

Hostos Community College (CUNY)

Syllabus Checklist for Writing Intensive (WI) Courses

Course Name Beyond Games
 Course Number GD102 Credit Value 3
 English/ESL Level Required ENG110 (Identify *Pre- and/or Co-Requisite*)
 Department Humanities
 Submitted by M Bethancourt
 Date

1. Indicate which of the following informal “writing-to-learn” activities you plan to utilize in your WI course. After each item you check, indicate the frequency with which you plan to utilize each activity. Please provide examples of some “writing-to-learn” assignments or activities.

	Once/Month	Twice/Month	Once/Week
Summary Writing			
Journal/log writing			
Double or triple-entry journal			
Letter Writing			
Online discussion/forum			Students will initially respond to the given material in a dedicated online discussion forum
Responding to prepared questions		Every other class will give the opportunity for students to respond to prepared questions, regarding both the material and new ideas that have arisen from in-class and on-line conversations	

Defining key terms or concepts			
Personal Response Writing			After participating in the class forum, the student will be asked to write a personal response reflecting his/her thoughts on the material.
Free Writing			
E-mail Exchanges			
Other (Please specify)			

2. The WI guidelines require a minimum of 10-12 pages of formal writing in all WI courses. Indicate which of the following formal writing assignments you plan to use in your WI course. Indicate also the number of pages of writing you require for each type of assignment.

	Number of Pages
Personal Response Essay	
Summary Essay	
Expository Essay	
Compare/Contrast Essay	
Research Paper	
Book Report	
Lab Report	
Poster Presentation	
Other (Please Specify):	Game Design One-Sheet: 2
	Game Design Documents: 6-8
	Interactive Fiction: 4-6
Total Number of Pages of Formal Writing	12-16

3. Of the total number of formal writing assignments you plan to give in your WI course, indicate the percentage of assignments in which students will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work for evaluation.

10-25%

26-50%

51-75%

76-100%

The game design documents and the interactive fiction will go through at least one revision phase each, built into the syllabus.

4. Indicate the total number of exams you plan to give in your WI course. Then indicate what percentage of these exams requires writing by students. (Note: Exams do not need to contain writing.)

There will be no exams in this course. Instead, students will create an original work of interactive fiction and work through an industry-based development cycle for two game design documents.

5. WI guidelines stipulate that grades in WI courses “should be based in substantial part on students’ written work.” In determining the final grade for your WI course, indicate what percentage of the grade involves written work by students. Circle one.

10-25%

26-50%

51-75%

76-100%

6. Does the syllabus for your WI course clearly indicate the type of written work to be completed at particular times in the semester?

Yes. The nature of each assignment and the due dates are clearly stated in the syllabus.

7. Please identify or explain any terms you use in your WI syllabus for types of writing assignments that correspond to other commonly used labels (e.g., writing exercise for composition or reaction paper for personal response essay).

I have adopted the term Reading and Game Response (RGR) for my students. This highlights the main goal of this writing assignment, namely to use the assigned reading as a filter with which to view the assigned games.

8. Along with your WI course syllabus, please provide examples of written assignments which comprise the formal writing assignments for this course.

Please refer to the Reflective Essay below for inclusion with the WI Checklist:

In an essay of approximately 250-300 words, please consider the following questions:

- What is the most important thing (i.e. habit/skill/body of knowledge) for students to learn in this course?
- How will the writing assignments in this syllabus enable students to learn this?

- How does this WI section differ from a non-WI section of the same course?
- What do you hope students will learn about writing in this course?
- What are some challenges, related to the writing-intensive aspects of this course that might arise for you and your students?
- What have you learned from the experience of creating this WI syllabus?

The game design document has become a crucial aspect of the field of game design. Whether to garner investment money or help a team stick to design, budgetary, and schedule goals, it is nearly impossible to make a successful game without one. The production of these documents can be confusing to students, who are unfamiliar with the special techniques and organization required to make them both effective and readable. Working through a real-world based development cycle for two different game design documents will help our game design majors learn this valuable skill.

The field of game design is becoming increasingly diverse. Games are able to speak about issues, tell stories, present interesting conundrums, and educate people in revolutionary ways yet many of our game design students have yet to enter in to this conversation. The assigned response papers and interactive fiction piece will force the student to think of games in these new ways. These lenses of art, narrative, social connectivity and semiotic domains will open up to the students both new areas of design possibilities and the vocabulary needed to be conversant in today's expanding game design scene.

I am very excited about adopting these writing intensive techniques in a course that has already been very exciting to teach. My hope is that these methods will create a more structured environment for the students to gain the necessary skills to enter in the truly fascinating conversation about the nature of games and their ability to evoke emotion, tell stories, educate, and otherwise change the world.

Beyond Games

Game Design 102

Professor Bethancourt

Meets: T: 5-8:15 C-456
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Course description:

This course explores the revolutionary effect that games have had on our culture at large and how artists, sociologists, politicians, musicians and others have used games and gaming tools to create new forms of expression. The class will be divided into five sections focusing on: Sociology and games, games as art, games as story, games in education and games for change. Students will read and analyze a variety of articles relating to these topics. Students will develop written proposals for educational games, research related topics and develop papers about their research. In addition students will have the opportunity to create game art as well as an animated 3D narrative using a game engine.

Prerequisites: GD101 Intro to Games; English 110

Course objectives:

By the end of the course, students will have learned:

- About games as a sociological and cultural phenomenon.
- A critical language to discuss media's effect on culture.
- To explore games as tools for other means of expression besides simple entertainment.
- Better collaborative skills
- Better understanding of what is needed to develop a game proposal
- Stronger communication skills

Credit Hours: 3 hours

Writing and Game Design

This course has been designated as a Writing Intensive (WI) course by Hostos Community College. As a WI course, this course will provide you with opportunities for both informal non-graded writing, and formal real-world based formal writing. In order to complete this course successfully you will need to do both types of writing.

- Informal writing is exploratory, low-stakes writing that helps us generate ideas. The focus is on discovery rather than grammar. For these assignments, students will be given a question, topic, or sample materials and asked to respond reflectively.
- Formal writing assignments are structured assignments adopting methodologies and ideas learned through class materials. This course is structured around one creative interactive fiction piece and three game design documents of varying levels of the development process. The process of brainstorming, drafting, peer and instructor feedback, and revision will be used to develop and improve these formal assignments.

Required Readings:

Game As Art-

- Smuts, Aaron. "Contemporary Aesthetics." *Are Video Games Art?* 2005. 14 April 2009 <<http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=299>>

- Ochalla, Brian. "Gamasutra" Are Games Art? (Here We Go Again). 2006. 14 April 2009 <http://www.gamasutra.com/features/20070316/ochalla_01.shtml>

Game As Story-

- Jenkins, Henry. "Web.MIT.Edu" Game Design as Narrative Architecture. 2000. MIT. 14 April 2009 <<http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/games&narrative.html>>

"Social" Games

- Huizinga, J. Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture. New York: Roy Publishers, 1950
- McGonigal, Jane. "Reality is Broken"

Learning Through Games

- Beck, John, and Wade, Mitchell. The Kids Are Alright. Boston: Harvard Business School Press. 2006
- Gee, James. What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000

Expected: While this class has not been designated as 'web-enhanced,' it is expected that students wishing to take full advantage of the class have:

- Familiarity with the Internet;
- Access to the Internet from home or elsewhere
- An active Hostos email account, which they check daily.

Due dates:

Late assignments will not be accepted without a note from a physician or counselor.

Beyond Games assignments:

This is a studio course involving a combination of lecture, project activities, and discussion of assigned readings. Staying on top of the reading assignments is essential in order to be informed and make contributions during in-class discussions and activities. These readings will reference and introduce concepts and vocabulary that may at times be unfamiliar and so require students to do independent research. This will be expected.

15% of the grade will be based on engagement and consistent attendance. The balance of the grade will be determined by several projects undertaken over the 15 week course.

Assignment	Description	Points
4 Reading and Game Responses	Students will be assigned various readings and accompanying games that illustrate both the history and the mechanics of our topic. Students will then write a one to two page response papers that will assist students in gathering their thoughts for in-class discussion. It is not to be a brief review or overview, but an opportunity to express personal thoughts and points of view on topics mentioned in the reading. It is also an excellent opportunity to raise points for later discussion in a concise and eloquent format.	5 each

Art Game (AG)	Students will create a pitch presentation for an 'art' game, outlining what is trying to be said and what emotions / issues are addressed? Students will present the game to the class as well as bring in a 2 to 3 page Game Design Document (GDD) that includes the 1 to 2 sentence pitch, narrative, core mechanic, rules, and assets.	Presentation: 5
		GDD: 5
Interactive Fiction (IF)	Using Twine , students will create a work of interactive fiction similar to the ones examined in class.	10
Social Game Proposal (SG)	Create a pitch presentation for a truly 'social' game. How does it bring people together? How will your game enrich the lives and bring greater connectivity to those playing it? It can be in any of the fields discussed in class (on-line social game, location-based game, digital game, ARG). You will need to present your game idea to the class as well as bring in a 2 to 3 page Game Design Document (GDD) that includes the 1 to 2 sentence pitch, narrative, rules, and assets.	Presentation: 10
		GDD: 10
Education Game (EG)	<p>During the course of the semester we will study how games affect us and how we can learn from playing games. For this project students will be asked to create a game to be used in a 5th grade class to teach a lesson plan. This lesson plan may be of the student's choosing, but must be age appropriate to the end users. After one initial paper prototype and playtest session, a final game will be developed and accompanied by a 2 to 3 page Game Design Document which outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lesson goal • A game objective • A description of the core mechanic • A narrative outline • A list of precedents being referenced <p>Students will give a formal presentation of their project proposals for critique</p>	Prototype 1: 5
		Prototype 2: 5
		Final Version: 10
		GDD: 10
Attendance / Participation		10
Total		100

Breakdown:

- 20 % _ Reading and Game Response Papers
- 10 % _ Interactive Fiction Story
- 20 % _ Social Gaming Project
- 30 % _ Education Game Project
- 10 % _ Attendance / Participation

Notes on the grading criteria:

Work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Understanding and interpretation of readings
- Research and Analysis of related issues
- Contribution to in-class discussion

Participation:

A student's participation grade is based primarily on their attendance and participation in class. Every student begins the term with 10 participation points. Attendance is mandatory for every single scheduled class. For each class missed, 3 participation points will be deducted. Tardy students will have 1 participation points deducted. More than three absences will amount to a failure, as a student may not earn less than 0 participation points.

Academic policies (from Catalogue):

Hostos Community College believes that developing student's abilities to think through issues and problems by themselves is central to the educational process. Since the Hostos College degree signifies that the student knows the material s/he has studied, and the practice of academic dishonesty results in grades or scores that do not reflect how much or how well the student has learned, understood, or mastered the material, the College will investigate any form of academic dishonesty brought to its attention. If the charge of academic dishonesty is proved, the College will impose sanctions. The three most common forms of academic dishonesty are cheating, plagiarism, and bribery.

Cheating (from Catalogue):

In the collegiate setting, cheating is defined as the purposeful misrepresentation of another's work as one's own. Faculty and students alike are responsible for upholding the integrity of this institution by not participating either directly or indirectly in act of cheating and by discouraging others from doing so.

Plagiarism (from Catalogue):

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which occurs when persons, even if unintentionally, fail to acknowledge appropriately the sources for the ideas, language, concepts, inventions, etc. referred to in their own work. Thus, any attempt to claim another's intellectual or artistic work as one's own constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Bribery (from Catalogue):

In the collegiate setting, bribery involves the offering, promising, or giving of items of value, such as money or gifts, to a person in a position of authority, such as a teacher, administrator, or staff member, so as to influence his/her judgment or conduct in favor of the student. The offering of sexual favors in exchange for a grade, test score, or other academic favor, shall be considered attempted bribery. The matter of sexual favors, either requested or offered, in exchange for a grade, test score or other academic favor, shall also be handled as per the Sexual Harassment procedures of the College.

College attendance policy (from Catalogue):

Students are expected to attend all class meetings in the courses for which they are registered. Classes begin at the times indicated in the official schedule of classes. Arrival in class after the scheduled starting time constitutes lateness.

The maximum number of absences is limited to 15% of the number of scheduled class hours per semester and a student absent more than the indicated 15% is deemed excessively absent. Attendance is monitored from the first official day of classes. In the case of excessive absences or lateness, the instructor has the right to lower the grade, assign a failing grade, or assign additional written work or readings.

Absences due to late registration, change of program, or extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis by the instructor. Each department and program may specify in writing a different attendance policy. Instructors are required to keep an official record of student attendance and inform each class of the College's or department attendance policy.

NOTE:

- Any work missed during any period of absence must be made up by the student.
- To meet financial aid criteria, a student must attend class at least once in the first three weeks and once in either the fourth or fifth week of class.

Course schedule:

Readings must be completed for each class. Not all assigned texts will be discussed in class or covered in the class lectures.

Class	Lecture	Due	Other Assignments	Reading
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Introduction • Games are More Than Games 		Play: <i>Passage and Every Day the Same Dream</i>	<i>Are Games Art? (Here we go Again)</i>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games vs. Art / Game Culture as Art 			
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Game Presentations 	AG	Play: <i>Lost Pig and A Dark Room</i>	<i>Game Design as Narrative Architecture</i>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stories Games Tell 	AG Revision		9:05
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive Fiction Workshop 			

6	Interactive Fiction Project Presentations	IF	Play: <i>Way and Plink</i>	<i>Reality is Broken</i> , Chapter 5
7	Games as Models of Social Behaviors	IF Revision		
8	Social Game Presentation	SG	Play: <i>Where in the World is Carmen San Diego</i> and <i>Oregon Trail</i>	<i>What Video Games Have to Teach us About Learning and Literacy</i> , Chapter 2
9	Game as Learning Tools	SG Revision		
10	Educational Game Proposal	EGP One Sheet		
11	Work Session	GDD Version 2		
12	Playtest 1	PT1		
13	Work Session	GDD Version 3		
14	Playtest 2	PT2		
15	Educational Game Presentations	GDD Final Version		

Formal Writing Assignments

GD102 - Beyond Games

Interactive Fiction:

The landscape of games is much broader than RPGs, fighting games, and first person shooters. The gameplay elements of early exploratory, experiential games such as Adventure and Myst, have merged with choose-your-own-adventure style books to create a field of experiential interactive fiction. Using the interactive fiction building toolkit Twine, you will create a work of interactive fiction similar to those discussed in class. Remember that the focus of this should be on experiential storytelling and emotional impact, not merely choice-based storytelling.

Requirements:

- At least 10 pages
- A total of at least 500 words
- 3 pages presenting the reader with significant choice
- A branching narrative with at least 2 distinct endings

Due Dates:

Class 5 - Initial version completed and ready for peer and instructor feedback
Class 6 - Final version due

Game Design One-Sheet - Art Game:

The Game Design One-Sheet has become an important way for game designers to present their ideas for feedback and funding proposals. The one-sheet is a way to help hone and clarify the game vision, and get the team, client, and investors excited about your idea. Focus on making it readable, accessible and exciting. It will include the following sections:

Sections:

- Genre / Proposed platform - This gives the reader a good idea of what type of game you intend on making (first-person shooter, puzzler, endless runner), and where you plan on marketing it (iPhone/Android, desktop, PS4)
- Target Audience - This tells the reader who your game is for.
- Description - Give a short narrative breakdown of how the game will work. What is the game's story? Describe the game flow and key game elements.
- Most compelling features - What sets your game apart from similar titles? (For example the time-shifting mechanic in *Braid* or the portals in *Portal*)

Due Dates:

Class 3 - Present Art Game one-sheet and pitch

Game Design Document - Social Game / Education Game:

For the final two projects of the semester you will work through the development of an industry-standard Game Design Document. These documents will go through three stages. You will receive feedback and critique at each stage and use the responses from your peers and the instructor to further refine the vision for your game.

Stages:

Initial One-Sheet / Pitch
Initial Game Design Document
Final Game Design Document

As explained in class, the final 10 page Game Design Document will be a fully realized document addressing all of your design choices in the following sections:

Sections:*Title Page*

Game Title / Logo / Graphic, contact info, target platform, target audience

Story and Gameplay

A few short paragraphs detailing: setting, characters and conflict.

Tell the narrative and arc through gameplay / stages

Elevator Pitch

Characters and Control

Who does the character control?

What is his/her motivation?

What activities can they perform?

If digital, illustrate control mapping

Game Flow

How does the Player grow?

What can the player gain?

Game World

Where does the game take place?

List of environments

Include images / storyboards

Include diagram of world navigation / gameboard design

Main Gameplay Concepts

Genre

How is the play broken up? Rounds / Levels / Chapters?

Interface

How does the player navigate the world?

Mechanics

What unique mechanics are used?

What collectible can be attained?

Enemies / Bosses

Describe enemy types and functionality

Include any available images

Iterations / Playtest Reports

Explain why certain design choices were made

What have you learned by seeing your game in users' hands?

Competition

Discuss other games that are similar to yours

What sets your game apart?