



DHSI

DIGITAL HUMANITIES SUMMER INSTITUTE

Engaging Play/Playing to Engage: Teaching and Learning through Creating Games in the College Humanities Classroom

Sean Smith and Jeffrey Lawler

This package is intended for the personal, educational use of DHSI attendees. Portions appear here with consideration of fair use and fair dealing guidelines.

© DHSI 2023



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Welcome to DHSI 2023!

Thank you for joining the DHSI community!

In this coursepack, you will find essential workshop materials prefaced by some useful general information about DHSI 2023.

Given our community's focus on things computational, it will be a surprise to no one that we might expect additional information and materials online for some of the workshops—which will be made available to you where applicable—or that the most current version of all DHSI-related information may be found on our website at dhsi.org. Do check in there first if you need any information that's not in this coursepack.

Please also note that materials in DHSI's online workshop folders could be updated at any point. We recommend checking back on any DHSI online workshop folder(s) that have been shared with you in case additional materials are added as DHSI approaches and takes place.

And please don't hesitate to be in touch with us at institut@uvic.ca or via Twitter at [@AlyssaA_DHSI](https://twitter.com/AlyssaA_DHSI) or [@DHInstitute](https://twitter.com/DHInstitute) if we can be of any help.

We hope you enjoy your time with us!



Statement of Ethics & Inclusion

Please review the DHSI Statement of Ethics & Inclusion available here:

<https://dhsi.org/statement-of-ethics-inclusion/>

DHSI is dedicated to offering a safe, respectful, friendly, and collegial environment for the benefit of everyone who attends and for the advancement of the interests that bring us together. There is no place at DHSI for harassment or intimidation of any kind.

By registering for DHSI, you have agreed to comply with these commitments.

Virtual Sessions

Your registration in DHSI 2023 also includes access to the virtual [institute lecture](#) sessions. Access details for these talks will be shared as DHSI approaches.

Due to the high volume of attendees, please ensure your DHSI registration name or DHSI preferred name and your Zoom name match so that we know to let you into the virtual sessions.

DHSI Materials

DHSI materials (ex. videos, documents, etc.) are intended for registrant use only. By registering, you have agreed that you will not circulate any DHSI content. If someone asks you for the materials, please invite them to complete the registration form to request access or contact us at institut@uvic.ca.

Auditor and participant registration

If you registered to **audit** any workshops, note that auditor involvement is intended to be fully self-directed without active participation in the workshop. The auditor option offers more flexibility regarding pace and time with the workshop content. Your registration as an auditor will include access to some asynchronous workshop materials only and does not include access to live workshop sessions and/or individual/group instruction or consultation. Please direct any questions about DHSI workshop auditing to institut@uvic.ca.

If you registered as a **participant** in any workshops, your registration includes access to asynchronous content + active participation in live workshop session(s). The workshop instructor(s) will contact you about the date(s), time(s), and platform(s) of the live workshop session(s).

If you are unsure whether you registered as an auditor or participant, please check your registration confirmation email. Further questions can be directed to institut@uvic.ca.

Schedule

The at-a-glance schedule of DHSI 2023 courses, workshops, institute lectures and aligned conferences & events can be found here: <https://dhsi.org/timetable/>

All times are listed in North American **Pacific Time Zone**.

For those who registered as participants in any workshops, live sessions for online workshops are not currently listed on the above-referenced schedule. **Instructors will be in touch with registered participants directly about the exact date(s) and time(s) of their live workshop session(s).**

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our partners and sponsors (including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council), workshop instructors, aligned conference & event organizers, institute lecturers, local facilitators, and beyond for making this possible.

Further information

General DHSI 2023 information: <https://dhsi.org/program/>

Full course listings (in-person): <https://dhsi.org/on-campus-courses/>

Full workshop listings (online): <https://dhsi.org/online-workshops/>

Aligned conferences & events (in-person): <https://dhsi.org/on-campus-aligned-conferences-events/>

Aligned conferences & events (online): <https://dhsi.org/online-aligned-conferences-events/>

Institute lectures: <https://dhsi.org/institute-lectures/>

Frequently asked questions: <https://dhsi.org/faq/>

Any questions not addressed in the above pages? Please email us at institut@uvic.ca!

Engaging Play/Playing to Engage: Teaching and Learning through Creating Games in the College Humanities Classroom

Syllabus and Course Pack

Digital Humanities Summer Institute 2023 (In Person Edition)

This class provides students with hands on experience with games and their uses in the humanities classroom. The focus of our course is to learn how games are structured, how they function and how they can become an integral part of a humanities curriculum. Participants in this course will work to create a curriculum for their own humanities classrooms that introduces game analysis and theory. Specifically, we'll look at how to develop a class that uses video games and tabletop/board games as objects of analysis. Students will end the course with a syllabus for a class of their own design. Taught by Jeff Lawler and Sean Smith co-directors of the Center for the History of Video Games and Critical Play, the course covers a variety of topics such as game theory and questions that games, including tabletops and video games, raise within humanities disciplines.

Sean Smith and Jeff Lawler are full-time lecturers of U.S. history at California State University, Long Beach. They are the Directors of The Center for History of Video Games & Critical Play (criticalplay.org).

Course Schedule and Readings:

This schedule is tentative and will be adjusted based on class experience and interests. If the course and our time on Zoom becomes overwhelming, we recommend stepping away for a bit and playing a game instead of checking your email or doing other work. After all, play is research and you're doing critical readings of key texts for the course.

Day One: Introductions, Game Studies Historiography, and Games and Narrativity

Today's session will cover a brief history of digital games and the critical study of games by humanities scholars. Our brief history will examine important moments in the evolution and of games and their connection to popular culture. The conversation will also speak to the ways that scholars have written about games and games' importance as sources in humanities scholarship. The class will review how games have been and can be read through a variety of lenses and interpretive methods.

- Part I Introductions (70 min)
 - Building community
 - How we've used games and Twine in our Classes
- Part II Reading Games—Games as Sources and Game Narrativity

Suggested Reading:

- Chapter 3 “History on Film” from Robert Rosenstone: *History on Film / Film on History*. (New York: Routledge, 2012)
 - Andrew J. Salvati and Jonah M. Bullinger, Ch. 10 “Selective Authenticity,” in Kapell, Matthew, and Andrew B. R. Elliott eds. *Playing with the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013)
 - Chapter 1 “Games and New Frontiers” from John Wills, *Gamer Nation*
- Part III Discussion

Day Two: Game Theory and Teaching Games in a Humanities Classroom.

For this session, we will explore some theoretical components related to understanding games in a humanities context and their interactivity and narratology.

- Part I Exploration of Games Studies and the nature of games

Suggested Reading:

- Excerpt from Salen and Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: An Essay on the Pain of Playing Video Games*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013. Ch.6, “Interactivity”
- Excerpt from Tamer Thabet, *Video Game Narrative and Criticism: Playing the Story*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Chapter 1 “A Player’s Story.”

Supplemental:

- Patrick Jagoda, “Videogame Criticism and Games in the Twenty First Century” in *American Literary History*, vol.29 no. 1 2017. Pp. 205 –218.
- Excerpt from Jesper Juul, *The Art of Failure: An Essay on the Pain of Playing Video Games*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013. Chapter 1 “The Paradox of Failure.”
- Excerpt from John Wills, *Gamer Nation: Video Games & American Culture*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2019. Chapter 1, “New Realms of Play.”

- Part II Examples of games / games styles / implicit & explicit narratives and history within games / what is a game trying to accomplish?
 - [Colossal Cave Adventure](#)
 - [Zork](#)
 - [Ultima I: The First Age of Darkness](#)
 - [King's Quest I](#)
 - [Gone Home](#)
 - [BioShock Infinite](#)
 - [Return of Obra Dinn](#)
 - [Adventure](#)
 - [What Remains of Edith Finch](#)
 - [Summer of Darkness \(obsolete\)](#)
 - [Walden](#)
 - [Elsinore](#)
 - [Assassins Creed III](#)
 - [Red Dead Redemption 2](#)
 - [Pentiment](#)
 - [Lake](#)
 - [Forgotten City](#)
 - [Through the Darkest of Times](#)
 - [Valiant Hearts](#)
 - [Bury Me My Love](#)

- Part III Discussion

Day Three: Getting your Twine On (pedagogically and interactively)

- Part I How to read and teach with games - How the medium leverages humanities skills and practices. Game Pedagogy: What place to games have in the classroom? How can we use them in our teaching practice? What are the benefits and drawbacks of their use?

Suggested Reading:

[Anastasia Salter, "Making Games in the Classroom: Twine and Harlowe 2."](#)

(ProfHacker)

[Dawn Spring, "Gaming History: Computer and Video Games as Historical Scholarship," *Rethinking History*, pp 207-221. Published online: 06 Nov 2014.](#)

- Part II Introduction to Twine and The Basics a Tutorial
 - [Twine](#)
 - [Ren'Py](#)
 - [Bitsy](#)
 - [RPG Maker](#)

Suggesting Reading:

- *Twine Basics* Lawler and Smith
- *Creating a Narrative Game* Lawler and Smith

Video Tutorials:

[How to Link passages in Twine](#)

[Our Tutorials on YouTube for Students](#)

[Intro to Twine Variables \(Older Version of Twine and Harlowe but valuable\)](#)

[Intro to Twine in General \(Older Version of Twine and Harlowe but valuable\)](#)

[Twine Tutorial Series \(16 videos\) Discussion & Q & A\(Also old\)](#)

Day Four: Game Production Day: Make a Game!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We'll spend time in class creating games in Twine. You're welcome to work in groups or on your own. Lawler and Smith will offer help and suggestions.

Day Five: Play Games / Get Medals:

We'll upload your games to the internet and play them as a class and discuss them. Then we'll give everyone their virtual medals!!

Game Over: Insert Coin to Continue