

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



MASTER SYLLABUS

ENGL/TCOM 200 – NARRATIVE FORM IN VIDEO GAMES

CIP Code: 090702

**Created by: Kirk Jones
Updated by: Kirk Jones 2020**

SUNY Canton
Department of English & Humanities
Spring 2020

- A. **TITLE:** Narrative Form in Video Games
- B. **COURSE NUMBER:** ENGL/TCOM 200
- C. **CREDIT HOURS:**
 3 Credit Hours
 3 Lecture Hours: 3 per week
 Course Length: 15 weeks
- D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** Yes
- E. **GER CATEGORY:** None
- F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Spring
- G. **COURSE 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. Three hours of lecture per week.

- H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:**
 a. Co-requisite(s): ENGL 101 or ENGL 102

- I. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):** By the end of this course, the student will:

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<u>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</u>	<u>PSLO</u>	<u>GER</u>	<u>ISLO</u>
a. <i>Explain</i> the history and development of interactive narrative forms.			1[W]
b. <i>Analyze</i> narrative successes and failures in video games through case studies.	2. Critical Thinking Skills		2[CA]

c. Explore and <i>evaluate</i> philosophies on interactive narrative development.			2[CA]
d. <i>Apply</i> various storytelling techniques through creation of interactive fiction and storytelling.	2. Critical Thinking Skills		2[PS]
e. <i>Compare</i> narrative techniques in gaming.			1[W]

KEY	<u>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes [ISLO 1 – 5]</u>
ISLO #	ISLO & Subsets
1	Communication Skills Oral [O], Written [W]
2	Critical Thinking <i>Critical Analysis [CA] , Inquiry & Analysis [IA] , Problem Solving [PS]</i>
3	Foundational Skills <i>Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit,/ Reasoning [QTR]</i>
4	Social Responsibility <i>Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T]</i>
5	Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** Yes: X No: _____

- **Creative Works/Senior Project**

K. **TEXTS:**

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:** None.

M. **EQUIPMENT:** Technology-enhanced classroom.

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A-F

O. **MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

- Exams
- Quizzes
- Papers
- Participation

P. **DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

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