Syllabus LMC 4720 Interactive Narrative / LMC 6317 Interactive Fiction
FALL 2017
T/Th 1:30 -2:45 PM
Skiles 002

Professor Janet H. Murray
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Office Hours Monday 4-6 PM TSRB 320A

Game Resources are available online and in the Game Lab TSRB Room 113

The official site for this course is the joint Canvas site for 6317/4720
Announcements and revisions to schedules will be made through Canvas

Course Prerequisites (4720)
- ENGL 1102
- LMC 2100 or LMC 2700 or LMC 2800
- CS 1322 or CS 1331

Course Prerequisites for LMC 4720 ad 6317
- Familiarity with or ability to quickly master Twine 1.x or a similar rapid prototyping environment of your choice is essential. **If you cannot meet this requirement you should not take this course.**
- Knowledge of CSS and JavaScript and Unity will be helpful.

Core Area/Attributes
- Humanities/Fine Arts/Ethics

Course Description
The larger objective of this course is to contribute to the expansion of human expressive powers by creating and critiquing artifacts that exploit the affordances of the emerging digital medium for the purposes of the ancient human practice of storytelling. The course will survey multiple strategies for the representation of narrative in interactive, digital formats. It will present a structured approach for analyzing and creating coherent interactive storytelling systems that require the participation of one or more interactors. The course will be conducted through instructor presentations and active discussions, student oral reports, in-class discussion of students' written analytical and creative assignments, and in-class group workshop projects. Students will be responsible for multiple prototypes and design documents, and a substantial final project in the form of a digital interactive narrative.

Programmatic Learning Outcomes
- Students can create digital artifacts with an awareness of media traditions, audience, and context.
- Students can appreciate and evaluate future trends in the development of digital media

Attendance Policy
Students are expected to attend every meeting and to actively participate, including attentive and responsive engagement with the reports of other students. **Students will be asked to leave if they engage in any non-class activities during clas**s, such as web surfing, reading email, or texting, and will be expected to immediately leave the room for the duration of that class period.

If you are sick, please do not come to class but send the instructor an email indicating why you are absent.

What to do if you fall behind

Everybody drops the ball sometimes, and students often find themselves unable to keep up due to an illness or family emergency. If this happens to you, come and see me about it as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements for work that has been missed, and continue coming to class even if you have not handed in the assignment for the week.

Sharing of work
Participation in the course implies permission for sharing work with others in the class and with future students if your work is judged to be a good example. If you are not comfortable with this, please let me know. Unless I am informed by you in writing (email) that you do not want your work shared with others in the context of current and future versions of this course, I will assume that it is available.

Adapts Disability Services Program
Students with disabilities at Georgia Institute of Technology will find programs designated to coordinate academic accommodations and promote access to all phases of university life. Such programming is coordinated through the ADAPTS-Disability Services.

The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program is a functional part of the Office of the Dean of Students. ADAPTS-Disability Services Program personnel oversee and coordinate programs to ensure accessibility to students with disabilities on an individual basis. The Georgia Institute of Technology strives to provide equal access to a college education as well as support to students with disabilities
in their experience in the university community.

Georgia Institute of Technology
353 Ferst Drive, Suite 210
Smithgall Student Services Building
Atlanta, GA 30332-0285
404-894-2563 (V)
404-894-1664 (TDD)
404-894-9928 (FAX)

Honor code statement
The members of the Georgia Tech community believe the fundamental objective of the Institute is to provide the Students with a high quality education while developing in them a sense of ethics and social responsibility. We believe that trust is an integral part of the learning process and that self-discipline is necessary in this pursuit. We also believe that any instance of dishonesty hurts the entire community. It is with this in mind that we have set forth a Student Academic Honor Code at Georgia Tech.
You can find the Georgia Tech Honor Code at this address:
http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9

Some Special Applications of the Honor Code to Work in this Course
Students may use computer code, story elements, and images produced by others as part of their work in fulfillment of assignments for this course, if (a) they clearly identify and credit the source of any work not original to them and (b) they point to a substantial part of the assignment that is their own original creation and is equivalent in creativity and effort to the work of others who have not included borrowed elements.

In collaborative projects, students should clearly identify who is responsible for each element of the design and implementation. Credits should be assigned by mutual agreement and any dispute about crediting should be brought to the attention of the instructors as soon as possible in the process. Any collaborations beyond the group work explicitly assigned in class must be approved by the instructor in advance.

Communications Center

The Communication Center is located in **Clough Commons 447**. Trained professional and peer tutors help undergraduate and graduate students with written and oral presentations. Take advantage of this resource in preparing your assignments.

There is zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment on any basis, including but not limited to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Georgia Tech is committed to providing its staff, faculty, and students the opportunity to pursue excellence in their academic and professional endeavors. This opportunity can exist only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. Georgia Tech's full anti-harassment policy is online here: http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/anti-harassment-policy Violation of these expectations will result in appropriate penalties, including but not limited to reduction of grade, rescinding of lab access, or disciplinary action.

Coping with our High-Stress Culture

The known stresses of academic life can intensify other sources of personal or societal anxiety, and we all get overwhelmed at times. It is important to take time to look after ourselves and one another. The beginning of the semester is a good time to think about pacing your work so you don't have to pull all-nighters and you don't get into a cycle of lack of sleep, loss of perspective, and accelerating anxiety. Try to set aside some regular time to escape to something you enjoy for its own sake. The Recreation Center has lots of drop-in classes, organized outdoor activities, and equipment for burning off anxiety, zoning out on something mindless for a while, or revving up your spirits. Many people find yoga and meditation helpful to getting perspective on life. We live in a golden age of TV drama, and I am personally a firm believer in the healing power of narrative which can simultaneously distance us from our everyday world and reveal to us what we most deeply love, hate, and long for. So go binge-watch something great – and see if you can get a friend to watch with you or to talk with you about it. We also have a Games Lab in TSRB 113 where you can remind yourself of the joy of interactivity by playing one of the oldies but goodies just for fun, or you can escape into virtual reality for awhile.

If you are experiencing anxiety or depression or a medical, personal, or family crisis, or if you just feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with the many pressures of being a student at Tech or a human being on this planet at this moment in time, please do not hesitate to reach out for help. Everybody needs help sometimes, and college and graduate school years are often a personally challenging time in ways that can feel frightening and isolating. You are not alone, and many of us are available to be sympathetic listeners and to share our own strategies for coping with stressful situations. In addition, professional counselors and medical practitioners have expertise that can be very helpful. The Dean of Students Office has a list of services here: http://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/services.

Requirements and Grading

This is a workshop course, focused on design insights that can be immediately applied to the creation of interactive narratives. There are 4 short analytical assignments requiring responses to games, TV shows, and 4 brief and rapid prototypes for interactive narratives, as well as 1 final project which is a substantial, playable individually created story/game that is also part of a shared Storyworld developed in groups of 4.

- 10% class participation. This includes active involvement in in-class and on-line discussions and design exercises, coherent presentation of assignments when called on in class, productive contribution to group projects, and constructive critical responses to other students' creative and analytical work, and receptivity to other students' thoughtful critiques of your own work.
- 20% for Rapid Interactive Prototype assignments
  - **Grad students**: do **all four** prototypes (they will be graded on a 10 point scale but count for 5 points each in your final grade calculation)
  - **Undergrads**: do **any two** prototypes (10 points each) and for the ones you do not build out, substitute the 1-point "Alternate Assignment" for that week
- 20% for analytical diagrams in response to media reading/viewing/playing assignments
  - **Grad students**: do **all four** analytical diagrams (they will be graded on a 10 point scale but count for 5 % each in your final grade calculation)
  - **Undergrads**: do **any two** diagrams (10 points each) and for the ones you do not build out, substitute the 1-point "Alternate Assignment" for that week
- 50% Final Project – A complete, individually created story/game that is also part of a larger storyworld created collectively by 5 students:
  - Group Planning Documents 5%
  - Individual Planning Documents 5%
  - Mockup and response to user testing 10%
  - Group Oral / slide presentation 5%
  - Individual Oral / slide component of final presentation 10 %;
  - Working final project 10%
  - Video documentation of a persuasive demonstration run of your individual final project, posted to a web page, illustrating the appropriateness of this approach for this particular story content, the experience of dramatic agency, and the exploitation of replay 5%.
- Bonus Credit: Helpfulness to other students (technical help, artistic contribution, etc.) up to 5pts bonus.
- **All work is due by noon of the first meeting day of the week they are due and students should always be prepared to discuss their work in class, including the weeks on which as an UG you have only handed in a brief written statement or conceptual design.**
- **Late submissions without prior excuse will be penalized by 1 point off .**

Required Texts
- Propp, V., *Morphology of the Folktale* 1928, Austin: University of Texas Press. (Intro to Second Edition and Chapter II, on Canvas)
- Jenkins, Henry, "Transmedia Storytelling 101," Confessions of an Aca-Fan, March 22, 2007 http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html

Required Videos One of the Following:
- "Bowling," *Malcolm in the Middle,* Season 2, Episode 20 (2001) Episode available streaming from Netflix
- Alternate choice: "Remedial Chaos Theory" *Community* Season 3 Episode 4 (2011) episode available streaming from Hulu
- (also see Storyworld assignment)

Required Storygames
- Anna Anthropy, Dys4ria (2012) (Play online)
- Pedercini, Paolo. "Everyday the Same Dream" (2009) (Play on line)
  One of the Following
  - The Fullbright Company, *Gone Home* (2013)*,* PC or Mac game: purchase for download or play in the TSRB 113 Game Lab

- Inkle Studios, <u>80 Days</u> (2014)   plus Vimeo: Meg Jayanth "Unfair Game" (2015)
    https://vimeo.com/149286981
One of the Following Storyworld pairs

1 TV episode and 1 Telltale game episode from the same season of one of the following:– feel free to fast forward through violent or revoltingly gory scenes and substitutions accepted with prior approval of the instructor)
- *Game of Thrones*
- *Walking Dead*

Default game choice: *Game of Thrones: Fire from Ice (2014)* which is available in GAL.

Disturbing Content Warning – If you choose one of these storyworlds, feel free to fast forward through violent or revoltingly gory or prurient scenes; and substitutions of other storyworld paired media examples accepted with prior approval of the instructor

Default Authoring Environment for rapid prototypes: <u>Twine</u> – tutorials available on twinery.org. **You are responsible for learning it on your own to the level required to fulfill assignments.** (alternate platforms such as Unity may be acceptable in some cases with prior permission from instructor)

Strongly Recommended Story-games
- Leibling, D., et al. (1979). *Zork,* available on line at
    http://textadventures.co.uk/games/view/5zyoqrsugeopel3ffhz_vq/zork
- Weizenbaum, Joseph (1966). Eliza, (paper in Resources, good emulation of original here:
    http://www.masswerk.at/elizabot/eliza.html
- Pope, Lucas. <u>Papers Please </u>(2013) (available in Game Lab)
- Chen, Jenova, <u>*Journey*</u> (2012) ThatGameCompany (available in Game Lab)
- Pedercini, Paolo and Jim Munroe. <u>Unmanned</u> (2012) Molleindustria
    http://unmanned.molleindustria.org/

Recommended "Interactive Journalism" Examples (includes some VR)
- OpenDocs Project at MIT Media Lab: http://opendoclab.mit.edu/interactivejournalism/

Additional Recommended Texts and Resources
Other relevant readings will be available on Canvass including pdfs of articles by Brenda Laurel, Mary-Laure Ryan, and David Herman. Web resources below:
- Campbell, Joseph (2008). <u>The hero with a thousand faces</u>. (excerpt) Novato, Calif., New World Library. Originally published 1949 (Part I – The Adventure of the Hero) (pdf on Canvas)
- Murray, J.H., *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* updated MIT Press edition 2017, Chapters 3,4,5 (in pdf on Canvas): ebook from Simon and Schuster (2016). (Available on reserve in Library with their Kindle.)
- http://emshort.wordpress.com/ Commentary on interactive storytelling by an inventive practitioner and very perceptive critic
- http://inventingthemedium.com Janet Murray's blog with a section on interactive narrative, including video of <u>Janet's Ted Talk</u> (1998) ; Janet's Future of StoryTelling (FoST 2015) video on Dramatic Agency https://futureofstorytelling.org/video/janet-murray-dramatic-agency/
- Janet Murray's Twitter feed posts focus on interaction design, interactive narrative, VR, and TV storyforms : @janetmurray
- Some related videos: http://futureofstorytelling.org/films/

Schedule and Assignments

Weekly Topics	Assignments (Full details are on Canvas)
Week 1 8/21, 8/22 Interactive Storytelling	Due Thursday at Noon Week 1 as a post to Canvas Discussion ~100 words identifying a moment in a digital story/game that offers the experience of dramatic agency - see Canvas for full assignment Required on-line story-games • Anna Anthropy, Dys4ria (2012) (Play online at https://jayisgames.com/games/dys4ia/) • Pedercini, Paolo. "Everyday the Same Dream" (2009) (Play on line at http://www.molleindustria.org/everydaythesamedream/everydaythesamedream.html) Required authoring platform: Twine: http://twinery.org/ Recommended Beginner's Guide http://www.adamhammond.com/twineguide/ Recommended reading • Murray, J.H., *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* updated MIT Press edition 2017, Chapters 3,4,5 (in pdf on Canvas)
Week 2 8/28, 8/30 Spatial Storytelling Structures	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 2 Analytical diagram on spatial storytelling in one of the following (or pre-approved substitution): *Gone Home* (2013) The Fullbright Company *80 Days* (2014) Inkle Studios Post response as link to appropriate Canvas Week Two Discussion page which has full assignment:
Week 3 9/4, 9/6 Prototype #I	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 3 Prototype #1 Spatial Storytelling Create a Spatial Story Prototype using Twine. See Canvas for full assignment details.
Week 4 9/11, 9/13 Temporal Storytelling Structures	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 4 Watch both of these half hour TV episodes and create **a diagram** illustrating the time scheme and parallel events of one of them. Details of assignment on Canvas. "Bowling," *Malcolm in the Middle,* Season 2, Episode 20 (2001) (available streaming on Netflix) "Remedial Chaos Theory" from the TV show *Community* Season 3 Episode 4 (2011) Discussed in class and recommended: Ramis, H. (1993). *Groundhog Day*. USA, Columbia Pictures.
Week 5 9/18, 9/20 Prototype #2	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 5 Prototype #2: Temporal Storytelling Details of assignment on Canvas
Week 6 9/25,9/27 Genre Fiction as a Substitution System	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 6 Read the Propp assigned text and create **an analytical diagram** capturing a schematic representation of a similarly formulaic set of stories, such as a a TV sitcom or drama. Propp, V., *Morphology of the Folktale* 1928, Austin: University of Texas Press. (Intro to Second Edition and Chapter II, on Canvas) Recommended: Campbell, Joseph (2008). The hero with a thousand faces. (excerpt) Novato, Calif., New World Library Originally published 1949 (Part I – The Adventure of the Hero) (pdf on Canvas)

Weekly Topics	Assignments (Full details are on Canvas)
Week 7 10/2, 10/4 Prototype #3	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 7 **Prototype #3:** Genre Substitution Story This prototype generates alternate versions of the same genre-specific story. Assignment details on Canvas
Week 8 10/9 –FALL RECESS 10/11 Analyzing Storyworlds	No Class on Tuesday October 9: Fall Recess Due Thursday at Noon Week 8 **Analytical diagram** of the elements of a storyworld. See Canvas for assignment details Read Henry Jenkins' essay on Transmedia Storytelling. Then watch any episode of *The Walking Dead* or *Game of Thrones* TV show and play any episode of the corresponding Tell-Tale Game for at least 2 hours. Henry Jenkins, "Transmedia Storytelling 101," Confessions of an Aca-Fan, March 22, 2007 Telltale Games, *The Walking Dead I Season 1* (2012) or *400 Days* or *Season 2 (2013)*. Purchase for download or play in TSRB 113 Game Lab OR Telltale Games. *Game of Thrones: Fire from Ice* (2014) Purchase for download or play in TSRB 113 Game Lab Graduate Students Recommended: Janet Murray, "Transcending Transmedia" from blog Inventing the Medium
Week 9 10/16, 10/18 Prototype #4 Characters and dialog	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 9 **Prototype #4;** Character, Genre, Dialog . See Canvas for assignment details. Note: These characters will be a first draft of part of your final project: • the basis for your self-sorting into groups to create shared story worlds • a first pass at a dramatic event within your individual final project. UNDERGRADS: If you choose this as one of the prototype assignments you are skipping, pay particular care to your alternate assignment which will be to write a brief description of your character and the key elements of the dramatic situation so that it can help you and your classmates see how your story might fit into a shared storyworld.
Week 10 10/23, 10/25 Forming storyworld groups for final projects	In-class Tuesday and Thursday: exercises and group meetings, plus group meetings with instructor to design the shared storyworld. By Thursday at 5pm, sign up for next week's individual conference with instructor Due Friday at 5pm: **group documentation** of the storyworld See Canvas for assignment details
Week 11 10/30, 11/1 Individual Conferences on final project structure (no regular class meetings)	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 11 (or sooner if your individual conference is on Monday or Tuesday morning): **preliminary individual story documentation** for your own story By 5pm Friday: augment group storyworld documentation with **revised individual story documentation** (and any revisions to group documents) See Canvas for assignment details

Weekly Topics	Assignments (Full details are on Canvas)
Week 12 11/ 6, 11/8 Final Project Development: Playtesting of Mockup	Due Tuesday at Noon Week 12 A **playable version of one narrative sequence** from your individual final project story/game that affords dramatic agency for playtesting. This will be an excerpt from the final story/game that lets you see how the interactor will engage with it. You will be **testing one another's story/games,** providing feedback, recording the results of the test runs of your own story/game, and (**by Friday at 5pm**) responding to the feedback you receive on Tuesday and Thursday with appropriate design modifications. Details of the assignments are on Canvas. This will also be an opportunity to fine-tune the correspondences across stories within a shared storyworld.
Weeks 13 & 14 11/13,11/15, 11/20 Final Project Development: Extended Lab Week (no class meetings)	Extended Lab Week - No regular classes so you can build your individual projects and continue coordinating development of the shared storyworld. Arrange group meetings as needed for further playtesting and coordination. Working first draft posted for fellow group members by Thursday 11/15 at 5pm. Peer critiques posted by Friday 11/16 at 5pm . Responses to peer critiques posted by Tuesday 11/20 at 5pm, including any revisions to shared documentation of the common storyworld.
11/21-23	Thanksgiving Break
Week 15 11/27, 11/29 and Week 16 Tuesday 12/4 Final Presentations	Tuesday 11/27 - In class final group meetings to coordinate group presentation of storyworld presentations - Review of video documentation requirements Due Thursday at Noon 11/29: Post all storyworld **group presentation slides** to Canvas by noon In class Thursday 11/29 – first 2 groups **oral presentations** with complete flowcharts, extensive screen capture walk-through, and brief live demos Tuesday December 4 – final 2 groups **oral presentations** with complete flowcharts, extensive screen capture walk-through, and brief live demos Between Dec 4 and Dec 10 you can make the final revisions to your stories and create your video documentation. Details of assignments are on Canvas
Monday Dec 10 by 5pm **Final deliverables due** .	All the **story-games** should be playable in final form and **all documentation** should be complete, including a **3 minute videos** of edited ideal play session with your individual story-game, demonstrating dramatic variation and dramatic agency, with smoothly delivered, completely audible, scripted voiceover indicating key design features. Students will also hand in team member evaluations by confidential email to the instructor including self-evaluations for final project work. Details of assignments on Canvas