

**University of Kentucky**  
**School of Information Science (SIS)**

**[LIS 690] Special Topics in LIS: Games, literacy, meaning, and learning.**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Spencer Greenhalgh, PhD
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<b>Response Time:</b>	During the week, I work to respond to all emails within 24 hours. I am slower to respond on weekends and may not get back to you until Monday. Please keep this in mind when preparing to submit assignments! I also ask that you check Canvas on a regular basis and that you respond to my messages within 48 hours.
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Mondays and Tuesdays, 2pm to 4pm, or by appointment. I am available to meet in my office or on Zoom.
<b>Meeting Schedule:</b>	This course takes place asynchronously on Canvas.
<b>Required Materials:</b>	All course materials will be available through Canvas.

**Course Information**

**Course Description**

This course examines video, board, and roleplaying games as activities that involve literacy practices. You will learn how to think about literacy practices beyond just reading and writing and how to evaluate the design of a game. Building on these skills, you will then learn how to identify the literacy practices associated with meaningful games, meaningful game contexts, and game design activities for youth and/or adults. Practical considerations for using games in libraries and other contexts will also be addressed.

**Course Objectives—“I Can Statements”**

The following “I can” statements will guide all of the learning and assessment activities throughout this course. Although all of the statements build on each other, each module of the course will focus on one statement in particular. By the end of that module, you should feel comfortable making that statement about yourself and will demonstrate your ability to meet that objective through a module project.

- I can describe how the design of a game connects with particular literacies.
- I can explore and describe the contexts within and surrounding games.
- I can design a meaningful game by applying and reinforcing relevant literacies.
- I can explain how the design of a game produces meaning.
- I can develop a plan for fitting games into my professional context.

## Course Assessment

Your grade for this course will be based on 200 points:

180 points – 200 points = **A (Exceptional Achievement)**

160 points – 179.9 points = **B (High Achievement)**

120 points – 159.9 points = **C (Average Achievement)**

0 points – 119.9 points = **E (Failing)**

These 200 points come from the following assessment activities:

### **Meaningful Game Design: 50 points (due 3 May 2020)**

Throughout the semester, you will be working on designing a meaningful game, which you will ultimately submit as your final project. This is not a course on game design or on technical skills, so you will not be assessed on whether your game is fun or technically impressive. Rather, designing a meaningful game is simply a way for you to get some hands-on experience with what learning, literacies, and meaning in games look like (plus, it will give you some experience that you could use to organize game design activities in your professional context).

This assessment will consist of a simple-but-functional game as well as an 800- to 1,000-word essay that comments on how your game corresponds with the "I Can" statements described above. Activities throughout the semester will organize and structure your game design experience and provide you with resources that you can use to create your game (most notably, the Twine interactive storytelling software). However, you are free to use other resources to create your game so long as you understand that there will be no course support for them.

You will submit the Meaningful Game Design through Canvas, which contains further details.

### **Meaningful Game Design Notebook: 75 points (15 points due at end of each of five modules)**

While the Meaningful Game Design final project described above is a practical, comprehensive way for you to demonstrate all of your learning in this class, it suffers from two practical problems:

- because many of you have likely never designed a (meaningful) game before, it's probably asking a lot of you, and
- because you're submitting it at the end of the semester, there would normally be no chance to learn from the feedback I'll give you before the class is over.

To respond to both of these issues, you will keep a Meaningful Game Design Notebook throughout the semester that both breaks the final project down into more manageable steps and allows me to provide feedback after each of these steps so that you can course correct as you go!

This assessment will consist of a Google Doc that contains five sets of specific prompts about games and meaning. Each set of prompts will be associated with the readings and activities of one of the five modules of the course: You will complete the prompts as you move through the module and submit your Google Doc for review at the end of the last week of the module.

You will create your Meaningful Game Design Notebook by copying a Google Doc that is provided during the first week of class and submitting a link to the Notebook through Canvas at the end of each module of the course.

**Module Participation:** 60 points (4 points due at end of each of fifteen weeks)

Just as the Meaningful Game Design Notebook helps you work toward the Meaningful Game Design you will turn in at the end of the semester, Module Participation activities will help you work toward the prompts in the Meaningful Game Design Notebook. You will complete readings and participate in small, low-stakes activities that let you learn about, reflect on, and apply concepts and ideas that can help us describe how games can be meaningful.

You will complete around four activities during each week of the course. Each activity will be worth a single point, and all of the activities for a week will be due by Sunday evening. Most of the reading activities will consist of reviewing an article, book chapter, or other resource and leaving your thoughts in the form of social annotations. Most of the other activities will be discussion prompts where you demonstrate your understanding of specific ideas from the readings by applying them to practical cases.

You will complete your participation activities through the Hypothesis and discussion board tools embedded in the Canvas course. You will complete reading activities by leaving at least one annotation (but preferably more!) for that reading. You will complete other activities by following the prompts in discussion forum posts.

**Playing Games Reports:** 15 points (3 points due at end of each of five modules)

What's the point in taking a class about games if you aren't having a little bit of fun?! I will ask you at the end of each module to submit a short report where you describe an out-of-class experience you've had over the past three weeks that's helped you see the relationship between games and meaning a little bit differently. You will submit Playing Games Reports through Canvas, following the prompt found there. However, the prompt is loosely-structured, and you will have a tremendous amount of flexibility in how you respond to it. If you don't have a lot of "out-of-class" experiences with games, there will be a number of optional gaming activities associated with the class that you can participate in to complete

### **Late Work Policy**

Officially, each assignment is due at 11:59pm on the Sunday night at the end of the corresponding week. Practically speaking, however, I will grade without penalty (for graded assessments) and provide feedback on (for all assessments) any assessment that is turned in by the time I begin looking over that assessment. However, I will not grade or provide feedback on any work that is completed after this time unless you have made other arrangements with me. Naturally, because my schedule varies from week to week and because I try to provide feedback as quickly as possible, your best bet is to turn in your work by the official deadline or—if life has thrown you a curveball—to get in touch with me ahead of time to make other arrangements.

## Considerations for Online Learning

Because this course is held entirely online, it may be different than many of the courses you have taken in the past. Please consult this section for advice and resources that will help you successfully participate in an online class.

### Technology Requirements

Minimum technical requirements for UK courses and suggested hardware, software, and internet connections are available at [ITS Student Hardware & Software Guidelines](#).

### Technical Support

For account help, contact UK's [Information Technology Customer Services online](#), by [email](#), or by phone at 859-218-HELP (4357).

### Online Learning Resources

The following resources may be helpful for you:

#### Zoom Teleconferencing Software

We will be using the Zoom software in this course for virtual office hours and other meetings.  
<https://uky.zoom.us> [log in using your linkblue account]

#### Information Technology Services (ITS) Customer Services

Students having trouble logging into the various linkblue sites (Account Manager, myUK, Canvas, Office365, etc.) can contact the ITS Service Desk for help.

859-218-HELP or 859-218-4357

<https://www.uky.edu/its/customer-support-student-it-enablement/customer-services>

#### Canvas Assistance

Students needing technical assistance within their Canvas course can find help through Canvas support.

<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>

#### UK Online (Formerly, Distance Learning)

<http://www.uky.edu/ukonline/>

#### Distance Learning Library Services

Phone: (859) 218-1240

Fax: (859) 257-0505

E-mail: [dllservice@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:dllservice@lsv.uky.edu)

Librarian: [Carla Cantagallo](#)

2-2, north wing, [William T. Young Library](#) 0456

Website: <http://libraries.uky.edu/dlls>

## Course Policies

The following policies are in effect for this course:

### Academic Integrity

Per University policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the University may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Complete information can be found on the [Academic Ombud](#) page. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

*Senate Rule 6.3.1* (see current [Senate Rules](#)) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording, or content from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work (including, but not limited to a published article, a book, a website, computer code, or a paper from a friend) without clear attribution. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work, which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be. Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone.

When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources or information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she has employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content, and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas, which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain.

### **Academic Integrity—Prohibition on Cheating (SR 6.3.2)**

Cheating is defined by its general usage. It includes, but is not limited to, the wrongfully giving, taking, or presenting any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding himself/herself or another on any academic work which is considered in any way in the determination of the final grade. The fact that a student could not have benefited from an action is not by itself proof that the action does not constitute cheating. Any question of definition shall be referred to the University Appeals Board.

### **Academic Integrity—Prohibition on Falsification/Misuse of Academic Records (SR 6.3.3)**

Maintaining the integrity, accuracy, and appropriate privacy of student academic records is an essential administrative function of the University and a basic protection of all students. Accordingly, the actual or attempted falsification, theft, misrepresentation or other alteration or misuse of any official academic record of the University, specifically including knowingly having unauthorized access to such records or the unauthorized disclosure of information contained in such records, is a serious academic offense. As used in this context, "academic record" includes all paper and electronic versions of the partial or complete permanent academic record, all official and unofficial academic transcripts, application documents and admission credentials, and all academic record transaction documents. The minimum sanction for falsification, including the omission of information, or attempted falsification or other misuse of academic records as described in this section is suspension for one semester.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement and Title IX Information**

UK is committed to providing a safe learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community. The University maintains a comprehensive program which protects all members from discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. For complete information about UK's prohibition on discrimination and harassment on aspects such as race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, and sexual orientation, please see [the electronic version of UK's Administrative Regulation 6:1 \("Policy on Discrimination and Harassment"\)](#). In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex in academics, employment, and all of its programs and activities. Sexual misconduct is a form of sexual harassment in which one act is severe enough to create a hostile environment based on sex and is prohibited between members of the University community and shall not be tolerated. For more details, please see [the electronic version of Administrative Regulations 6:2 \("Policy and Procedures for Addressing and Resolving Allegations of Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Exploitation"\)](#). Complaints regarding violations of University policies on discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct are handled by the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity (IEEO), which is located in 13 Main Building and can be reached by phone at (859) 257-8927. You can also visit [the IEEO's website](#).

Faculty members are obligated to forward any report made by a student related to IEEO matters to the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity. Students can *confidentially* report alleged incidences through the Violence Intervention and Prevention Center, Counseling Center, or University Health Services.

### **Academic Accommodations**

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC coordinates campus disability services available to students with disabilities. Visit the [DRC website](#), [email the DRC](#), contact them by phone at (859) 257-2754, or visit their office on the corner of Rose Street and Huguelet Drive in the Multidisciplinary Science Building, Suite 407.

## Summary Course Schedule

This table provides an overview of the schedule for this course.

Week	Topic	Reading Activities	Other Activities
<b>Module 1: Game Design and Literacies</b>			
Week 1	Introduction to the Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate syllabus</li> <li>- OPTIONAL: start on Gee (2003), chapter 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduce yourself</li> <li>- introduce a meaningful game</li> <li>- copy Meaningful Game Design Notebook</li> </ul>
Week 2	Introduction to Games and Literacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Gee (2003), chapter 2</li> <li>- read and annotate Willsher (2015)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identify literacies in a favorite game</li> <li>- propose a <i>Scrabble</i> literacies hack</li> </ul>
Week 3	Introduction to Game Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Mayer &amp; Harris (2010), chapter 2</li> <li>- read and annotate Romero &amp; Schreiber (2009), chapter 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explore different kinds of games</li> <li>- connect game design elements to meaning</li> </ul>
submit Meaningful Game Design Notebook and Playing Games Report for Module 1			
<b>Module 2: Contexts Within and Surrounding Games</b>			
Week 4	Games and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Gee (2017)</li> <li>- read and annotate Steinkuehler &amp; Duncan (2008)</li> <li>- read and annotate Roeder (2018)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explore a "Geekdo" community</li> </ul>
Week 5	Games and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Steinkuehler &amp; Squire (2015)</li> <li>- read and annotate Mayer &amp; Harris (2010), chapter 5</li> <li>- read and annotate Carnes (2014), Introduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- share experiences with games and education</li> </ul>
Week 6	Games and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Carr-Chelman (2012)</li> <li>- read and annotate Teague (2016)</li> <li>- read and annotate Bayeck (2018)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read negative board game reviews</li> </ul>
submit Meaningful Game Design Notebook and Playing Games Report for Module 2			
<b>Module 3: Designing Meaningful Games</b>			
Week 7	Literacies and Designing Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Kafai &amp; Burke (2016), excerpt from chapter 1</li> <li>- read and annotate Kafai &amp; Burke (2016), chapter 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- design a 15-minute game</li> <li>- find some "game design materials"</li> </ul>
Week 8	Literacies and Designing in Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Dikkers (2015), chapter 2</li> <li>- watch and discuss <i>Minecraft Minechat episode 23</i></li> <li>- read and annotate Owens (2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- propose a meaningful hack of a game</li> </ul>

Week 9	Inclusivity and Game Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Kafai &amp; Burke (2016), chapter 4</li> <li>- read and annotate Woodruff (2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conduct an informal survey</li> <li>- propose an inclusion hack for a game</li> </ul>
submit Meaningful Game Design Notebook and Playing Games Report for Module 3			
Week 10: Spring Break—Flex Week			
Module 4: Game Design and Meaning			
Week 11	Games and Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- watch and discuss <i>Ms. Male Character</i></li> <li>- watch and discuss <i>Are Games Racist?</i></li> <li>- read and annotate <i>Frasier</i> (2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- build a roleplaying game character based on yourself</li> </ul>
Week 12	Games and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Flanagan &amp; Nissenbaum (2014), ch. 2</li> <li>- read and annotate Winkie (2019)</li> <li>- read and annotate Loring-Albright (2017)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- propose a <i>Risk</i> values hack</li> </ul>
Week 13	Games and Arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Bogost (2007), excerpt from ch. 1</li> <li>- watch and discuss <i>TerrorBull Games on BBC Games Britannia</i></li> <li>- watch and discuss <i>The Hidden Genius of Monopoly's Rules</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- play an "advergame"</li> </ul>
submit Meaningful Game Design Notebook and Playing Games Report for Module 4			
Module 5: Fitting Games into Professional Contexts			
Week 14	Learning About Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Marklund &amp; Taylor (2015)</li> <li>- read and annotate Dikkers (2015), chapter 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider a board game explainer video</li> <li>- consider a video game Let's Play video</li> </ul>
Week 15	Building a Game Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Mayer &amp; Harris (2010), chapter 6</li> <li>- read and annotate Mayer &amp; Harris (2010), chapter 7</li> <li>- read and annotate Laskowski &amp; Ward (2009)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider game collections and your professional context</li> </ul>
Week 16	Organizing Game Design Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- read and annotate Akcaoglu (2016)</li> <li>- skim and annotate Tekinbas, Gresalfi, Peppler, &amp; Santo (2014), Activity 1</li> <li>- skim and annotate Tekinbas, Gresalfi, Peppler, &amp; Santo (2014), Appendix B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider game design activities in your professional context</li> </ul>
submit Meaningful Game Design Notebook and Playing Games Report for Module 5			
submit Meaningful Game Design			

## Course Bibliography

These materials will all be available through Canvas. Full APA citations are listed here so that you can look up any materials that stand out to you. YouTube videos are not listed here.

- Akcaoglu, M. (2016). Design and implementation of the game-design and learning program. *TechTrends*, 60, 114-123. doi:10.1007/s11528-016-0022-y
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Steinkuehler, C., & Duncan, S. (2008). Scientific habits of mind in virtual worlds. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 17(6), 530-543. doi:10.1007/s10956-008-9120-8

Teague, E. (2016). Creating a welcome gaming environment. In E. Teague (Ed.), *Girls on games: A look at the fairer sides of the tabletop industry* (pp. 31-35).

Tekinbas, K. S., Gresalfi, M., Pepler, K., & Santo, R. (2014). *Gaming the system: Designing with Gamestar Mechanic*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Willsher, K. (2015, July 21). The French Scrabble champion who doesn't speak French. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/jul/21/new-french-scrabble-champion-nigel-richards-doesnt-speak-french>

Woodruff, T. (2016). Building blocks in girls' game design. . In E. Teague (Ed.), *Girls on games: A look at the fairer sides of the tabletop industry* (pp. 64-67).