



**DEPARTMENT OF Liberal Studies & Art History  
FALL SEMESTER, 2024**

Course Code and Title: **ART, DESIGN & VIDEOGAMES (FHCA 2050)**

Meeting Times and Days: F 2:00 PM-5:00 PM                      Room: 114

Instructor: Kirby Mealer

Contact Information: Kirby.Mealer@paris.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the intricate and continually evolving relationship between art, design, and the world of video games. We will investigate the intersections of video game development with contemporary art and design practices, and students will have the opportunity to:

- Delve into the crucial role of games in various cultures throughout human history. Using foundational texts such as "Man, Play, and Games" by Roger Caillois and "Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture" by Johan Huizinga, we will explore the social and cultural aspects of play.
- Trace the origins of modern video game design by examining past works that foreshadowed its elements. This includes exploring Stéphane Mallarmé's experimental and never-finished "Livre," interactive plays by Bertolt Brecht, and Karlheinz Stockhausen's musical composition Klavierstück XI, spanning various art forms.
- Learn about cultural movements' impact on game design. By analyzing movements like Surrealism, Impressionism, and Abstract Expressionism, we will uncover their profound influence on video game design and narratives and further explore the art movements that emerged from video game design.
- Investigate experimental approaches to storytelling, world-building, and narrative structures within video games, examining the medium's historical development.
- Explore how video game culture has deeply impacted contemporary art and design. From video game-inspired art installations to the usage of video games for advertising to immersive mixed-reality experiences and fashion events conducted entirely in virtual environments, we will investigate the convergence of these worlds.

By the conclusion of this course, students will gain an in-depth understanding of video games from the perspective of the art world, its evolution over time, and how new media artists and game designers utilize different artistic and narrative techniques that stem from the digital realm.

This course welcomes students from various academic backgrounds who share a passion for art, design, and video games. Whether you're an art and design history enthusiast, a dedicated gamer, or simply curious about the fusion of these realms, this course promises valuable insights into this ever-evolving intersection.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, a student should be able to:

- Be able to explain the history of play throughout different cultures and its connection to the art and game realm
- Demonstrate effective knowledge of visual vocabulary about art movements, video game culture, and technical terminology in class discussions and writing assignments
- Demonstrate critical thinking and analysis skills while examining different art and artists and finding the relationship between art, culture, and video games
- Be able to explain the history of video games and their evolution over time, concerning evolving technologies and artistic movements
- Demonstrate the ability to critically examine media and be able to place traits, themes, and developments in gaming in a critical and artistic context

## ASSESSMENT

- Participation - 15%
  - Participation in discussions – 10%
  - Short presentation of an art piece/artist/studio relating to the content of the course that inspires you – 5%
- Quizzes – 10%
- In class assignments and homework assignments- 25%
- Midterm- 25%
  - Paper – 15%
  - Presentation- 10%
- Final project- 25%
  - Project- 15%
  - Presentation – 10%

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**LATE SUBMISSION POLICY:** If a paper or other project is one day late, it will be marked down one-third of its given grade (e.g. an A to A-, or an A- to B+ etc.) unless students can present a medical excuse from a doctor or a note from their Department Chair. For each subsequent day, until seven days from the original due date, the paper will be marked down one-third of its given grade. No paper or assignment will be accepted after the seventh day after the first due date.

### Students are expected to:

- Students are responsible for checking their paris.edu emails regularly.
- Students are responsible for making up the work if a class is missed.
- Students are required to attend the mandatory field trips.
- Students are required to participate in in-person discussions and activities.
- Students are expected to complete exams and assignments as scheduled.
- Students are expected to submit all assignments on time.

### Faculty is expected to:

- To be on time and prepared for each session.
- To check their paris.edu emails regularly.
- To create a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students.



To provide timely scholarly feedback on exams and organize individual or group tutorials.  
To provide Zoom links at least the day before the class starts.  
To answer emails before the next class.

## **ATTENDANCE**

All absences are noted. Substantial **unannounced** absences or late arrivals are factored into grades. Please note the following:

- Two late arrivals (more than 15 minutes) or early departures = one full absence
- One late arrival of more than 30 minutes = one full absence
- Two unannounced absences = excessive absence for a course that meets once per week; four unannounced absences = excessive absence for a course that meets twice per week
- If the course meets once a week, three absences are grounds for failure in the course. If the course meets twice a week, six absences are grounds for failure in the course.

If you are ill or have any signs of illness within 24 hours prior to the class (fever, cough, breathing difficulties/shortness of breath, or other symptoms) you should not attend class. Send an email to your instructor with your chair in copy to announce that you will be absent, and then contact your medical provider.

Make sure at the beginning of the semester that you have contact information for other students in your class so that you can ask them for help to catch up if you have missed a class.

If someone in your household has tested positive for the coronavirus, keep the entire household at home. Do not come to school. Contact your medical provider.

Students who have symptoms should stay at home and not come to campus until they have been tested and should catch up on assignments through classmates.

If you are ill for a long period of time you should discuss options for withdrawing from class with your department chair.

The attendance policy is valid for online classes as well as for classes that meet in person.

## **RESOURCES AND READINGS**

*PDF and printed versions of required readings will be provided.*

Required readings:

- Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*
- Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*
- Kelli Feury, *New Media: Culture and Image*
- Mark J. P. Wolf, *The Video Game Explosion: A History from PONG to PlayStation and Beyond*
- Ralph H. Baer and Van Burnham, *Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984*
- Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*
- Donna J. Cox, Ellen Sandor, and Janine Fron, *New Media Futures: The Rise of Women in the Digital Arts*
- Gonzalo Frasca, "Simulation vs. Narrative: Introduction to Ludology"

## LEARNING RESOURCES & LIBRARIES

- *The Research and Writing Lab* (appointments: [rwl@paris.edu](mailto:rwl@paris.edu)) is a tutoring resource for students seeking extra help with written assignments in English.
- A Support and Adaptations form should be filled out by students who have a documented learning disability. Students with learning or other disabilities may seek advice from the Registrar ([registrar2@paris.edu](mailto:registrar2@paris.edu)). This must be done within the first 3 weeks of the semester if the student requires specific accommodations.
- *The American Library in Paris* (for general resources in English): 10, rue du Général Camou, 75007 Paris. <http://www.americanlibraryinparis.org/>. Library cards are free for Paris College of Art students (see Registrar for details).
- *Bibliothèque Kandinsky*, at the Centre Georges Pompidou (for specialized collections on Modern art and design, primarily in French). Closed Tuesdays, Saturdays, Sundays & holidays: <http://bibliothequekandinsky.centrepompidou.fr/>
- *Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs* (for specialized collections on decorative arts, design, posters, and fashion, primarily in French): 111, rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris. Closed Sundays and holidays. <http://www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr/francais/bibliotheque/>
- *Terra Foundation for American Art* (research library devoted exclusively to the visual arts of the United States from the eighteenth century to 1980): 121 rue de Lille 75007 Paris. Monday–Friday, 2:00–6:00 p.m. For information: [library@terraamericanart.eu](mailto:library@terraamericanart.eu).

## MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

- Folder for printed reading assignments
- Pencils and/or pens
- Notebook paper

## SCHOOL POLICIES

1. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. All research, text, and image sources must be cited using [Chicago](#) (Turabian) or [APA](#) style. See your instructor or the Student Handbook if you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism.
2. You are required to attend and participate in class critiques and other presentations. Be respectful of your fellow classmates.
3. No phones, devices for listening to music, or other electronics are allowed in class, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.
4. No emailing, web surfing, or instant messaging, etc. is allowed during class time, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.
5. Classrooms are community spaces. Please leave them clean and tidy.
6. All *Paris College of Art* buildings are NON-SMOKING, including balconies and the courtyard. You must go outside in the street to smoke. Students found smoking on PCA premises will be fined.

## GRADES

Faculty assign **letter grades** at the end of the semester, which can be calculated numerically either on a 4-point scale, or on a 100%-scale, as outlined below. The GPA is calculated on a 4-point scale, but some instructors may prefer to calculate their grades based on the 100% scale.

Letter Grade	4.0 scale	100% scale	Grade Description
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<b>A</b>	4.0	94–100%	Exceptional achievement. Substantial effort and achievement in the areas of critical thinking, technique and presentation.
<b>A-</b>	3.7	90–93.9%	Work of very high quality.
<b>B+</b>	3.3	87–89.9%	Work of high quality. Substantially higher than average abilities.
<b>B</b>	3.0	84–86.9%	Very good work that satisfies the goals of the course; clear and convincing structure that is complex and unique.
<b>B-</b>	2.7	80–83.9%	Good work.
<b>C+</b>	2.3	77–79.9%	Above average work. Average understanding of course material.
<b>C</b>	2	74–76.9%	Average work. Original assignment approached but does not develop further.
<b>C-</b>	1.7	70–73.9%	Passing work but below good academic standing.
<b>D</b>	1.0	60–69.9%	Below average work that indicates a student does not fully understand the assignments. Very little effort, is incomplete or late. Lacks of full understanding and commitment.
<b>F</b>	0.0	0–59.9%	Failure, no credit (Student did not perform to the minimum standards of the course as described in the syllabus.)
<b>W</b>	n/a	n/a	Withdrawal. This grade can only be assigned by the Registrar’s Office. If a student withdraws from a course during the “Add/Drop” period, the course is deleted from his or her permanent record. If a student withdraws between the fourth and seventh weeks and completes an “Add/Drop” form, obtaining Advisor approvals and submitting it to the Registrar’s Office, he or she will receive a grade of W, assigned by the Registrar. A receipt provided by the Registrar’s Office to the student confirms that a withdrawal has been made. This should be kept with other personal records. No withdrawals are allowed after the seventh week of classes. There is no penalty for a grade of W.
<b>WF</b>	0.0	n/a	Withdrawal Failing. Instructors may assign this grade to indicate that a student has unofficially withdrawn or stopped attending classes. It may also be issued when a student fails to submit a final project or to take an examination without prior notification or approval from the instructor. The WF grade is equivalent to an F in calculating the grade point average (0 grade points) and no credit is awarded.
<b>I</b>	n/a	n/a	Incomplete. This grade may be assigned when coursework has been delayed at the end of the semester for extenuating circumstances (illness, death in the family, etc.). Incomplete grades are given only with the written approval of the instructor and the Department Chair. Outstanding work must be submitted within a period of four weeks after the last day of class. If

			outstanding work is not timely submitted, the “I” will automatically convert to a permanent unofficial withdrawal (WF).
<b>Grade Missing (“GM”)</b>	n/a	n/a	This grade can only be assigned by the Registrar’s Office. This is a grade assigned when grades for an entire class have been turned in but one or more individual grades are missing.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**(Weekly Course Outline, please note that this outline is subject to modification)**

Classes begin Monday, September 2, 2024. Add/Drop ends at 5pm on Tuesday, September 10, 2024. The last day to withdraw from a class without penalty is Thursday, October 31, 2024. The last day of class is Friday, December 13, 2024.

*Please note that in Fall 2024, Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup> and Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> are public holidays and PCA will be closed. Therefore, classes should be rescheduled and make-up dates should be indicated in your syllabus.*

### **Week 1**

- Course Overview and Learning Outcomes
- Introduction: What is Play?
  - An investigation into the history of play and how that relates to modern-day play in the scope of games.

### **Week 2**

- Game design as an art form
  - Exploration of Stéphane Mallarmé’s "Livre," Bertolt Brecht’s interactive plays, and Karlheinz Stockhausen’s musical composition “Klavierstück XI.”
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #01

### **Week 3**

- History of video games
  - An exploration of the first video games and the evolution of video games over time.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #02

### **Week 4**

- Utilizing interactivity in art installations to elicit “play”
  - Exploration into interactivity in art and its connection to video games as an art medium.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #03

### **Week 5**

- The influence of art movements inside the digital realm and art movements that stemmed from the digital realm
  - An analysis of the Surrealism, Impressionism, and Abstract Expressionism movements and how they have impacted video game aesthetics.



- An exploration of digital art movements in the virtual realm, such as JustWalkingism.
- Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #04

#### **Week 6**

- The evolution of digital stylizations
  - An exploration of the evolution of artistic styles of video games as technology evolves over time.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #05

#### **Week 7**

- Midterm presentations

#### **Week 8**

- Video games' aesthetic
  - An exploration into video games as an aesthetic in contemporary art.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #06

#### **Week 9**

- No class Friday, Nov 1
- A field trip to an exhibition will be made for Saturday, October 26 OR Saturday, Nov 2 based on student availability. Exhibition TBD.

#### **Week 10**

- Video games and communication design
  - An exploration into “advergaming,” games used for advertising and marketing.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #07

#### **Week 11**

- The digital body
  - An exploration of the “digital body” through the lens of virtual realms
  - Exploring immersive art in virtual reality, augmented reality, and mixed reality.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #08

#### **Week 12**

- Experimental video games: taking the player on a journey
  - Exploring experimental video games that utilize video games as a medium for meta-commentary, abstract storytelling, and utilizing concepts such as time as core game mechanics.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #09

#### **Week 13**

- Video game culture
  - An exploration into the globally connected world of the internet and how global connection has influenced video game culture, game stylization, and artists who now have easy access to new inspirations from around the globe.
  - Due: Weekly Reflection and Assignment #10

#### **Week 14**

- Final presentations

#### **Week 15**

- Last session: wrap-up and in-class discussion about course content and experience.