



History 560
Mind Games
T, TH 12:30-1:45
Powers 136

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Course Description and Objectives

This course will start with the students examining popular games to gain a better understanding of how diverse game mechanics can be leveraged for engagement and learning in the classroom. We will then play a “Reacting to the Past” micro-game prototype, “The Jumonville Incident,” by Nicolas Proctor. We will

follow this up with another one-day game “Peron is Dead,” by Mary Jane Treacy. Following their conclusion, we will evaluate their effectiveness as a teaching tools. As with the earlier conversation on game mechanics, this discussion will set the stage for gaining an understanding of what historical elements and game mechanics are necessary for the creation of a historical role-playing classroom game. To facilitate learning students will propose ideas for their own games. In the middle of the semester the class will choose three to four student-generated ideas to develop as a class and test at the end of the semester.

Required Texts

Available from the CMU Bookstore:

Schell, Jesse. *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*. Second Edition. New York: CRC Press, 2015.

Available from Amazon.com:

Proctor, Nicolas. *Reacting to the Past Game Designer’s Handbook*. 3rd Edition. POD from Amazon.com (Specifics of this are good for this course and the methodology we will be discussing).

Available from our Blackboard shell:

Treacy, Mary Jane “Paterson, 1913: The Silk Strike”

Treacy, Mary Jane. “Person is Dead”

Grading Policy and Course Opportunities:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Participation	10%
Paterson, 1913	10%
Peron is Dead	10%
Initial Pitch	20%
Refined Design	5%
Team Briefing and Self-Evaluation	15%
Prototyping	30%

Grade Scale:

A = 93 – 100%	B- = 80 – 83%	D+ = 67 – 69%
A- = 90 – 92%	C+ = 77 – 79%	D = 64 – 66%
B+ = 87 – 89%	C = 74 – 76%	D- = 60 – 63%
B = 84 – 86%	C- = 70 – 73%	E = 59%

All assignments must be provided in hard copy.

Assignments:

Participation

This class requires *active* participation. Attending class and nodding appropriately will not cut it. The idea behind the class is to develop engaging games for use in your future classes. As such you will be presenting material, playing games, and otherwise engaging with your classmates. **You will know everyone's name.** This is something you should work at and may be quizzed on.

As you play games in and out of class think about how the mechanics of those games can be leveraged for learning in the classroom. Bring these ideas with you to class. A willingness to participate in new and “odd” (when compared to the traditional) learning methods is essential to the idea of the class.

Paterson, 1913: The Silk Strike

“Reacting to the Past” games are designed to foster the development of several different skills including: critical thinking, written and oral communication, negotiation, problem-solving, creativity, and strategic thinking. They are also designed to give you a good understanding of a pivotal historical moment.

Before the game begins, I will give each of you a role sheet, which is an essential and integral part of each game. It describes the historical persona that you will model. Once a game begins, you should attempt to inhabit your role as fully as is possible. Consequently, you should read your role sheet very, very carefully. In addition, you may want to carry it around with you in case you need to consult it. When you read the contextual material and documents for the game read them “in role” and think about how that might be different from reading them as yourself.

The best way to fully understand your role is by talking with other people about their roles. This is also useful because you will need to interact with others to play the game well.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation grade for the game includes the following components:

1. Attendance
2. Active participation in addition to prepared speeches
3. Integration of the readings into your speeches
4. Acknowledgement of statements made by your classmates in your speeches
5. Developing a clear understanding of the historical context of the game
6. Developing a clear understanding of the operation of the game

WRITING

Do the assignment required of the games. Details are in the materials (either the gamebook or on the character sheets)

VICTORY

Winning isn't everything, but it sure is nice. Does this mean you are competing against your classmates? In some cases, yes, it does. But in other cases it means that you must cooperate with them. Sometimes this is because they are your allies, but in many cases, their positions on certain issues are *indeterminate*. That is, they do not have set positions on certain issues at the beginning of the game. Bring them over to your way of thinking and persuade them to adopt your positions. In addition to speaking, this requires that you *listen* carefully to what they have to say. It also requires that you listen to what others have to say about them.

PERSUASION

When giving a speech, it can be helpful to think of yourself as a lawyer. Is your client well served if you plead that you *feel* he is innocent, because you *believe* he is innocent or because you *really, really want* him to be innocent? Just because it is useful for something to be true, doesn't mean that it is so. Consequently, you must provide **evidence** to convince us that your position is strong. Furthermore, explain where that evidence comes from and why you consider it reliable. If you draw on the required readings everyone will be impressed.

Informal discussions are where much of the actual negotiation takes place in the game, so you should continue to discuss the issues with your peers **outside of the classroom**. Treating someone to lunch in order to influence her opinions is entirely within the rules. Flattery, dissembling, exaggeration, and lying are all possibilities too – as are loyalty, honesty, and forthrightness. The personal touch is usually best for these things, but you should certainly feel free to supplement these efforts with electronic communications.

Remember: while enthusiastic immersion in the game is encouraged, never forget that you must always adhere to the rules of Central Michigan University as well as municipal, state, and federal law.

Initial Pitch: Topics Must be Non-Western

This is your opportunity to persuade everyone that your concept for a game has merit. The initial pitch should be “high concept” and should not get lost in details. Hit the high points. Get us excited about the prospects for your game. In order to achieve this, your pitch must include the following:

1. Learning objectives – *What should players learn?*
2. Justification for addressing these through a game – *Why a game?*
3. Intellectual collisions – *What do people argue about?*
4. At least two good books by historians that describe the events in your game
5. At least two key primary source documents
6. At least nine key roles

7. An answer to the question: *Why will people want to play your game?*

You have four 8 ½ by 11 sheets of paper you can use to make your cause. How you use the space is up to you, but you MUST cite your materials. **You will bring in a copy for everyone to see.** If this causes a problem, come talk to me.

Half the pitches will be eliminated.

Then, as we move towards the Refined Design, we may decide to end work on several more.

Refined Design

Now you need to figure out if there is sufficiently rich historical material for your game to work. Also, you now have at least one teammate. Together, teammates must prepare a Refined Design. There must be a physical version (**you have 6 pages that will go to me**) and an oral presentation (**4 minutes**) for the class as a whole. Teammates share the grade.

These presentations should include the following:

- The clarification of items 1-3 above
- A bibliography including at least six good sources by historians (with annotations)
- Six primary source documents
- 16 roles

In addition, you need to produce a visual aid. This “idea map” of the game mechanism should include:

- Relationships between the roles
- The essential game mechanisms (e.g. elections, money, etc.)

Half the refined designs will be eliminated. Then we will trim until we determine the three to four finalists. I will let you know how many finalists we will trim to prior to this point.

Contract: Each group will create a contract that all members will sign. The contract will detail how to contact each other. What expectations are for submitting work to the group before deadlines. And, most importantly, a process for handling conflict that arises within the group. Specifically attached to the conflict resolution must be a list of actions that happen before you ask the professor to intervene in the group. The result of a professor intervention will generally fail to please anyone in the group.

Mid-term Evaluation: You will all submit a mid-term evaluation of your group members work. This will be due on March 17th. The aim of these evaluations is as a health check for the group. If it becomes clear that anyone is not holding up their end of the group project they will meet with the professor and may be asked to drop the class.

Team Briefing & Self-Evaluation

Every team needs at least one person to fill the following functions:

- Visionary -- *maintain project focus on learning objectives. This person ultimately has the final say when components of the game come into conflict. In charge of understanding how the historical period understudy intersects with the game mechanics to create a good educational game. You will be reading all of the materials of the game as they are produced and making sure they fit into your goal. You are the project lead. **This WILL be the person who initially proposed the project.***

- Administrator – *maintain communications and coordinate efforts of everyone. This person will set internal team deadlines and see that everyone has the help they need. This person needs to be comfortable jumping from task to task and telling people (not asking) what needs to happen to make deadlines. ***The reason for telling and not asking, you are a team and things need to get done quickly. Politeness is for favors not for teams on a deadline. A quarterback doesn't ask a wide receiver to catch the ball he throws it at him. This will happen the same way. If you have a reason you might drop the "pass" say so, but don't dodge it.*
- Progress Report Writer/Mechanics Specialist – *submit 2 reports during the development phase. This person will be the "squeaky wheel" as he/she will need to know where people are at in the process in order to finish their reports on time. You will also be working with the Synthesizer to develop the core mechanics of the game.*
- Synthesizer/Mechanics Specialist – *integrate disparate parts into a whole. This person needs to understand how the game mechanics will work and how each piece of the game ties into those mechanics. You will also be working with the Progress Report Writer to develop the core mechanics of the game.*
- Content Specialists x 2 – *research and develop an understanding of the time period of the game on a macro level. This person needs to know how each component of the game intersects and supports historical accuracy.*
- Character Specialist x 2 – *This person is in charge of a micro knowledge of the history. She/he will know all of the characters in the game, how important they are to the topics being covered in the game, the order that they will be assigned, and the interconnections between the characters. While this person will focus on writing characters he/she will also distribute the responsibility and keep track of who is writing which characters and follow up on them.*

Each team will determine who will fill these roles. Then, each team member must write a **two-page self-evaluation**. In it you must describe why you selected your role and how you plan to coordinate with the rest of the team. In particular, describe your plans to deal with the situation if one of your team members begins to encounter challenges that prevent the completion of necessary components of the overall game design. The natures of these challenges will surely vary. Laziness, overwork, inexperience, and inadequate resources are all likely culprits.

As part of this meeting, every team member must get a **Google account**. The Administrator should then create a **Coordinating Document** using Google docs. All team members and the instructor must be invited to the document with full editing privileges.

Structuring the Team

Creating a game is a big effort and is not easily done in a semester. To accomplish it you will have to work together and do so quickly and efficiently. Each of the positions have a specific task they are responsible for accomplishing.

The **Visionary** must write a document describing the learning objectives for the game as well as providing a justification for addressing these through a game. Finally, this document should outline the intellectual collisions that will provide the intellectual center for the game. (An early version of these ideas appeared in the initial pitch). As the project progresses, the Visionary must make appropriate changes and must continue to read and revisit all portions of the game as they are submitted.

The **Administrator** must create a Coordinating Document listing the responsibilities of every team member. Everyone on the team must agree to this distribution of responsibilities. As the project

progresses, new elements will become necessary; the Administrator must make appropriate changes to the master document.

The **Progress Report Writer/Mechanics Specialist** must monitor the filing of components and the evolution of the project. On the appointed dates, a 2-3 page Progress Report must be filed. If progress is not being made on particular components, these reports must explain why. The Administrator must then take steps to correct these shortcomings. You will also help to develop the core-mechanics of the game. The mechanics must support the learning objectives in a seamless fashion. The game cannot overshadow the educational components while at the same time they cannot appear to be frosting on something that is otherwise unappetizing.

The **Synthesizer/Mechanics Specialist** must compile all of the components into one Prototype. The different components need to be harmonized with one another. They also need to share the same formatting. You will also help to develop the core-mechanics of the game. The mechanics must support the learning objectives in a seamless fashion. The game cannot overshadow the educational components while at the same time they cannot appear to be frosting on something that is otherwise unappetizing.

The **Content Specialist** is responsible for the overall historical accuracy of the game. If there are counterfactuals she/he must detail it and mention why it is important to the function of the game. Additionally, she/he must make sure that all of the primary source documents being used in the game have a direct tie into at least a quarter of the characters in the game.

The **Character Specialists** are responsible for creating a character web document and sharing it with the group. This web will depict all of the characters and their relationship with each other and the learning objectives of the game. These individuals will also lead the process of writing the character sheets and distributing the process of writing the characters to other colleagues in the group.

General Components

All of the other components provide content for the game itself. The tasks listed below will need to be distributed within the group. There are some that make an obvious fit, while others just need to be picked up by someone. The team needs to make sure the work load is balanced among all of the team members. All documents should all be submitted via Googledocs. All team members and the instructor must be given editing permissions. There are a variety of components:

1. **Secondary source research.** Submit a **5-7 page** written report on two books and three scholarly articles (from historical journals) that address your game topic. This is a feasibility study. In a setting where you aren't constrained by the confines of a semester time clock you could do a lot of the original research yourself.
2. **Six contextualized and glossed primary source documents.** This means the document should be identified, as should its author, and the date of publication. In addition, there should be a paragraph length introduction, and any specialized vocabulary or historical references in the text should be decrypted in footnotes. *Note:* These cannot be scans. They must be documents that can be edited.
3. **20 Role sheets (3 pages each).** At a minimum, they should include the following:
 - a. **Biography.** Who is this person? (1 page)
 - b. **Victory objectives.** What motivates this role?
 - c. **Connections to documents.** What should the player read first?
 - d. **Connection to game mechanism.** Can this person vote? Does this person need money?

- e. **Citations.** Provide full citations for the source materials you drew upon, but do not bother citing encyclopedias.
4. **Game Mechanism.** A **2-3 page** description of how the game mechanism works. Diagrams are usually useful. This may be the shortest component, but since it must be particularly clear and well thought-out, it may be the most difficult to write.
5. **Historical Context Essay.** Based on secondary sources, this is a **6-page essay** that sets the stage for the game. This may be the longest component, but the format – a narrative essay – should be quite familiar to many students.

Prototyping

Play-testable Prototype – 5% shared

The Prototype is, in essence, a rough but playable version of the game. It assembles all of the available components, harmonizes them with one another, plugs them into the game mechanism, and standardizes the format. The Synthesizer is in charge of producing this, but the team as a whole must contribute to this effort.

If any of the responsibilities identified by the Administrator and commented upon by the Progress Report Writer are incomplete, the prototype as a whole may be flawed. Consequently, the entire team's grade may suffer. Contrariwise, if everyone has pulled their weight, identified necessary course corrections, and assisted the Synthesizer, everyone will share a high mark.

Playtesting – 15% individual

Expectations are similar to that of the Paterson game. You will present arguments, give speeches, and provide feedback. You do not need to write the papers, but you should still come prepared with the requisite reading completed.

Prototype Final Draft – 5% shared

Your Final Draft should clean up the prototype and it should incorporate changes in reaction to the playtesting feedback. Some components will need updating:

- The Visionary must update the Learning Objectives
- The Administrator must update the Coordinating Document in consultation with team members
- The Synthesizer must compile all of the alterations and additions

In addition, some new components will need to be created:

- Opening vignette
- Counterfactuals
- Annotated bibliography
- Designer's notes for the Instructor's Manual (e.g. why we did what we did)

Finally, there may be a need for additional roles and documents and that sort of thing. All of these responsibilities should be distributed as evenly as possible.

Assessing the Experience

Team and Self-Assessment

Toward the beginning of the class you will self-assess yourself. At the conclusion of the course, you will provide feedback on group dynamics within your design team, its inner-workings, the ways problems were addressed, and how the members of the group contributed to progress toward the completion of the

project. In addition, describe the role you played in the group’s organization, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Course Policies

Class Points as Currency: Over the period of my teaching career students have made a number of requests that on an individual level seem small, but when taken in the context of 100+ students a semester can become egregious. To be able to support these requests and help you out I have turned the points you receive for your assignments into currency. You may exchange your points for any of the items on the table below. To be completely clear, **use of the points WILL reduce your overall score in the class**, so use them wisely. The cost of each item is below. If you think I should add something to the list, please let me know. You earn points with each assignment you complete. There are 1,000 points available over the course of the semester.

Item	Cost in Points
Staple or paper clip for paper	5 points
Failing to use in-text citations in your papers	30 points
Late paper	33 points per 24-hour period
Leaving class early/arriving late	Varies based on egregiousness. Talk to me.
Missing Class	First two free, all additional are 33 points.
Texting in class or use of social media	50 points for first offense. 200 for second offense (yes I really hate this).
Answering phone calls in class	666 points

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory for all classes. Students may miss two classes without payment of points. Each additional class will cost you points, see table above.

Honorable Conduct: In the interests of a distraction-free classroom, students are asked to turn off their cell phones, and ignore any in-coming calls or text messages until after class. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in an expenditure of points per the table above.

Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will fail the class. Infractions will be reported to the Honor Board and the dean with the recommendation that the harshest punishment be enforced. Plagiarism includes taking someone’s ideas without giving them proper credit or copying someone’s work that is not your own. Students are expected to adhere to Central Michigan University’s Policy on Academic Integrity, which is available on-line at http://www.cmich.edu/documents/policies-procedures/ACADEMIC_INTEGRITY_POLICY.pdf

Disabilities: CMU provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities or services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the Office of Student Disability Services (120 Park Library, telephone 989-774-3018, TDD #2568), and then contact the professor as soon as possible.

Note: *This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.*

Tentative Class Schedule:

Weekly Topics

Week One: Jan. 8-12 Day 1: “Game Development Process” and “What is RTTP” <i>In-Class Game:</i> Marshmallow Challenge.	Introduction to the Class Distribute Roles
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<p><i>In-Class Discussion:</i> Making a safe space and building teams.</p> <p>Day 2: Play and Learning and the “Magic Circle” Read: Proctor, 9-62 and Schell, pp. 1-68. Discussion: Cooperative vs. Competitive Game Play. <i>In Class Game:</i> Hanabi</p> <p>Distribute Roles</p>	
<p>Week Two: Jan. 15-19 Day 1: Peron is Dead! (Come prepared to play) Read: Peron is Dead</p> <p>Day 2: Debrief Peron is Dead!</p> <p>Discuss: Answer questions about Peron is Dead! and discuss it in light of Schell’s book.</p> <p>Distribute Roles</p>	
<p>Week Three: Jan. 22-26 Day 1: Paterson, 1913 (come prepared to play) Read: Paterson, 1913 and Proctor, pp. 63-84.</p> <p>Day 2: Paterson, 1913 Read: Schell, pp. 157-238</p>	<p>Paterson Paper Due Jan. 25</p>
<p>Week Four: Jan. 29-Feb. 2 Day 1: Debrief on Paterson. Read: Proctor, pp. 85-116 Schell pp. 239-341.</p> <p>Discussion: Did you achieve victory? Why or why not? Is this important to you? Why or why not? Does it matter whether other players won or lost? What do you consider your finest moment in the games? What made it so? To what degree do you think about grades while playing an educational game? Investigate the relationship between receiving grades and becoming immersed in a game. Do grades prevent your absorption in the game? Alternatively, might they facilitate it? Consider both games in the context of what you have read in Schell so far.</p> <p>Day 2: Preparing our pitches. Read: Schell, pp. 345-391 (also consider reading Ch. 30 about pitches).</p>	
<p>Week Five: Feb. 5-9 Day 1: Initial Pitches VOTE: Half the Pitches advance (rounded down) Discussion: Consider the projects that you are <u>not</u> affiliated with. Which of them do you think should advance to the next stage? Why? Read: Schell, pp. 413-447. Discuss: Thinking about teams.</p>	<p><u>Initial Pitch due 2/6</u></p>

<p>Day 2: ...but what do you learn? “Reading” Assignment: Play a game outside of class that you have played before, but it must be one in which you haven’t considered learning as part of it. Analyze the game – what did you actually learn from it prior to analyzing it? What did you learn from it in analyzing it?</p> <p>Read: Schell, pp. 499-528.</p> <p>In class writing: Think about your potential strengths and weaknesses as a game designer and developer. As a consequence, what kind of people do you need on your team? How can you know who they are? How can you attract them to your team?</p>	
<p>Week Six: Feb. 12-16 Day 1: Refined Designs Vote: Which three designs advance? Discussion: Offer commiserations and thanks to designers of Refined Designs that almost made it. Why are their ideas awesome? Is there anything about their designs that could be salvaged and incorporated into the designers that are moving forward?</p> <p>Day 2: Game Mechanics In class game: One Night Ultimate Werewolf.</p> <p>Read: Revisit Schell chs. 12-14. Discussion: Game Mechanics and Education</p>	<p><u>Refined Designs Due 2/13</u></p>
<p>Week Seven: Feb. 19-23 Day 1: Team Briefing & Self-Evaluation In class activity: Rapid game prototyping.</p> <p>Day 2: Secondary Source Review and 6 Character Sheets due.</p> <p>Work in class.</p>	<p><u>Team Briefing & Self-Evaluation due 2/20</u></p>
<p>Week Eight: Feb. 26-Mar. 2 Day 1: Primary Sources and 10 additional Character sheets due. Progress Report Due</p> <p>Day 2: Game Mechanism and 5 additional Character sheets due.</p> <p>Work in groups</p>	<p>Progress Report Due Tuesday</p> <p>Midterm Evaluation Due March 1st.</p>
<p>Week Nine: Mar. 5-9 Spring Break</p>	<p>Spring Break</p>
<p>Week Ten: Mar. 12-16 Day 1: <u>Report in, then work in groups either in the library or in classroom</u></p> <p>Day 2: Historical Background and complete draft</p>	<p>Progress Report Due Thursday</p> <p>Group Eval Due Thursday.</p>

due. Progress Report Due.	
Week Eleven: Mar. 19-23 Day 1: <u>Prototypes are due</u> <u>Game 1 materials distributed and setup game</u> Day 2: Game 1 playtest begins	<u>Game 1 materials distributed</u>
Week Twelve: Mar. 26-30 Day 1: Game 1 Playtest Day 2: Game 1 Playtest Conclusion	
Week Thirteen: Apr. 2-6 Day 1: Game 1 debrief <i>Discussion:</i> Feedback on Game 1 Day 2: No Class	<u>No Class April 5th</u>
Week Fourteen: Apr. 9-13 Day 1: <u>Game 2 materials distributed and setup game</u> Day 2: Game 2 playtest starts	<u>Game 2 materials distributed</u>
Week Fifteen: Apr. 16-20 Day 1: Game 2 playtest Day 2: Game 2 playtest Conclusion	
Week Sixteen: Apr. 23-27 Day 1: Game 2 debrief <i>Discussion:</i> Feedback on Game 2 Day 2: Odds and ends	

Final Drafts and Team Assessment Due: Thursday May 3rd, 12:00-1:50