncertainty (172-189)

Week 6: Formal Components: Rules & Systems II

Screening: *Universal Paperclips* (Frank Lantz, 2017)

M 9/29

RP: 16. Games as Information Theory Systems, 17. Games as Systems of Information (190-211)

W 10/1

RP: 18. Games as Cybernetic Systems (212-229)

F 10/3

RP: 19. Games as Game Theory Systems (230-247)

Week 7: Midterm, Conflict, and Breaking the Rules

Screening: *Free Guy* (Shawn Levy, 2021, 115min)

M 10/6 Midterm Exam

No reading: Study for In-Class Midterm Exam

W 10/8

RP: 20. Games as Systems of Conflict (248-265)

F 10/10

RP: 21. Breaking the Rules (266-285)

Week 8: Analog & Digital Game History

Screening: *The King of Kong* (Seth Gordon, 2007, 79min)

M 10/13 SU Fall Break: No Class Meeting

No reading

W 10/15

IGA: 3. Areas of Analysis 1: Context 69-107

Final Draft of Paper Assignment #1 due by Thursday 10/17 10:00pm via Turnitin Link in your Discussion Section's Blackboard Site and one (1) printed copy due at start of Friday 10/18 Discussion Section

F 10/17

IGA: 4. Areas of Analysis 2: Game Overview (partial to start of "Game Mechanics", 108-121)

Paper Assignment #2 Handed out in Discussion Section

Week 9: Defining Play

Screening: ***PLAY ON YOUR OWN: *Minecraft* (Mojang, 2010)**

M 10/20

IGA: 4. Areas of Analysis 2: Game Overview (partial from start of "Game Mechanics", 122-144)

W 10/22

RP: Play Intro, 22. Defining Play (300-311), & 25. Games as the Play of Meaning (363-374)

F 10/24

RP: 27. Games as the Play of Simulation (420-459)

Week 10: Player Experience: Person, Player, & Character

Screening: *A Dark Room* (doublespeak games, 2013)

M 10/27

RP: 23. Games as the Play of Experience (313-327)

W 10/29

RP: 24. Games as the Play of Pleasure (328-361)

First Part of Paper Assignment #2 due by Thursday 10/30 10:00pm via Turnitin Link in your Discussion Section's Blackboard Site and four (4) printed copies due at start of Friday 10/31 Discussion Section

F 10/31

IGA: 5. Areas of Analysis 3: Formal Elements (partial to start of "Difficulty Levels", 145-186)

Week 11: Games & Narrative

Screening: *Gridland* (doublespeak games, 2014)

M 11/3

IGA: 5. Areas of Analysis 3: Formal Elements (partial from start of "Difficulty Levels", 186-222)

W 11/5

RP: 26. Games as Narrative Play (partial to start of "Spaces of Adventure" 377-396)

F 11/7

RP: 26. Games as Narrative Play (partial from start of "Spaces of Adventure" 396-419)

Week 12: Representation & Identity

*******PLAY ON YOUR OWN WITH ASSIGNED GROUPS (Details will be posted on Blackboard): Screening:** *Coup* (Rikki Tat/La Mame Games/Indie Boards & Cards, 2013)

M 11/10

RP: Culture Intro, 29. Defining Culture (502-513)

W 11/12

IGA: 6. Writing the Analysis (partial to start of "Game Communities", 223-248)

F 11/14

"Do You Identify as a Gamer?" by Adrienne Shaw (Blackboard)

Week 13: Esports, Games, & Culture

Screening: *Passage* (Jason Rohrer, 2007)

M 11/17

IGA: 6. Writing the Analysis (partial from start of "Game Communities", 248-280)

W 11/19

"The 'Problem' of Intersectionality in Digital Gaming Culture" by Kishonna Gray (Blackboard)

Final Draft of Paper Assignment #2 due by Thursday 11/20 10:00pm via Turnitin Link in your Discussion Section's Blackboard Site and one (1) printed copy due at start of Friday 11/21 Discussion Section

F 11/21

“The Rhetoric of Video Games” by Ian Bogost (Blackboard)

11/22: Registrar’s Withdrawal Deadline

11/24-12/1: Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Serious & Art Games, & Course Conclusion

Screening: *Freedom Bridge* (Jordan Magnuson, 2010) and *Adrift* (Quinn Crossley & Andrew Connell, 2017)

M 12/1

RP: 32. Games as Cultural Resistance (556-569)

W 12/3

IGA: 7. Wrapping Things Up (281-287)

F 12/5

No reading: Prepare for Final Exam next week!

Week 15: Course Conclusion

Screening: No screening

M 12/8 Final Exam

No reading: Study for In-Class Final Exam

12/9 Last day of classes

*****In-Class Final Exam During Last Class Meeting on Monday 12/8**

Information about Assignments and Other Aspects of the Course

Assessment

Discussion Section Participation	15%
Blackboard Posts	10%
Five Reading Review Exercises	10%
First Part of Paper Assignment #1 (due Week 3)	5%
Final Draft of Paper Assignment #1 (due Week 8, 1000-1250 words)	10%
Midterm Exam (Week 7, in-class exam)	15%
First Part of Paper Assignment #2 (due Week 10)	5%
Paper Assignment #2 (due Week 13, 1500-1750 words)	15%
Final Exam (in-class exam)	15%

Screenings: Most are screen on your own, scheduled 7:00pm-9:45pm, Wednesday, and may be watched/played before this time but must be completed by 9:45pm on Wednesday.

Please note that we will meet in person to play games for a couple of screenings from 7:00pm-9:45pm, Wednesday on 9/24 and at a time that you will determine with your group before 9:45pm on 11/12. We want to be sure that you get to play these games with your classmates and have fun with them, so please keep these clear on your calendar and you

need to notify your Teaching Assistant by noon on Friday 9/5 if you will have a conflict at this time. Any changes to screenings or locations will be announced in class and on Blackboard.

Course Objectives

This course is designed so that you may achieve the following goals:⁹

- Analyze emerging video games and their precursors in relation to their historical contexts
- Understand multiple ways in which meaning is produced in games
- Interrogate key concepts and theories of games studies and their associated cultural and social practices
- Provide a critical and theoretical foundation to help prepare for more advanced courses in screen studies
- Develop analytical and critical skills in both dialogue and prose
- Evaluate theoretical approaches to games and screen media by identifying and questioning assumptions

The writing assignments in this class are designed to help you build your skills as a writer through scaffolded work that allows you to get feedback on your work that you can then use to revise and improve your work. The assignments follow specified guidelines in order to fulfill associated requirements and to familiarize students with the thought processes, structures, and styles associated with writing in the liberal arts.¹⁰

Incompletes and Other Information

All written assignments and exams must be completed in order to pass this course. No incompletes will be given in this class except under extreme circumstances; such instances will require formal documentation of those circumstances and the instructor's approval. If you anticipate having difficulty completing any assignment, please e-mail your Teaching Assistant ahead of time so we can try to work something out. Unexcused lateness of assignments will negatively affect your grade. If you miss a class, you are responsible for work assigned and for finding out what you missed in class. If you are late to a class meeting or screening, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor immediately afterwards so that you are not marked absent.

Phones, laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices can be incredibly distracting to those using them and anyone near them.¹¹ Please be considerate of your classmates and remember that such devices are strictly prohibited during lectures, screenings, and discussion sections without prior instructor approval; if you are observed using your phone or another unapproved electronic device during any course meeting, you might be marked absent for that meeting.

⁹ I have tried to revise these and I will continue to tweak and refine them using the CALMS strategy for CRI Day 1!

¹⁰ I revised this language to explain that the assignments are designed to help students improve their writing and are geared towards feedback and giving students the opportunity to revise and improve their work based on the feedback that they receive. This change stemmed from trying to humanize the syllabus and also trying to make it clear to students that they will have opportunities to revise their work based on feedback.

¹¹ This explanation was added to help students understand why phones and other screens are not allowed during class meetings, drawing from CRI Day Two discussions on best practices regarding technology policies.

You are not allowed to use your own work from another course in this class; doing so will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

If you have a question or concern about a grade you receive on an assignment, you may contact your Teaching Assistant after you have read their comments on the assignment and 48 hours after you have received your graded assignment. Be sure to have specific questions regarding the comments in your communication.

Absences which warrant an absence notification may include (but are not limited to) the following emergency/critical situations that keep you from attending class for 48 hours or more: being an alleged victim of a crime, experiencing a personal illness or personal injury that result in hospitalization, or learning about the death of a family member or close friend. The Case Managers at Student Outreach and Retention (SOaR) can prepare an absence notification for you in one of these situations. When possible, SOaR should be contacted prior to your leaving campus and not after you have returned. You can make an appointment here: <https://experience.syracuse.edu/soar/make-an-appointment/>.

Grading Criteria

This course uses the following grading criteria:

- “A” is reserved for superior work. The student’s class participation demonstrates a sustained critical engagement with the material of course, thus enhancing other students’ understanding of both primary and secondary texts. Papers articulate original and well-argued ideas that take our understanding of the material beyond class discussion and lecture.
- “B” is reserved for good work. The student’s class participation is regular and demonstrates a solid understanding of the course material and the issues raised by it. The student occasionally offers original critical insights. Papers are well written and articulate a clear understanding of the material tackled through competent critical analysis.
- “C” is reserved for satisfactory work. The student’s class participation is less regular or less extensive. Papers demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the course material.
- Grades below “C” are reserved for students who produce unsatisfactory written work, consistently miss classes and/or screenings, and fail to participate in class discussion.

Exams

The midterm and final exams are both in-class exams. The midterm and final exams may be comprised of essays, short answer, other content, or some combination of these. Details on their format will be announced in class before each exam. The final exam will be an in-class exam on our last class meeting. Please do not schedule any travel that conflicts with either the midterm or final exam. These exams will be conducted at the times listed on this syllabus without exceptions.

Written Assignments

There are two paper assignments required for this course, which are carefully designed in sequence and to help you steadily improve your writing skills.¹²

¹² This language was modified to help students understand the logic of the assignments and to emphasize that they are sequenced to help build skills through practice and revision based on feedback.

Paper Assignment #1

As specified in the assignment prompt to be handed out, the First Part of Paper Assignment #1 (min. of 200 words) will consist of an introduction paragraph with a thesis statement, to be submitted on the specified date on week 3 in the course schedule. This assignment constitutes 5% of your course grade, and will be returned to you with our written feedback, which will aid in your revision process. Additionally, mini-workshops and exercises will take place during section and/or lecture time to help you develop your writing skills through practice. The Final Draft of Paper Assignment #1 should demonstrate thorough revision and development; this assignment is due during week 8 and accounts for 10% of the course grade. In combination, The First Part and Final Draft of Paper Assignment #1 are worth 15% of the course grade.

Paper Assignment #2

As for the first paper, the First Part of Paper Assignment #2 (min. of 200 words) will consist of an introduction paragraph with a thesis statement, to be turned in on the date specified by the course schedule in week 10 for 5% of the course grade and we will give you written feedback. The Final Draft of Paper Assignment #2 should demonstrate thorough revision and development based on the feedback that you receive. It is due in week 13 and is worth 15% of the course grade.

Reading & Screening Review Exercises¹³

Five unannounced reading exercises help you practice your interpretative skills for the exams, as they will use a very similar format that asks you to concepts from the reading in examining the weekly screenings. These exercises will motivate you to keep current with the reading and course material and will be given during discussion sections and possibly lecture class meetings. The lowest grade for these exercises will be dropped (which includes missing one exercise due to an unexcused absence or being late to class) and the remainder count for 10% of the course grade.

Format for Written Assignments

Please use 12 pt. Times (New Roman) font and double-spacing. Paper margins should be no greater than 1 inch. Put your name, my name and your Teaching Assistant's name, the class number, the assignment number, a word count, and the date on the first page. Pages should be numbered. Game or film titles should be *italicized* or underlined. Include the game's developer or film's director, and then its year of release in parenthesis following your first mention of its title, then just the title each time after. Example: Super Mario Bros. (Nintendo, 1985), and subsequently just Super Mario Bros. Be sure to properly cite all sources which you use, including those assigned in this course. For citations, follow MLA formatting rules, and please be consistent in your paper and include a bibliography if using short citation style. Check the guidelines at Purdue University's OWL (Online Writing Lab, https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html) or elsewhere for proper citation formatting. Papers that do not meet these formatting and citation requirements will be penalized.

Blackboard

- Everyone in the course is required to post to your course blog in your discussion section's Blackboard (blackboard.syr.edu) site at least once per week.

¹³ I changed "Quizzes" to "Reading Review Exercises" to reflect that these are actually opportunities for students to demonstrate their work in the course and to practice their critical skills to help them prepare for the final exam.

- Your post must be at least 200 words and be made by 12pm on Thursday before your discussion section.
- Each week, I will post screening questions to help frame your attention to the screening.
- Your TA will use Blackboard posts as part of Friday's class discussion.
- Select a moment in the screening (e.g. film or game) to discuss, and take a frame capture or image from this moment to upload with your post as either a PNG or JPEG file (either with your computer's screen capture function or by simply taking a photograph of your screen or the game with your cell phone).
- These posts should engage with the week's assigned readings, lecture, and screening, and can continue the discussion from the classroom—just as you are encouraged to continue discussions from Blackboard in class meetings.
- Screening questions will help guide your responses, but do not simply reply to all of these questions in your post. Instead, use these questions as a starting point for engaging with the readings and the screening and address the question(s) that are most interesting to you or most relevant to your observations about the screening and its connections to the readings; for example, you might discuss one question in detail rather than trying to answer all of the screening questions.
- Each post is worth a maximum of 1% of your final grade and you need to respond satisfactorily to a total of 10 separate weekly prompts to receive full credit for your Blackboard participation.
- You may receive additional credit if you post every week (extra posts are worth up to an additional 1% for each one).
- Blackboard posts will not be formally graded but you will receive a midterm assessment of your Blackboard posts and in-class participation from your TA.
- For your own post, you can start a discussion thread or respond to someone else's, and you may post as often as you wish. In fact, the more you use the course blog, the better your participation grade will be, especially if you are shy or reticent about talking in the classroom. However, even those who regularly contribute to discussion in the classroom are also required to post to Blackboard.
- Posts and responses made up to 24 hours after the weekly deadline will receive partial credit, provided they respond to another student's post or discussion thread; posts and responses over 24 hours late will receive no credit.
- Please make sure that you check the Announcements board on the course site and in your discussion section on a regular basis for updates to assigned readings, screenings, and other course information.
- This class will use the Blackboard Learning Management to house the syllabus, course content, links to external course materials, assignments, quizzes, exams, feedback, and grades. Due dates and times in Blackboard are stored in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) and displayed for each user based on the time zone setting of their computer and data from their internet browser. The system will always display the time zone being used. If an instructor sets a due date of 11pm Eastern time, a student in the Pacific time zone will see a due date of 8pm.
- Information about Blackboard is available on Answers Blackboard; alternatively, you can contact Information Technology Services by sending an email to help@syr.edu, calling 315.443.2677, or in-person at the ITS Service Center, located at 1-227 CST in the Life Sciences Complex. Business hours for the Service Center can be found on the ITS

Website at http://its.syr.edu/its_service_center/

Screenings

- Screenings are a required component of the course and they will be made available online until further notice. Changes to screening location and availability will be announced in class and via Blackboard.
- Please note that we will meet in person to play games for a couple of screenings. On Wednesday 9/24 and Wednesday 11/12 from 7:00pm-9:45pm, we will meet as a class. Please reserve these times on your calendar and you need to notify your TA by the end of week 2 if you are not available at these times.
- Please be sure to complete all screenings by the end of our designated screening time, but you may complete them before the designated screening time if you choose to do so.
- The screenings will be used for screening films and other media, as well as in-class game demonstrations.
- The screenings may be subject to change depending on content, and these changes will be announced on Blackboard.
- The screenings are not for entertainment, but serve as the primary material to be critically examined by the course.
- You will need to take notes at the screenings for specific reference in class discussion, papers, and the final exam. Do not attempt to write complete transcriptions of the games or media, but instead note the play mechanics, names of people and characters, the events and settings depicted, as well as the formal properties of the content (such as rules, mechanics, lighting, editing, or sound). As a starting point, keep track of moments which surprise or confuse you, key game rules, and your initial intellectual and emotional responses to them.
- Important information (cast lists, dates, production information) about the films is available at <https://collections-search.bfi.org.uk/web>
- Availability of the screening games will be announced on Blackboard.

Discussion Sections

- Attendance will be taken at your discussion section.
- To pass this course you must regularly attend the discussion section in which you are registered. If you fail to do so, you risk failing the whole course.
- You are permitted one unexcused absence from your discussion section. Each subsequent unexcused absence will reduce your participation grade by 5%.
- Students with more than three unexcused absences will fail the whole course.
- Before your first discussion section, you are required to email your Teaching Assistant with your preferred name, preferred gender pronouns (e.g. she/her/hers), favorite screen media text (i.e. a game, film, or television program), and reason(s) for taking this course.
- It is your responsibility as a student to notify your Teaching Assistant if you have to miss a class session or discussion section due to a religious holiday or obligation. You must do this by the end of the second week of class, per the University religious observances policy listed in this document.
- All other forms of absence can only be excused with formal documentation. If you know that you will be missing any classes or discussion sections due to extracurricular

activities sponsored by the university, please e-mail Prof. Hanson and your Teaching Assistant in the first week of the course.

- Students can only attend the discussion section in which they are registered. If you miss a discussion section, you may not attend one at a different time in its place. It is also your responsibility to find out what you missed.
- If you wish to change your discussion section in the first week, the only way you may do so is via drop/add on MySlice (but be aware that there may not be any more slots left in the section you want to move into or the course may reach its cap as you are trying to drop/add).
- Your participation grade includes assessment of your in-class contributions to discussion sections and your weekly posting on Blackboard.
- Assignments will be collected at the start of your discussion section on the day that they are due.
- Additional work may be assigned in your discussion section.

Classroom Community

A classroom is a space in which you are expected to be “in the moment” of its particular experience and you should treat it with respect and seriousness as you would any such academic space. Therefore, please:

- Be there on time and stay there: do not be late or leave early (unless you have talked to your TA ahead of time). If you do have to leave during class in an emergency, please email your TA afterwards to explain and please always use the classroom’s rear or side door (if one is available) instead of the door near the front of the classroom to minimize disruption to the class.
- Come to lectures and discussion sections prepared: do the reading, complete the screenings, and post your Blackboard question or commentary.
- To avoid unnecessary distractions, put away things not related to this course and please turn off or silence your cellphones and put them away during class sessions, discussion sections, and screenings.
- Please do not use a laptop, tablet, or any other electronic device during class meetings, screenings, or discussion sections.
- Respect your classmates’ learning experience! Please be aware that when you surf the web, shop, play games, read and reply to email, watch online videos, do homework for other classes, or conduct private conversations during class, it can significantly distract all the students around you. Please refrain from using electronic devices during class time without prior approval from your instructors.
- Always respect each other in the classroom. We all have different experiences, different identities, different histories and different knowledges that enrich our class community. Always listen attentively and never silence, interrupt or demean other voices. Disagreements are welcome but should be framed in ways that invite further dialogue.
- Audio or video recordings of class content, including that of other students, guest speakers, screening material, and instructor(s), without explicit written permission of the instructor(s) and all relevant parties is prohibited.
- Original class materials (handouts, assignments, PowerPoint slides, and the like) are the intellectual property of the course instructor. You may download these materials for your own use in this course. However, you may not provide these materials to other parties

- (e.g., web sites, social media, other students)
- If you have any concerns about the culture of the classroom community at any time during the semester, please feel free to contact your TA and/or Prof. Hanson to discuss it.

Statement on Disability Accommodations

Syracuse University values access and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be necessary to ensure equitable access, and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process.

If you would like to discuss disability-related accommodations or register with CDR, please visit Center for Disability Resources. Please call (315) 443-4498 or email CDRspecialist@syr.edu for more detailed information.

CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations are generally not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to initiate this process.

Statement on Academic Integrity

As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity at the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full [Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy](#) can be viewed by visiting the [Syracuse University Policies website](#).

Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation.

All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person quizzes and exams also apply to online quizzes and exams. In this course, all work submitted for quizzes and exams must be yours alone. Discussing quiz or exam questions with anyone during the quiz or exam period violates academic integrity expectations for this course.

Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of

violation level.

Artificial Intelligence Course Policy

All generative-AI tools are prohibited in this course because their use inhibits achievement of the course learning objectives. This policy applies to all stages of project and writing processes including researching, brainstorming, outlining, organizing, and polishing. Do not use Generative-AI tools to create any content (i.e., images and video, audio, text, code, etc.). If you have any questions about a feature and whether it is considered Generative-AI, ask your instructor.

Plagiarism is a serious offense that leads to failure of the assignment and other further disciplinary action, including automatic course failure. Plagiarism is using other people's or machine/AI-generated words and ideas and presenting them as one's own, whether the material is taken from a book, a friend, an app, a writing tool, or the internet; it is any work that repeats verbatim or rephrases someone else's ideas or arguments without acknowledging the source. Cite all reading and research sources with footnotes or endnotes in your paper. If you have questions or problems regarding your papers, please come see me during office hours or make an appointment. Keep a hard copy of all of your assignments and research notes until the final grade is posted. All papers in this course will be submitted to the Turnitin anti-plagiarism program.

Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty:

Other violations of academic honesty include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Handing in to a class written assignments including papers and Blackboard posts written wholly or partially by someone else or by something else including AI, paraphrasing software or websites such as Quillbot or Grammarly, or similar writing tools.
- Handing in as an original work for a class a paper one has already submitted to another course.
- Handing in the same paper simultaneously to two courses without the full knowledge and explicit consent of all the faculty members involved.
- Having someone else rewrite or clean up a rough draft and submitting those revisions as one's own work.

For more information, see:

The Academic Integrity Policy: <https://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/policy/>

This class will use the plagiarism detection and prevention system Turnitin. You will have the option to submit your papers to Turnitin to check that all sources you use have been properly acknowledged and cited before you submit the paper to me. I will also submit all papers you write for this class to Turnitin, which compares submitted documents against documents on the Internet and against student papers submitted to Turnitin at Syracuse University and at other colleges and universities. I will take your knowledge of the subject matter of this course and your writing level and style into account in interpreting the originality report. Keep in mind that all papers you submit for this class will become part of the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Statement on Religious Observance Policy

Students must notify instructors via MySlice by the academic drop deadline if they will be absent during the semester in order to observe a religious holiday.

Syracuse University's Religious Observances Policy recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

In addition to completing the MySlice form listed above by the end of the second week, you should also e-mail the instructor at least one week prior to the observance of each holiday in order to make arrangements to complete and make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance.

Mental Health

Well-being and mental health are significant predictors of academic success. It is critical to take care of yourself physically and emotionally and to effectively navigate stress, anxiety, and depression. Please familiarize yourself with the range of resources the Barnes Center provides (<https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/>) and seek out support for mental health concerns as needed. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315-443-8000.

Use of Class Materials and Recordings

Original class materials (handouts, assignments, tests, etc.) and recordings of class sessions are the intellectual property of the course instructor. You may download these materials for your use in this class. However, you may not provide these materials to other parties (e.g., web sites, apps, tools, social media, or other students) without permission. Doing so is a violation of intellectual property law and of the student code of conduct.

Trigger Warning

Because of the nature of the topics covered in this class, the course readings, screenings, or class discussions may generate intellectual and emotional discomfort. These responses are natural parts of intellectual growth. If, however, your emotional response becomes acute psychological distress (triggering), please communicate with me. I invite you to contact me if you have concerns in this regard.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University does not discriminate and prohibits harassment or discrimination related to any protected category including creed, ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, gender, pregnancy, reproductive health decisions, disability, marital status, political or social affiliation, age, race, color, veteran status, military status, religion, sexual orientation, domestic violence status, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender.

Any complaint of discrimination or harassment related to any of these protected bases should be

reported to Sheila Johnson-Willis, the University's Chief Equal Opportunity & Title IX Officer for Faculty and Staff. She is responsible for coordinating compliance efforts under the various laws including Titles VI, VII, IX and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. She can be contacted at Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, and Resolution Services, 621 Skytop Road, Suite 1001, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-1120; or by email: equalopp@syr.edu; or by telephone: 315-443-4018.

Federal and state law, and University policy prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sex or gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation). If a student has been impacted by any prohibited behavior based on sex or gender, they can obtain confidential counseling support, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, from the Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team at the Counseling Center (315-443-8000, Barnes Center at The Arch, 150 Sims Drive, Syracuse, New York 13244). Incidents of sexual or relationship violence or harassment can be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinators (Sheila Johnson Willis, Chief Equal Opportunity Officer and Title IX Officer for Faculty and Staff, 315-443-4018, equalopp@syr.edu or Pamela Peter, Director/Coordinator of Student Title IX Case Management, 315-443-0211, titleix@syr.edu). Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University's Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224, 005 Sims Hall), the Syracuse Police Department (511 South State Street, Syracuse, New York, 911 in case of emergency or 315-435-3016 to speak with the Abused Persons Unit), or the State Police (Campus Sexual Assault Victims Unit, 844-845-7269). I will seek to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a professor I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, harassment, and crimes I learn about with the University's Title IX Officer to help make our campus a safer place for all and to ensure you have access to available resources.