GAME1850: EXPERIMENTAL GAME DESIGN
Fall 2018
COURSE SYLLABUS

GENERAL INFORMATION
Location: Ell Hall 410
Time: Tue/Fri 1:35pm-3:15pm
Office Hours: tinyurl.com/PearceOfficeHours

Professor: Celia Pearce
Office: Lake Hall 209
E-mail Address: c.pearce@neu.edu

Please sign up in advance for Office Hours.

Course Blog: http://www.northeastern.edu/experimentalgamedesign/

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
Explores traditions of games, play, participation, and procedurality in twentieth-century avant-garde art movements, including Dada, Surrealism, Fluxus, conceptual art, the Situationists, Happenings, participatory performance and Tactical Media, avant-garde music, as well as contemporary artgames. Students will be introduced to each of these movements, understand their historical context and contingencies, and participate in lectures, discussions and critical analysis exercises draw from the readings in the class, including situating specific works within a taxonomy of avant-garde games. Students will apply key principles learned from each movement to the creation of four completed artworks using various tactics drawn from these traditions, including appropriation, scores, intervention, and experience. Each assignment will include a reflective artist’s statement that connects the work to themes, movements and principles learned in the class.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

Conceptualize and Create Expressive, Innovative Games and Playful Experiences and Artifacts
- Develop a large portfolio of creative works representing a broad range of innovative game and playful experiences across media and contexts.
- Conceptualize and design work that reflects advanced levels of analysis, insight, and artistic and design methods and techniques
- Evaluate and appraise the affordances of different media in order to execute technical, aesthetic, and conceptual decisions
- Apply and integrate methods of arts and design practice and research to the creation of game-based and playful artworks
- Experiment, Innovate, invent and solve creative problems within the field of games and playful experiences through research & synthesis

Explain and Apply Interpretive, Cultural, and Historical Frameworks to Analyze Texts, Visuals, Performance, and New Media
- Identify, describe and analyze a broad array of games, genres and playful experiences and artifacts as aesthetic forms across times, cultures, and media
- Understand the history of game design, artgames, game and art criticism, and identify the origins of media conventions and traditions, including the role of games in various art movements and practices

Develop Professional Collaboration and Communication Skills
- Produce professional level presentations and generate clear and concise design documents
- Develop and employ professional skills (e.g., courtesy, honesty, integrity, adaptability, reliability, work ethic, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Homework [Due Tuesday]</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 9/7</td>
<td>Links on p3: Pearce, Games as Art; Friedman, Exquisite Events; Beavin on Kaprow; Kaprow – Blurring Life and Art, 39-41 &amp; 81-89 (by book page #s) Register for Class Blog</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Scores</td>
<td>Syllabus Review Lecture/Discussion: Introduction to Games as Art Play Surrealist Games</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 9/11 9/14</td>
<td>Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life: Ch.1; Ono, Grapefruit Artwork #1 – Score Pitch / Critique</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Appropriation - Fluxus</td>
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<td>Week 3 9/18 9/21</td>
<td>Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life: Chs. 4 &amp; 5 Artwork #1 – Score Playable Iteration</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Appropriation - Dada</td>
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<td>SAT 9/29</td>
<td>FIELD TRIP BOSTON FIG <a href="http://bostonfig.com/">http://bostonfig.com/</a></td>
<td>Artwork #2 - Appropriate Pitch / Critique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 10/2 10/5</td>
<td>DADA: Zurich, Berlin Select an Example of Appropriation for Show &amp; Tell</td>
<td>Show &amp; Tell: Contemporary Examples Of Appropriation</td>
<td>Artwork #2 - Appropriate Pitch / Critique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6 10/9 10/12</td>
<td>DADA: Hannover, Cologne (Celia @ IndieCade)</td>
<td>Guest Lecture TBD</td>
<td>Artwork #2 - Appropriate First Iteration Playtest w/ Guest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7 10/16 10/19</td>
<td>DADA: New York, Paris Artwork #2 - Appropriate Final PLAYABLE Iteration</td>
<td>Activity: Dada History Collage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 10/23 10/26</td>
<td>Brand, Spacewar; Ludica, Sustainable Play</td>
<td>Activity: Play New Games</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion New Games/Tactical Media/ Intervention</td>
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<td>Week 9 10/30 11/2</td>
<td>C. Carr, On Edge p.3-9, 16-24, p. 159-161,223-225 Artwork #3: Intervene Iteration 1</td>
<td>Screening: The Institute</td>
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<td>Week 10 11/6 11/9</td>
<td>Poremba Works of Game, Intro., Ch. 1</td>
<td>Artwork #3: Intervene Final Iteration</td>
<td>Activity: Indie/Artgames Show &amp; Tell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11 11/13 11/16</td>
<td>Works of Game, Ch. 2 Artwork #4 – Express Project Pitch/Design</td>
<td>Artwork #4 – Express Iteration 1-Playtest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12 11/20 11/23</td>
<td>Works of Game, Ch. 3 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY [NO CLASS]</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY [NO CLASS]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13 11/27 11/30</td>
<td>Works of Game, Chs. 4-5 Artwork #4 – Express Iteration 2-Playtest</td>
<td>Guest Speaker TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14 12/4</td>
<td>Artwork #4 Final Iteration - Presentation</td>
<td>[NO CLASS]</td>
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COURSE MATERIAL

Note: Some of these assignments require purchasing physical or digital of books. Where possible I have provided links to free digital versions. Any books that cannot be obtained for free online can be purchased at: Amazon or http://www.alibris.com/. Please acquire books as soon as possible to avoid falling behind on reading assignments.

Books


Carr, C. On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century. (1993/2008). Weslyan University Press. (Note: Free download can be found here https://muse.jhu.edu/book/23314 (Note: You may need to login via myneu or the Library to view this.) Used and Kindle versions available on Amazon.


Ono, Yoko. (1964). Grapefruit. (New York: Simon & Schuster) Can be purchased new or used from Amazon or A Libris.


Papers


Web Sites/Archives/Exhibits

Select Parks http://ljudmila.org/~selectparks/
Cracking the Maze (1999 – First online game art exhibit) http://switch.sjsu.edu/CrackingtheMaze/index.html

Celia Pearce’s Recent Art Projects can be found here: http://www.paidiastudios.com
ASSIGMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA

Reading/Participation (25 points)
Throughout the class, you will be expected to do the readings assigned for each week. During the course of the semester, you will be asked to participate in activities pertaining to the readings. You will receive 15 points for participation in these activities and an additional 10 points for your participation in discussion and critique of other students’ work.

Artworks
The main assignments for this class will consist of a series of four art projects, the first two of which must be solo projects, and the remainder of which can be solo or collaborative. For each artwork you will be asked to:

- Create the work and present 2-3 iterations in class during the scheduled presentation time as specified for the assignment; first iteration will be a concept presentation, second (if applicable) will be a playable prototype, final will be the final work.
- Create documentation of the work and your process and post on the class blog. You may post using your real name or an artist persona alias created for the class.
- Write and post a short (300-500 words) artist’s statement about the work’s intention and influence. What are you trying to do with the work? **How does the work pertain to works, readings and themes of the class?**
- Submit final project with documentation of implementation/gameplay on the class blog. Documentation may be in the form of video or photographs, notated with descriptions.
- **Be sure and select the correct category with each post.**

Artworks will be graded on the following criteria

- Originality and creativity
- Craftsmanship/execution
- Relationship of the work to the art, readings and themes of the class as expressed in artist’s statement

Artwork 1: Score (10 points)
Create and enact, either in class or outside of class, an artwork that takes the form of a short set of instructions. The score should be an artwork in its own right as well as in the form instantiated by participants. (Examples: Grapefruit, Water Yam) Provide documentation of the instantiation of the score if it is not conducted in-class.

Artwork 2: Appropriate (15 points)
In the spirit of the Dada and Fluxus movements, create a game, either digital or analog, that is comprised entirely of found objects or appropriated material. Use the transformation of these objects into the materials of a game to critique, subvert or call our attention to their original meaning. (Examples: Fountain, White Chess, Takako Saito’s chess series, Mario Clouds, Flatlands)

Artwork 3: Intervene (20 points)
Create an art or activist game that intervenes in some way in an existing process, location or site. The game should operate on a tactical level to critique the existing process, and to subvert or otherwise question assumptions about the original context or process. This piece may be a performance in the physical world or a digital space, such as a game or virtual world, or can entail intervening in or utilizing social media or other modes of digital communication in an innovative way. (Examples: Open Source, Re:Activism, Velvet Strike; PacManhattan, The Jejune Institute)

Artwork 4 (Final Project): Express/Experience (30 points)
Create an avant-garde digital, non-digital or hybrid artgame that uses game mechanics to express an idea, aesthetic or experience that is underrepresented in or critiques of digital games. This game can be short, and can capture a personal experience, such as spiritual awakening, falling in love, grieving, or it can be more systemic or political, such as a game about poverty or discrimination. If digital, you may use an existing development tool, e.g., Unity, Flash, Processing, authoring tools, e.g., Gamemaker or Twine, or a moddable game environment or engine, such as Minecraft, Half-Life or Unreal. Or, you may create a board game, pervasive game; or a hybrid game that includes both physical and digital elements. You may use or draw inspiration from any techniques or works you learned about in the class, or from an outside source, including adapting from another medium. Examples of contemporary games that would qualify for this assignment: The Marriage, Passage, Gravitation, dys4ia, Mainichi, Aiti: The Cost of Life, The Path, The Night Journey, Akraisa, Dys4ia, Papers Please, Gone Home.
GRADING SCALE & DEPLOYMENT
Grades will be distributed via Blackboard using the following grade scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>76-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-63</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>BELOW 60</td>
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ATTENDANCE POLICY
Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Three or more unexcused absences will result in an overall reduction of one half grade point. An **excused** absence is one in which permission is requested in advance and you have a legitimate reason to skip class, such as an illness. Unacceptable reasons include doing homework for another class, your girlfriend's birthday, or laundry (yes, there are real excuses people have given for missing class.) You are expected to make up what you missed by checking with other students and reviewing lecture materials on the web site. Chronic tardiness during the semester will also result in a half point grade reduction.

HONOR CODE/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Students are expected to adhere to Northeastern Code of Conduct, which can be found here: [http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/code-of-student-conduct/](http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/code-of-student-conduct/). Acts of plagiarism will result in an immediate fail.

INCLUSIVENESS
This course seeks to be inclusive and create an open and accepting space in terms of gender, orientation, ethnicity, age & ability. Please contact me directly if you have any concerns or issues pertaining to inclusiveness. If you have any specific preference, such as a gender pronoun preference, please let me know.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Please notify me if you have any disabilities with which you need special assistance or consideration. For more on disability services visit [http://www.northeastern.edu/drc/](http://www.northeastern.edu/drc/) or speak with your academic advisor.

EMOTIONAL ISSUES
If you are having emotional issues of any kind, such as depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety or substance abuse, please do not hesitate to schedule a one-on-one meeting with me or your advisor. You can also contact We Care at [www.northeastern.edu/wecare](http://www.northeastern.edu/wecare) or 617-373-4384 to seek counselling or other assistance.

PREVENTING & ADDRESSING SEXUAL ABUSE OR ASSAULT
As you are probably aware, sexual assault is a pervasive problem on college campuses. Sexual assaults can be prevented if bystanders intervene in a timely fashion. The University offers these social solutions to preventing sexual assault: [http://www.northeastern.edu/open/preventing-sexual-violence/](http://www.northeastern.edu/open/preventing-sexual-violence/). Northeastern’s OPEN Center also has tools, resources and classes: [http://www.northeastern.edu/open/](http://www.northeastern.edu/open/). The University’s VISION Center also has some useful information: [http://www.northeastern.edu/vision/](http://www.northeastern.edu/vision/) For legal definitions of consent and assault, see: [https://www.northeastern.edu/nupd/personal-safety-tips/sexual-violence-sexual-harassment/](https://www.northeastern.edu/nupd/personal-safety-tips/sexual-violence-sexual-harassment/)

HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND BIAS-RELATED INCIDENTS
Northeastern has policies against bullying (including cyberbullying), hate speech (including printed materials), harassment due to race, gender, ethnicity, religion orientation, and stalking. To review the definitions of these behaviors and their consequences, please see the University’s Code of Student Conduct: [http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/code-of-student-conduct-2017-2018.pdf](http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/code-of-student-conduct-2017-2018.pdf). Hate speech, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated in my classroom. If you experience anything of this nature, please let me know.