

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
CANTON, NEW YORK**



COURSE OUTLINE

TCOM 200 – NARRATIVE FORM IN VIDEO GAMES

Prepared By: Kirk Jones

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS
ENGLISH AND HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT
April 2016**

- A. **TITLE:** Narrative Form in Video Games
- B. **COURSE NUMBER:** TCOM 200
- C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3
- D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** No
- E. **COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks
- F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Spring
- G. **HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:** 3 lecture hours per week
- H. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** Students explore the evolution of narrative, from basic concepts to interactive fiction and interactive storytelling to early text-based adventures and recent open-world storytelling. Students review several philosophies on interactive narrative. Students also experience and discuss interactive fiction and storytelling through game case studies, including required playthroughs and subsequent discussion. As a course capstone, students will develop interactive fiction or storytelling through ADRIFT or other available programs.
- I. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:**
 a. Pre-requisite(s): ENGL 101
 b. Co-requisite(s): None
- J. **GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):**
 By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

<u>Course Objectives</u>	<u>Institutional SLO</u>
a. Explain the history and development of interactive narrative forms.	2. Crit. Thinking 3. Prof. Competence
b. Analyze narrative successes and failures in video games through case studies.	1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking 3. Prof. Competence
c. Explore and evaluate philosophies on interactive narrative development.	1. Communication 3. Prof. Competence
d. Apply various storytelling techniques through creation of interactive fiction and storytelling.	1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking 3. Prof. Competence
e. Compare narrative techniques in gaming.	1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking 3. Prof. Competence

- K. **TEXTS:**
 (Representative texts; texts chosen by instructor)

Abbott, Porter H. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Lebowitz, Josiah and Chris Klug. *Interactive Storytelling for Video Games: A Player-Centered Approach to Creating Memorable Characters and Stories*. Oxford, UK: Focal Press, 2011.

Monfort, Nick. Toward a Theory of Interactive Fiction. 2012 Retrieved September 14, 2014 from <http://nickm.com/if/toward.html>

Anderson, Tim, Blank, Marc, Lebling, Dave, and Bruce Daniels. *Zork*. Infocom, 1980.

Levine, Kevin. *Bioshock*. 2k Games, 2007

L. REFERENCES:

Barthes, Roland and Lionel Duisit. "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative. *New Literary History*, Vol. 6, No. 2. Winter, 1975. Retrieved from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0028-6087%28197524%296%3A2%3C237%3AAITTS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3>

Cohn, Dorrit. *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Cook, David. *A History of Narrative Film*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004

Crawford, Chris. *Chris Crawford on Interactive Storytelling*. Berkely, CA: New Riders, 2005.

Maher, Jimmy. "Let's Tell a Story Together: A History of Interactive Fiction." Retrieved from <http://maher.filfre.net/if-book/>

Porteous, Julie, Cavazza, Marc. and Charles, Fred. (2010) 'Applying planning to interactive storytelling: Narrative control using state constraints', *ACM Transactions on Intelligent Systems and Technology*, 1 (2) (Teesside University)

People's Republic of Interactive Fiction. 2014. <http://pr-if.org/play/>

Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folk Tale*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009.

Scott, Jason. *GET LAMP: The Text Adventure Documentary*. BBS, 2011.

M. EQUIPMENT: Technology-enhanced computer lab

N. GRADING METHOD: A-F

O. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:

- Exams
- Quizzes
- Papers

- Participation

P. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE: (must use the outline format listed below)

- I. Narrative: An Introduction
 - A. Defining Narrative
 - i. Genre
 - ii. Character
 - iii. Form
 - iv. Time
 - B. Basic Terminology
 - C. Interpreting Narrative

- II. Narrative Form in Fiction & Film
 - A. Narrative Techniques in Fiction
 - i. Theory in Fiction Narrative – Vladimir Propp: Motifs in Storytelling
 - ii. Theory in Fiction Narrative – Dorrit Cohn: Representing Thought in Fiction
 - iii. Theory in Fiction Narrative – Roland Barthes: Author-Audience Interaction (All Narrative is “Interactive”)
 - iv. Case Study #1: Fight Club (Novel)
 - B. Narrative Techniques in Film
 - i. Theory in Film Narrative – Syd Field: Three-Act Structure
 - ii. Theory in Film Narrative – Levi Strauss (binaries)
 - iii. Case Study #2: Fight Club (Film)

- III. Narrative Form in Video Games
 - A. Interactive Fiction
 - i. History of Text-Based Adventure
 - ii. Variations in Narrative Form
 - iii. Theory in Interactive Fiction – Nick Monfort
 - iv. Theory in Interactive Fiction – Jimmy Maher
 - v. Case Study #3: Zork
 - vi. Interactive Fiction Design – ADRIFT
 - vii. Presentations – Game Process and Product
 - B. Narrative & Platform Gaming
 - i. Narrative Function in Super Mario Bros.
 - C. Point and Click Adventures
 - i. Narrative Function in Sam & Max
 - D. Interactive Storytelling
 - i. History of Interactive Storytelling
 - ii. Variations in Narrative Form
 - iii. Theory in Interactive Storytelling – Chris Crawford
 - iv. Theory in Interactive Storytelling – Lebowitz & Klug
 - v. Case Study #4: Bioshock

 - E. The Future of Narrative in Gaming
 - i. Virtual Reality

Q. LABORATORY OUTLINE: None

GER 7 Humanities

Students will demonstrate:

- knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the General Education program.

Method:

Classes will be chosen by the Director of Institutional Research BY THE FOURTH WEEK OF THE SEMESTER IN WHICH THE ASSESSMENT IS NEEDED. A minimum 50% sampling rate will be used. All classes approved for GER 7 that are being taught that are not encompassed in another knowledge area will be assessed.

Instructors will develop and assign one of the following:

1. An essay question which allows students to demonstrate their capabilities in all course objectives

OR

2. A short answer exam with separate questions, each of which will be designed to gauge the students' capabilities in a single course objective.

Students will be assigned identification codes for confidentiality, and their responses will be submitted electronically via a designated Angel dropbox. The instructor and another Humanities faculty member will individually assess students' answers using the Humanities Assessment Rubric. The first and second readers will provide their assessment to the Humanities assessment coordinator. The coordinator will be responsible to average the readers' results for each student. The Humanities assessment coordinator will then average the scores of all the students by section and as a whole for completion of the *Humanities Assessment Report Form*.

HUMANITIES ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

COURSE OBJECTIVE <input type="text"/> (input each course objective from course outline and syllabus in the spaces below)	Exceeds Standards (Score between 4.0—3.01)	Meets Standards (Score between 3.0—2.01)	Approaches Standards (Score between 2.0—1.01)	Does Not Meet Standards (Score between 1.0—0.0)
	1. Student performance exceeds requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance meets requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance approaches requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance does not meet requirements of course objectives
	1. Student performance exceeds requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance meets requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance approaches requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance does not meet requirements of course objectives
	1. Student performance exceeds requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance meets requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance approaches requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance does not meet requirements of course objectives
	1. Student performance exceeds requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance meets requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance approaches requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance does not meet requirements of course objectives
	1. Student performance exceeds requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance meets requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance approaches requirements of course objectives	1. Student performance does not meet requirements of course objectives

GENERAL ASSESSMENT EXPLANATION

INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTOR:

General Education Assessment is a method used by SUNY colleges throughout New York State to collect information on how well the students are learning what the faculty believes the students are being taught. The purpose of assessment is to provide faculty and students with information and insights needed to improve teaching effectiveness and learning quality.

Although the immediate focus of assessment is the improvement of teaching and learning, it also results in additional statistical information that can be used for multiple purposes. Therefore, assessment must be done conscientiously and the results reported as accurately as possible.

Knowing this, it may be helpful for you to read the following statement to your students before assessment:

INFORMATION FOR THE STUDENTS:

General Education Assessment is a method used by SUNY colleges throughout New York State to collect information on how well the students are learning what the faculty believes the students are being taught.

The purpose of assessment is to provide faculty and students with information and insights needed to improve teaching effectiveness and learning quality; assessment is not meant to measure individual student learning but what the group as a whole has learned.

As an institution we take our assessment very seriously, and we would appreciate it if you would do the same. Assessment must be done conscientiously and the results reported as accurately as possible.

{Inform students of the 'how' and 'when' assessment will be completed for your individual courses.}

Humanities Assessment

DIRECTIONS

NOTE: NAME OF HUMANITIES ASSESSMENT PERSON IS: _____

GENERAL DIRECTIONS:

Your course has been chosen as part of the General Education Assessment for Humanities. Within this packet of information you will find the necessary form for reporting assessment and other essential information.

Please read through this document so that you are familiar with the process and are prepared to perform assessment for your selected section. There is a special note regarding assessment at the end of this packet.

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DIRECTIONS: HUMANITIES OBJECTIVE: Students will demonstrate: ability to exhibit knowledge acquired and/or performance as stipulated by each course objective.

Instructors whose sections are being assessed:

1. Be prepared to assign students a short answer exam or essay question which allows students to demonstrate their abilities for each course objective, due by the last day of your class;
2. Students will be assigned identification codes for confidentiality, and their responses will be submitted electronically via a designated Angel dropbox.
3. The instructor is responsible for downloading the dropbox content and sharing the coded student exams and CRN of the course section being evaluated with the second reader by [DATE].
4. Instructors may also provide a list of the appropriate terminology taught during the semester, as well as a copy of any supplementary instructions given regarding his/her individual course for use with the assigned essay question.
5. The instructor and another Humanities faculty member will individually assess students' answers using the Humanities Assessment Rubric, recording scores on the Humanities General Education Assessment form.
6. The first and second readers will provide their assessment to the Humanities Assessment coordinator no later than [DATE].
7. The coordinator will be responsible to average the readers' results for each student. The Humanities assessment coordinator will then average the scores of all the students by section and as a whole for completion of the *Humanities Assessment Report Form*.

Second Readers (Assigned by Humanities Department Chair):

Once you have received the coded dropbox folder with student responses, please follow steps 5 and 6 above. For Step 6, you should also provide the Humanities Assessment person a copy of the coded student exams.

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NOTE: If you do not understand any portion of this assessment plan, please see Humanities Assessment person, Kirk Jones, or the Humanities Chair, Dr. Nadine Jennings.

HUMANITIES ASSESSMENT REPORTING FORM

COURSE NUMBER: _____ COURSE TITLE: _____

CRN: _____ SEMESTER: _____ YEAR: _____

Record assessed score (between 4.0—0.0) for the appropriate student #.

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| 1. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 22. _____ |
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