

JNST O00N

Fall 2021

Video Game Storytelling

Student Facilitator: Luca Azenaro-Acero

Instructor of Record: Tim Seiber

Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:50

Larsen

4 units

### **Course Description**

Video games: once viewed as a cheap bit of pixel based fun at the local arcade, games have evolved into a viable and varied medium of entertainment, with storytelling and interactivity reaching new peaks in the past few years. The various strengths of the medium, from player input to the potential for emergent storytelling, have contributed to the development of video games as a vessel for storytelling. Despite this, video games still struggle to be taken seriously artistically when compared with other forms of media. In this class, we will discuss a myriad of topics regarding video games including: the strengths and weaknesses of games as a storytelling device, the perception of gaming by newspapers and other media outlets, comparative media analysis, the structure of video game stories, narrative free storytelling that emerges entirely from online gaming environments, the pros and cons of gaming's continued imitation of film, and the issue of ludonarrative dissonance in video games. This class will explore various eras of video games, paying attention to the height of high budget, scripted, set-piece based games such as *Uncharted* and lower budget, more character driven indie titles that evolve story through combat and gameplay such as *Hades*. The goal of this course is to create meaningful discussions around video games as a storytelling device, how they compare to other mediums, their limitations both technologically and narratively, the evolution of their perception in mainstream media circles, and what makes video games such a strong and wildly unique option for telling a story.