ARTG 140: Writing for Interactive Narrative (Summer Session 1, 2020)

Instructor Information

Nick Junius (they/them): njunius@ucsc.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment*
Class Meeting Link: https://meet.google.com/pei-krnu-uyf

Course Description

This is first and foremost a creative writing class. You will be creating two short stories in different styles over the course of the quarter. As part of this process, most of class time will be devoted to giving critiques and feedback on each others' work. **This means you should have at least one piece of writing (in any state) prepared before each class session.** This also means that a degree of the course material is up to you and part of the class will deal with how to give and receive feedback on work. Additionally we will be playing a variety of games in class and discussing the place of writing in each game and how these various games tell their stories.

Learning Objectives

From AGPM:
- Demonstrate understanding of the connections between technical commitments and game system design, on one hand, and player experience and cultural communication goals, on the other
- Define, develop, and communicate artistically innovative game ideas—situated historically and employing the methods of multiple art practices

For this Course:
- Develop a personal storytelling practice
- Practice writing in a variety of formats used in interactive media
- Learn to critique work, both for peers and existing media

Assignments

Grading

First Project Outline: 15%
First Project Final Draft: 30%

Second Project Outline: 15%

Second Project Final Draft: 30%

In class participation: 10%

Submissions

Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due at 11:59pm of the date on the syllabus. All final assignments can be submitted as PDFs or Twine games (or in a different portable format if you have talked with me). **To submit assignments, send an email to Nick (njunius@ucsc.edu) with "ARTG 140" and the assignment name in the subject line with your files attached (either as a zip folder or individual files).**

Sharing Drafts

There are two folders in the Google Drive for you to put your drafts to be workshopped in class:
- For the first project:
  https://drive.google.com/open?id=1sASsiZb6h8B_O9bykbRnoJb3hYY28eyh
- For the second project:
  https://drive.google.com/open?id=1_seA54EdR8EhRHu2cLK6kEB6eJ44Najj

Late, Missing, or Incomplete Assignments

You will be able to submit work late without penalty until the end of the last week of instruction (Week 5, July 20th-24th). Note that you will likely receive less feedback by default on late work.

Assignment Descriptions

Please note that all assignments are individual though it is perfectly reasonable (and encouraged) to discuss ideas and directions with your peers outside of class. **Of the four assignment options below, you will be completing two and the two you pick must be different (no repeats).** These assignments are supposed to be as open as possible to interpretation, so if your idea doesn't neatly fit into one of these categories we can talk about your plans and fit it in as much as possible.

None of these assignments has a set length though please keep in mind:
- I am the only one grading these
- There needs to be some form of progression so it cannot be too short
- These **do not** have to be branching narratives

Short Story Told as a Dialogue Driven Scene

This is basically a very short play and is usually focused around character interaction. This assignment can be in a more traditional script format (as a PDF) or in Twine if you prefer that work flow.

Outline Requirements:
- Names and brief descriptions of all the characters in your short story
- Descriptions of what will happen in each scene and who is involved
- What is the player doing during this scene?
    - If they are a character what are they allowed to do?
- A brief description of the world you are creating

Short Story Told Through Item Descriptions

This is more focused on the material artifacts of the world and may or may not be written in-universe. They can either be written from the perspective of the person(s) interacting with the objects or from the perspective of a narrator or some other entity all together. You can submit this either as a PDF or as an exported Twine game depending on how you want to work.

Outline Requirements:
- Names and brief descriptions of each of the items in your short story
- A map or diagram of the world in which these items are found
- How the player interacts with the items
    - Is the full description immediately available or is some of it hidden (and how do they uncover it?)
- A brief description of the world you are creating

Final Draft requires a map or diagram of locations submitted with it.

Short Story Told Through Found Pieces of Writing

This is generally what I'd call audio logs, diary entries, letters, or other things that characters in the world have left behind. These should be written as though the artifact exists in the world rather than being written by a narrator. You can submit this either as a PDF or as an exported Twine game depending on how you want to work.

Outline Requirements:
- Names and brief descriptions of each of the items and (potentially) characters in your short story
- A map or diagram of the world in which these items are found
- How the player interacts with these artifacts
    - Do they always see them in the same order or can they find things out of order?
- A brief description of the world you are creating

Final Draft requires a map or diagram of locations submitted with it.

Short Story Told Through a Series of Mission Briefing/Debriefing Scenes

These aren't quite the same as more traditional videogame cinematics and generally are used to bookend the in-game segments of action games. They usually involve one or more characters telling another set of characters what they will be doing (think planning scenes in heist movies or the old guy talking to the pilots before the Death Star battle in Star Wars Episode IV). You can submit this either as a PDF or as an exported Twine game depending on how you want to work.

Outline Requirements:
- Names and brief descriptions of all the characters and entities in your short story
    - Who is giving the briefing and who is listening to it?
- Descriptions of what will happen in each scene and who is involved
- Is what you are describing in each briefing actually going to happen and be what the player experiences?
    - Is there a gradient? Will things mostly happen in the way you describe?
- A brief description of the world you are creating

Attendance and Participation

I will not be taking attendance in this class. Participation involves giving feedback about others' work in class with the **main part of that score being determined by if you had at least one draft of your work read out loud in class, and by draft I mean any piece of in progress writing.**

Schedule

Week 1 (June 22 - 26)

Games: Item Description and Dialogue

Day 1 (June 22)

> **In class activity:** discuss outlining and approaches to writing stories
> **In class game:** Transistor
> **Assigned: First Project Outline**

Day 2 (June 24)

> **In class activity:** discuss outlining and approaches to writing stories
> **In class game:** VA-11 Hall-A
> **Assignment Due: First Project Outline**

Assigned: First Project Final Draft

Week 2 (June 29 - July 3)

Games: Briefing ~~and Found Writing~~

Day 1 (June 29)

In class activity: critique outlines and (possibly) workshop first project drafts
In class game: Freespace 2

Day 2 (July 1)

In class activity: workshop first project drafts
In class game: ~~Dead Space/Gone Home~~

Week 3 (July 6 - 10)

Games: ~~RPG Dialogue~~ Found Writing and Twine/Interactive Fiction

Day 1 (July 6)

In class activity: workshop first project drafts
In class game: ~~Tyranny~~ Gone Home

Day 2 (July 8)

In class activity: workshop first project drafts
In class game: ~~Trails in the Sky~~ Mama Possum/The Silence Under Your Bed
Assignment Due: First Project Final Draft
Assigned: Second Project Outline

Week 4 (July 13 - 17)

Games: Point and Click Adventures and Fighting Games

Day 1 (July 13)

In class activity: critique outlines and (possibly) workshop second project drafts
In class game: Primordia (Grim Fandango instead?)
Assignment Due: Second Project Outline

Day 2 (July 15)

In class activity: workshop second project drafts
Elizabeth Swensen coming by class at 2pm
In class game: Under Night in-Birth

Week 5 (July 20 - 24)

Games: ~~Interactive Fiction and Experimental Narrative~~ RPG Writing?

Day 1 (July 20)

> **In class activity:** workshop second project drafts
> **In class game:** ~~Mama Possum/The Silence Under Your Bed~~ Trails in the Sky

Day 2 (July 22)

> **In class activity:** workshop second project drafts
> Special guest Bahiyya Khan
> **In class game:** Elsinore
> **Assignment Due: Second Project Final Draft**

Safe Space

(from Michael Mateas's syllabi)
It is important that we all work together to help foster an environment in which students feel safe asking questions, posing their opinions, and sharing their work for critique. If at any time you feel this environment is being threatened—by anybody, including the professor—speak up and make your concerns heard. If you do not feel comfortable speaking about it in person, you may send private feedback via email or canvas to the course instructor or any of the TAs. If you feel uncomfortable broaching this topic with the professor in any way or for any reason, you should feel free to voice your concerns to the Dean's office.

Important Summer Session Remote 2020 Deadlines:

Session 1:
Drop: Monday, June 29
Request for "W": Friday, July 10

Session 2:
Drop: Monday, August 3
Request for "W": Friday, August 14

8-Week:
Drop: Monday, July 6
Request for "W": Friday, July 24

10-Week:

Drop: Monday, July 6
Request for "W": Friday, July 24

Summer is unique. **You will not be dropped for non-attendance or non-payment.** You must drop yourself. Dropping before the deadline results in a full-tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund).

For all dates and deadlines, including 'change of grade option' (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar: https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html

For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email summer@ucsc.edu.

DRC Remote Accommodations:

The Disability Resources Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. Operations continue via remote appointments. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations or any other disability-related matter, email the DRC Schedulers at drc@ucsc.edu for an appointment.

Title IX:

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. Information about the Title IX Office, the online reporting link, applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at titleix.ucsc.edu.

The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you

can expect the fastest response by using our [online reporting link.](#)

For more information please visit the [Title IX Operations under Covid-19](#) page.

Academic Integrity

I want to preface this by saying that this is a creative writing course so please, you are doing yourself a disservice if you use other people's work.

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

Student Resources

Digital Resources

-   Video Game Library, in Science & Engineering Library:
    https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/videogames
-   Digital Scholarship Commons in McHenry: https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/DSC
-   [Slug Support](#), including Food Support
-   [Basic Needs](#)
-   [Student Success Centers](#)
-   [CARE (Campus Advocacy Resources and Education)](#)
-   [CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services)](#)
-   [Student Health Center](#)

Additional Campus Resources

- [Writing Centers](#)
- [All Gender Restrooms](#)
- [Lactation Rooms](#)
- [Childcare](#)
- [Prayer Rooms: ISB-475](#)
- [For Veterans](#)
- [Undocumented Student Services](#)
- [Support for Survivors of Assault](#)