

WRITING FOR GAMES | THE CRIT

THE GAME CRITICISM PROJECT

“Game critics fuckin’ suck, right guys?”—
videogamedunkey

**DUE: TUES.
FEB. 11TH
CLASSTIME**

As we’ve begun to discuss, games pose a unique trouble for creators and critics alike—since games (moreso than film, books, etc.) must anticipate diverse players and interests. But there’s a larger problem here, and that is that game *criticism* (beyond consumer-oriented reviews) remains largely nonexistent. That’s where you come in.

THE QUEST AHEAD

Over the course of the next three weeks, you are going to choose a game of your choice (this can be a board game, tabletop roleplaying game, or video game) and you are going to produce your own, meaningful piece criticism for that game. I want to clarify, you will not be reviewing the game (your goal is not ‘score’ the product for a consumer). Instead, I want you to create a creative interest-piece that highlights a single mechanic, concept, or focus of the game and evaluates its effect on the user.

Your goal should be:

1. To **evaluate the effectiveness of a mechanic**, within the context of the game’s purpose.
2. To **offer new insights to players or developers** on how to approach something.
3. To **draw attention to an underrated mechanic** or expose its discreet workings.

THE DETAILS

EN 307
FALL 2020

Once you have chosen the mechanic and focus, you will develop a **three-to-six minute long creative video-essay** that demonstrates your points. We'll be going over some basic video-editing techniques together in-class, but the 'genre' of your video will be up to you. It may be highly pragmatic, or humorous. It may include footage of yourself with the game, or only footage of the game itself, with a voiceover. The choice is yours.

RESOURCES

- You have access to the entire **Adobe Creative Cloud** (including Premiere for video editing, and After Effects for video graphics). Tutorials are available on our course site.
- The **Gorgas Library** has microphones, green screens, lights, and video cameras that you can check out for free. They also have (and I highly recommend) whisper booths and an audio studio (the studio does require a training) for recording high-quality audio.
- I've linked on our site several **audio libraries** (including YouTube's) which are royalty free for use in your videos.

Some Examples of Game 'Criticism':

- Brian David Gilbert: ["Spider-Man Is \(Definitely Not\) Murdering People"](#)
- The Angry GM: ["Alignment in 5th edition D&D"](#)
- NYT's Kevin Draper: ["Should Board Gamers Play the Roles of Racists, Slavers and Nazis?"](#)