ENGLISH 2000
Why Video Games Matter: Identity, Representation, and Community
Spring 2018

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                                                          W 12:30pm-1:30pm
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TEXTS AND SUPPLIES
Moodle readings **
Back-up drive (flash or external or OneDrive, etc. Learn to save your work efficiently!)
note: When readings are assigned via Moodle, you must bring these readings to class in some form. **Printed copies are preferred, digital copies on laptops/tablets are permitted. **Digital copies on cell phones are not permitted.**

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In ENGL 2000 Why Video Games Matter: Identity, Representation, and Community, students will discover how video games are socio-political argumentative texts which make claims about the physical world. Students will discuss, analyze, and compose argumentative essays about video game industry related topics, exploring both the communities created from video game culture, (including let's players, cosplayers, and "gamer" culture) and the communities creating and using video games as cultural artifacts (including games which feature disabled characters, indigenous characters, non-binary and/or queer characters, etc.). The purpose of this course is to advance students' writing skills in a variety of academic, professional, and public genres, with an emphasis on research and argumentation. This class includes a service-learning component that gives students an opportunity to achieve course goals through hands-on experience, as we compose accessibility-based reviews for an actual video game charity, AbleGamers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1.   RHETORICAL APPLICATION Consider how your own field is rhetorical along with others. Examine and practice specialized **rhetorical genres and practices** relevant to various areas of interest.
2.   PROBLEM SOLVING Put knowledge from different lines of thought to use in order to generate justified claims that seek **to answer complex problems in writing**. See the ways in which responding to different forms of transferable knowledge can result in thoughtful considerations and assertions.
3.   CRAFTING FINISHED TEXTS Understand the **steps toward creating finished drafts** for different kinds of writing in various areas, and work **individually and collaboratively** to arrive at polished written work.
4.   DISCIPLINARY CONVENTIONS & ENGAGEMENT Examine and learn from the **conventions** of particular fields and genres of writing and find where there is room for original, innovative interventions in different forms of writing.
5.   RESEARCH **Research** and engage in academic conversations by analyzing and responding to the work of others. Learn a number of methodologies for conducting written research.
6.   INTERDISCIPLINARITY Search out the interconnected writing of your own and others' fields of study. Write toward and reflect on the **interdisciplinary** nature of different genres from diverse fields of knowledge.

SERVICE-LEARNING COMPONENT
The **required** service-learning component will be fulfilled through two community partnerships. Firstly, students will volunteer as a video game reviewer for the **AbleGamers Foundation**, "a nonprofit charity that aims to improve the overall quality of life for those with disabilities through the power of video games" (AbleGamers.com). Students will compose, revise, and submit a review (**Remix: Evaluative Argument**) for a video game of their choosing, evaluating the game based on accessibility, entertainment, and identity representation to AbleGamers. By doing so, students will (1) produce written work of direct use to the foundation and the disabled community at large, and (2) engage in and grow to appreciate the importance and value of composition.

This course has received a service-learning designation by LSU's Center for Community Engagement, Learning, and Leadership (CCELL). For more information about CCELL, please visit their website:www.lsu.edu/ccell
        Access CCELL to find out more about:
1. Service-Learning Program
2. Service-Learning Student Trip Insurance: http://bit.ly/11xx8BB
        CCELL is dedicated to protecting the safety and dignity of its students, faculty, community partners, and anyone who has contact with the program. The LSU and CCELL risk management policy requires that every student participating in a service-learning class has field trip insurance secured for every off-campus visit they make to a community partner site (to read LSU's full policy see PM-4).

PLAGARISM & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
 "Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student..." (Sec. 5.1, C. of the LSU Code of Student Conduct).
        Cases of academic misconduct and plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students.
Students will show respect for others in the classroom and *will not use cell phones or other electronic media unless asked to do so by the instructor*. In addition, a student who disrupts instruction will be asked to leave the classroom and will lose participation points for the day/week.

DISABILITY SERVICES
According to our General Catalogue, "The Office of Disability Services assists students in identifying and developing accommodations and services to help overcome barriers to the achievement of personal and academic goals. Services are provided for students with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accommodations and services are based on the individual student's disability-based need." Students must provide current documentation of their disabilities to their teacher. Students should contact the office early so that necessary accommodations can be arranged.

LSU is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with ODS. The ODS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission.

I assume that all of us learn in different ways, and that the organization of any course will accommodate each student differently. Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

I want us all to be committed to fostering a positive learning environment based on inclusion, open communication, mutual respect, and appreciation of diversity. Please use this opportunity to learn from one another, respecting others' opinions, experiences, beliefs, values, and differences. Refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments. Our goal is thoughtful and courteous intellectual dialogue.

This is an interactive, discussion-oriented course. This means that all students are responsible for contributing to both their own learning experience and the learning experience of others. There is room for vigorous discussion, and sometimes even heated intellectual disagreement in this classroom; however, it is expected that each person treats others with the utmost care and respect. Conflict between ideas does not need to become conflict between people.

ATTENDANCE (UWP)

When students have valid reasons for absence (see PS-22), they are responsible "for providing reasonable advance notification and appropriate documentation of the reason for the absence" and "for making up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed." Teachers "will assist those students who have valid reasons," but some in-class activities are difficult to make up. Valid reasons that must be documented include: Illness; serious family emergency; special curricular requirements such as judging trips or field trips; court-imposed legal obligations such as subpoenas or jury duty; military obligations; serious weather conditions; religious observances (see the interfaith calendar website); official participation in varsity athletic competitions or university musical events. Absences without valid reasons, or unexcused absences, are limited to three per term in classes that meet three times a week (e.g., MWF) and two per term in classes that meet two times a week (e.g., TTH or MW). Beyond these limits, *each unexcused absence will lower the final course grade by one grade increment: for example, a B+ goes to a B, a B goes to a B-, and a B- goes to a C+.*
NOTE: DOCUMENTATION FOR ABSENCES ARE DUE TO THE INSTRUCTOR WITHIN A WEEK FOLLOWING THE ABSENCE.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

Homework will not be graded if it is submitted late. Quizzes and other classroom activities cannot be made up if you miss them. If you have a valid excuse that is documented, the instructor will then assist you in making up the assignment (see attendance policy above).

Hardcopies of assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you are going to be absent on the day that an assignment is due, you are still responsible for turning it in on (or before) the scheduled due date. If the assignment is uploaded after class has started, it will be considered one day late. For every day that an assignment is late, one letter grade will be dropped (10% deduction), unless you have made arrangements with me in advance or you provide valid documentation for your absence (see attendance policy above). You must turn in a hardcopy of each assignment and upload a copy to our course Moodle page as back-up; however, **only hardcopy assignments will be graded and returned.** ***IMPORTANT NOTE: Even if Moodle says that the assignment is due by "5:00pm" or another time, assignments are ALWAYS due before the start of your class***

All major essays must be submitted to Turnitin on Moodle in doc or docx format. **No other formats will be accepted.** If I try to open an assignment and cannot because it isn't in doc or docx format, **it will be considered late**.

Technology issues are not an acceptable excuse for late and/or incomplete assignments. The secret to avoiding technology problems is completing your work **far in advance of the due date**. I will always

hold the student accountable unless I have received an official notice from the university that myLSU or Moodle has been down for an entire 24-hour period before class time.

PARTICIPATION, TARDINESS POLICY & MISSED CLASS
Participation is worth 5% of your final course grade. Participating in class discussion and group and/or individual activities is vital to students' success in this course.

Therefore, you are expected to show up to class on time and ready to learn. I reserve the right to count students as absent (unexcused) after excessive lateness and/or unpreparedness. Excessive lateness in this case will include: being late to class 3 or more times, coming to class without the required materials 3 or more times, and/or not participating or listening to lectures 3 or more times (this includes sleeping, using cell phones for any reason, using technology for reasons other than note-taking or class work, being unprepared to answer questions when prompted by me, and/or participating in general day dreaming/solemn window gazing.)

The instructor will not email students the day's notes or activities if they miss class. Instead, they should contact classmates to find out homework instructions and what we did that day in class. Please get to know your fellow classmates: exchange numbers, email addresses, Snapchat QR codes, whatever!

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Argument Analysis	750 words	10%
Blog Posts	750 words	10%
Evaluative Argument for Gaming Audience	800 words	15%
Remix: Evaluative Argument**	800 words	20%
Video Game Pitch and Reflection	800 words	15%
Annotated Bibliography	600 words	5%
Researched Argument	1500 words	20%
Participation/quizzes/In-class writing/homework		5%
TOTAL:	6000 words	100%

**fulfillment of service learning component

Plus/Minus Grading is required for all undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses using the A through F letter grading system. The letter grades A, B, C, and D have the suffix plus (+) or minus (-) included to distinguish higher and lower performances within each of these letter grades. The letter grade F does not include the plus/minus distinction.

For determining mid-term and final grades, the following grading scale will be used:

100-97=A+	89-87=B+	79-77=C+	69-67=D+	59 and below=F
96-93=A	86-83=B	76-73=C	66-63=D	
92-90=A-	82-80=B-	72-70=C-	62-60=D-	

CONFERENCES
You will be required to discuss your work with me in one or more conferences. Not signing up/missing these required conferences will count as an unexcused absence, as defined/discussed above.

GUIDELINES FOR FORMATTING

1. Double-space (MS style), Times New Roman, 12 Point Size, 1-inch margins for all essays, including drafts.
2. When prompted, turn in source materials for your research (print outs of web-site materials) plus Works Cited for drafts and finals.
3. When prompted, turn in everything that you or I write for each assignment: the assignment sheet, all notes, brainstorming, outlines, drafts, etc.
4. Number pages: upper right.

BLOG POSTS

You will be responsible for responding to prompts posted on our class's Moodle forum. These responses will usually be 150-300 words long, depending on the prompt, and should be posted by 10:00am the day of class, so that I have time to read them. Prompts can be found on the syllabus, and on the Moodle forum. Responses should be posted as replies to the forum prompt.

				COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)	Homework (due next class meeting)
Unit I: Video games and Rhetoric This unit will introduce students to rhetoric, as we work on rhetorically analyzing texts across media. In this unit, we will discover what exactly we mean when we say "video game," and how video games make arguments.	Jan	10	W	- Introduction to the course/texts - Overview of Syllabus - Discussion of plagiarism form - Introduction to service-learning - What is a video game? A few suggestions (PowerPoint) and our class-wide definition - Letter of Introduction	- Sign syllabus and return - Sign plagiarism form and return - Reading: "What is Rhetoric?" from *Understanding Rhetoric*, on Moodle - Using Google or the LSU library databases, find a definition of "video games" (not from a dictionary or Wikipedia) that you would like to discuss. Post this definition with a link to the source to the Moodle blog. Write at least 100 words explaining what you like about this definition.
		12	F	- Discussion: What is a video game? - Modify, or confirm, our earlier definitions: how do we define media? - Lecture on rhetoric - In-class practice analyzing rhetorically	-Watch "Gender Ex Machina" IdeaChannel video, link on Moodle - Read "Notes on Procedural Rhetoric" on Moodle -Write a paragraph (300 words) response to the reading/viewing to the Moodle blog. What did you think of the concept of "procedural rhetoric"? What did you think of Bogost's article and/or the video? Can you think of any games that you've played that contain "procedural rhetoric"?
		15	M	MLK holiday (no class)	- (see above)
		17	W	**Bring laptops to class!!! - Discussion of reading and responses: How do video games make arguments? How should we talk about video games, and what is video game criticism? - Class activity: practice analyzing procedural arguments, *McDonald's Videogame*	-Play *Every Day the Same Dream*; link on Moodle (must have flash enabled; if you use Chrome and it doesn't work, try using a different browser like Edge, Firefox, etc.) - Write a paragraph (200 words) about what you think the game is doing, and about your experience playing.
		19	F	- Introduction to first paper: Argument Analysis - Discuss *Every Day the Same Dream*: how might we analyze this game, rhetorically?	- Read "Shitty First Drafts" - Read "Managing the Writing Process" from *Everyone's an Author* on Moodle

			(Final date for dropping courses without receiving a grade of "W", 4:30 p.m. deadline)	- Begin thinking/researching what game you might write about for your first essay.
	22	M	- Discuss "Shitty First Drafts": giving yourself time to write. How do you write? Where do you write? Discuss *your* writing process. - Discussing the structure of an essay: Operation Organization -Practice brainstorming/outlining with *Every Day the Same Dream*	- Read "Living the Dream", link on Moodle. - Submit your chosen topic for your Argument Analysis essay. What kind of argument does your game make? Brainstorm some ideas in 150 words, and post your ideas to the Moodle blog.
	24	W	- Discussion of "Living the Dream": more discussion of structuring an essay - Discussion of topics for Argument Analysis: brainstorming together.	- Try out some of these tips from our earlier conversations to begin writing your Argument Analysis essay, if you haven't already.
	26	F	- Crafting thesis statements lecture and practice activity. - What might a thesis statement for our *Every Day the Same Dream* essay look like?	- Search through the various essays on *First Person Scholar* (link on Moodle), and find one that interests you. Read it, and identify what you believe to be the thesis statement of the article. Share this thesis statement, and your 250 word response to the article on the Moodle blog (remember to include a link to the original article!)
	29	M	- Discussion of your responses, and sharing cool stuff we found on First Person Scholar. What do these thesis statements look like? What do these essays look like, and what will *ours* look like?	-Write your thesis statement in-progress for your Argument Analysis. Submit to Moodle blog.
	31	W	-Thesis statement workshop -MLA formatting -In-class writing: **bring laptops!!	- Read "Peer Review Advice" on Moodle. - Complete, if you haven't already, the first draft for your **Argument Analysis** essay. Bring to class, either printed or via laptop/tablet.
Feb	2	F	-**Argument Analysis first draft due** -How to be a great peer reviewer -Peer review -Advice on editing -Sign-up for individual conference meetings	- Revise draft using suggestions from peer review. Bring revised copy to individual conference meetings.
	5	M	- **Individual Conference meeting**, no class.	- Revise draft using suggestions from your individual conference meeting. Bring revised copy to class for peer review.
	7	W	- **Argument Analysis revised draft due** - Common grammatical mistakes - Peer review	- Finalize your Argument Analysis essay, submit to Moodle and bring hard copy to class.
	10	F	- **Argument Analysis final draft due** - Self-evaluation - Wrap-up discussion of Unit I	- Play *Loved*. Fail, and play *Loved* again. And again, until you believe you have an understanding of what the game is doing/saying. Link on Moodle (must have flash enabled; if you use Chrome and it doesn't work, try using a different browser like Edge, Firefox, etc.) - Write a paragraph (200 words) about what you think the game is doing, and about your experience playing.

				- After writing your own response (don't be a party pooper!!) read "*Loved* discussion" on Moodle. Come to class prepared to talk about the game and the discussion piece.
Unit II: Video Game Audiences In this unit, we will explore who exactly plays, makes, and cares about video games, and how these individuals and groups create communities surrounding their love of games. How and why are these communities using games differently, and how might a game review geared specifically for these audiences look? Furthermore, how might *you* design a game for a specific community?	12	M	Mardi Gras holiday, no class.	- (see above)
	14	W	Mardi Gras holiday, no class.	- (see above)
	16	F	- **No class**: instructor at conference.	- (see above)
	19	M	- Discuss *Loved,* and your responses. - Discuss the reading: how did the author view *Loved*? How do our personal experiences shape our understanding of media?	- Read "Criticism vs reviews", link on Moodle -Watch "Game Critics" video, link on Moodle. **Note: lots of swearing in this video!!! - Read "Game Criticism Had Problems…", link on Moodle.
	21	W	- Introduction to second assignment: Evaluative Argument - Discuss reading/watching: what is the purpose of a critical review?	- Read "You Got Game, But Can You Write?" on Moodle - Find a game review that you like. Post it on the Moodle blog. What do you like about this review? What seems especially effective about this review? Write 250 words.
	23	F	- Discussion of reading: tips of the trade. - Discussion of Blog posts: What makes a review good? -Advice/discussion: choosing a topic	- Watch "What is a Gamer?" link on Moodle (note: you only have to watch until 6:18ish) - Skim through research on Gamers and Gaming from the Pew Research Center (note: there are multiple pages in this article), link on Moodle - Choose a topic for your Evaluative Argument and submit it to the Moodle blog forum. Brainstorm possible points you'll bring up in your review; think about who your audience is. Write about 150 words.
	26	M	- Discussion: who plays games? Who is the audience for your Evaluative Argument? - Brainstorming ideas for topics - Organizing your review	- Read "Just Making Things" on Moodle - Read "Three LGBT Gamers" on Moodle - Begin writing your Evaluative Argument using the tips we discussed in class.
	28	W	***Bring laptops!!! - Discussion of readings: how are communities formed around games? Why is representation in gaming important? - In-class writing of Evaluative Argument	- Complete Evaluative Argument first draft -Make individual appointment with Ms. Orgeron if necessary.

	Mar	2	F	- **Evaluative Argument first draft due** - Peer review	- Finalize Evaluative Argument draft - Watch "How are Games…?" Video, link on Moodle.

5	M	- **Final Evaluative Argument due** - Discussion of PBS video: What does it mean to be disabled? What is accessibility in gaming? And what acan we do about it? - Introduction to AbleGamers (looking at website, watching video) - Introduction to Remix: Evaluative Argument		- Explore the AbleGamers website, especially their list of accessibility-based game reviews (link on Moodle). Write 200 words comparing and contrasting one of their reviews to the review you wrote for your Evaluative Argument essay - Replay or re-explore your chosen game, with the game's accessibility in mind.
7	W	- Discussion of blog posts: How are accessibility-based reviews different? How are they similar? - What accessibility options will you focus your Remix on? Brainstorming together.		- Begin remixing your Evaluative Argument, focusing on accessibility in your chosen game.
9	F	**Bring laptops!!!! - Sign-up for individual conference meetings - What will your Remix look like? Organization tips and In-class writing		- Complete first draft of Remix, bring to your individual conference meeting.
12	M	- **Individual conference meetings, no class.**		- Revise draft using suggestions from your individual conference meeting. Bring revised copy to class for peer review.
14	W	- **Revised Remix due.** - Peer review		- Finalize Remix, submit to Moodle and bring hard copy to class.
16	F	- **Final Remix due.** - Introduction to Video Game Pitch and Reflection assignment. - Choosing groups for Pitch; exchanging ideas and brainstorming.		- Meet with your group members (either in person or via the internet) and discuss what community you'd like to make your game for. -Together, write at least 200 words brainstorming ideas for your project, and post to the Moodle blog. (Note: only one group member needs to post on the blog, but be sure to include the names of all group members.)
19	M	**Bring laptops!! - In-class group work on Video Game Pitch: figure out how you will present your pitch. Will you use PowerPoint? A video? Other multimedia? How will you divvy up the labor for this project?		- Continue meeting with your group and working on your project; you might begin writing your pitch Proposal and Reflection, if you haven't already. -Together, write at least 150 words discussing how you will convince your potential "backers" that your game is important. (Note: only one group member needs to post on the blog, but be sure to include the names of all group members.)
21	W	**Bring laptops!! - In-class group work on Video Game Pitch		- Continue meeting with your group and working on your project. Complete first draft of Proposal and Reflection: bring to class for peer review.
23	F	- Proposal and Reflection first draft due: peer review. - In-class group work on Video Game Pitch -Sign-up for presentation slots Final date for dropping courses, 4:30pm deadline		- Finalize Pitch presentation, Proposal, and Reflection; submit to Moodle, and bring hard copy to class. -Practice, practice, practice your Pitch!! - Use this time to get ahead: See below!
26-30	M-F	Spring break, no class MWF.		- Use this time to get ahead: See below!

	Apr	2	M	- **Video Game Pitch Proposal and Reflections due** - Day 1 of Pitch Presentations	**-** Use this time to get ahead: See below!
		4	W	- Day 2 of Pitch Presentations -Wrap-up discussion of Unit II (Final date for dropping courses, 4:30 p.m.)	- Read and explore the various links in "9 Ways Video Games…" link on Moodle - Watch "Is Minecraft the Ultimate Education Tool?" link on Moodle - Watch "Gaming Can Make a Better World" video, link on Moodle. - Think about how you might answer the question: Why do video games matter? How would you respond to someone who doesn't play games, or understand them…how would you explain why video games matter? Write 200 words, submit to Moodle blog.
Unit III: **Why Video Games Matter?** Our final unit of the course will be a research-intensive exploration of why video games *do* matter, as we work towards writing our final Researched Argument. Using the techniques for rhetoric and argument we've discussed throughout the semester, students will compose a well-researched, well-argued essay explaining one aspect of why video games matter to a non-gamer.		6	F	- Introduction to Researched Argument and Annotated Bibliography - Discussions: What are the messages you've gotten (from teachers, parents, the media) about the value of games? What do you think? - Brainstorming together about potential topics.	- Do some preliminary research to help you pick a topic for your Researched Argument essay. - Pick a topic for your Researched Argument essay. Brainstorm your topic ideas, and submit it to the Moodle blog (150 words).
		9	M	**-** Lecture on using the library's resources, and advice on research. - Annotated Bibliography: looking at examples and advice - Brainstorming together about our topics: discuss the reading.	- Find at least two sources for your Researched Argument essay/Annotated Bibliography; bring sources to class. - Write entries for your Annotated Bibliography, and begin outlining your Researched Argument essay.
		11	W	**Bring laptops!!! - Lecture on Evaluating Sources - Group activity: evaluating the sources we found, and remembering our own ethos. - Thesis statement workshop (synthesis and making a claim)	- Finalize Annotated Bibliography, **submit to Moodle only.** -Write thesis statement for Researched Argument essay, submit to Moodle forum
		13	F	**Bring laptops!! - **Annotated Bibliography due to Moodle** - Looking at thesis statements from former students, thesis statement workshop.	- Begin working on first draft of Researched Argument, if you haven't already.
		16	M	*Bring laptops!!! - Lecture on Integrating Sources and in-text citations - Organization and outlining activity.	- Continue working on Researched Argument draft.
		18	W	- **No class**: schedule meeting with Ms. Orgeron if needed/work on Researched Argument essay.	- Finalize first draft of Researched Argument. Being copy to class in some form for Peer Review

	20	F	- **First draft of Researched Argument due** - Peer review - Sign-up for individual conference meetings	- Revise draft using suggestions from peer review. Bring revised copy to individual conference meetings.
	23	M	- **Individual conference meetings**, no class.	- Revise draft using suggestions from your individual conference meeting. Bring revised copy to class for peer review. - **Submit revised draft to Moodle drop box by Wednesday at 10:00am.***
	25	W	- **Revised draft of Research Argument due** - Final peer review!	- Finalize Research Argument, submit to Moodle and print hard copy.
	27	F	- **Final Researched Argument due (hardcopy and Moodle Turnitin)** - Reflection on argument, video games, and service-learning. - Course evaluations.	

Finals week: TBA: Final paper pick up.
Final Grades Due (for degree candidates): Tuesday, May 8, 9:00 a.m.
Final Grades Due (for non-degree candidates): Wednesday, May 9, 9:00 a.m.