

Cultivating Transformational Communities

Course material is also available in the form of an online course on the EDGE website

<https://erasmusedge.eu/>

If you notice any mistakes in the course materials, please let us know by reaching out to Sarah Lynne Bowman sarah.bowman@speldesign.uu.se

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Course information

Orientation & Instructions

Course Activities

All activities are compulsory.

Rules for Absence & Compulsory Elements:

The course requires consistent engagement on **Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays**, especially in forum discussions. In order to pass this course, **you must achieve a Pass or Pass with Distinction** on the majority of your assignments. Instructors have the right to require specific assignments be completed to pass the course, e.g., Major Assignments. If you need to be absent, please notify your instructor(s) over email immediately to help you create a plan for your success.

Assignments, Deadlines and Attempts:

Each Assignment in this course has a re-exam offered on the date indicated below. Re-exams requires that you apply to be made part of the assessment.

If you fall behind in Transformative Game Design courses, you are permitted to turn in work late, but you may incur a grade penalty. If you must prioritize assignments, please focus on the time sensitive assignments that involve your peers, i.e. playtests, peer reviews, and discussion forums. Make sure to email your instructor(s) for guidance on getting back on track in the course.

Rules for Group Work:

Students are expected to join a group under People in the first week and engage in all playtests by the required due dates. Refer to the Schedule to take note of these dates.

If for some reason playtesting is not possible with the group, please contact the instructor immediately to see if you can find a solution. We recommend joining the student-run course Discord to work out solutions before contacting the instructor. Abandoning group members without making other arrangements is not an option.

If the group experiences issues destructive for the learning environment, please contact the Course Responsible. Failing to be a functional part of a group may lead to removal from the group and failing the group assignment, if grading criteria pertain to performing within a group context.

Grading Criteria and Weighting:

For the grade Pass, students are required to achieve the grade Pass on all three Major Assignments and peer reviews. Please review the assignment instructions and Grading Rubric for details. Students may revise each paper twice.

Students must also receive an overall average grade of Pass for all other assignments (Discussions and Journals). In this course, a Pass is 70% in the Assignments Weighted Total.

Students must also take part in all playtests and provide feedback to their peers.

From Fall 2024: For the grade Pass with Distinction, students are required to achieve the grade Pass with Distinction on all three Assignments. Please review the assignment instructions and Grading Rubric for details. Students may revise each paper twice.

Students must also receive an overall average grade of Pass with Distinction for all other assignments (Discussions and Journals). In this course, a Pass with Distinction is 85% in the Assignments Weighted Total.

Students must also take part in all playtests and provide feedback to their peers.

In exceptional circumstances, based on conduct within the online classroom or toward teachers, the instructor reserves the right to lower a student's grade.

Supervision and Tutoring:

For help with course content, please email the instructor. For help with writing, please contact the online linked [Language Workshop](#). Note you should contact the [Language Workshop](#) earlier rather than later to be able to get help during peak periods.

Expected Entry Skills:

You are expected to be able to read and write in English. Knowledge of games and design will be helpful, but not necessary.

Feedback:

In this course, you will receive brief feedback on discussion posts and journals. You will receive feedback on your Major Assignments, which generally be a paragraph of comments in addition to how you were assessed in relation to each of the grading criteria.

Technical Requirements:

You are expected to have a functional computer running either MacOS or Windows (not tablets), for the duration of the course. You must have reliable internet access throughout the week and the ability to run Zoom and watch videos at sufficient bandwidth.

Changes since last year:

- Introduction of conflict transformation content
- Option to be involved in Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange project (ROCKET)

Course Calendar

Cultivating Transformational Communities: Course Schedule

- All class sessions are compulsory and take place asynchronously on M W and F, with the exception of video meetings with your peers, which can take place at your convenience. **If you are having trouble with scheduling sessions, please message us.** All games must be playtested and feedback must be gathered for full credit.
- Submit all deliverables in the corresponding links in the Units under Modules.
- **All assignments are due the end class on the day assigned, i.e. Mondays at 11:59pm in your time zone.** When possible, please post the night before to make sure your peers have time to read your posts.
- If your country has a **holiday** on a due date, complete your work on the **next work day**.
- Tasks in **bold font** are deliverables that will be graded either on a **0-2 point basis (Discussion Posts)** or **Complete/Incomplete basis (Journals and Written Assignments)**.
 - Most tasks in **bold font** are deliverables that will be graded along the following scale:
 - Pass with Distinction (PwD - 100% - 75%)
 - Pass (Pass - 74% - 50%)
 - Fall (49% - 0%)
- We have done our best to weight the time it will take to complete your homework each week, including the relative complexity of the materials. Some days you will have more videos, whereas others you will have more readings.
- You must complete all discussion posts, including replies to your peers, for full credit.

Unit	Requirements
Week 1	
Unit 1	Monday: Choosing Playtest Groups Activities: • Choose a playtest group based on times available under groups. You can choose the same group as last time or join a different one. Please organize in groups of 4. ◦ Post an introduction to your small group. ◦ Organize a playtest session with your group.

	<u>Homework:</u> Read Bowman's "Interactional Dynamics in Role-Playing Games" and Baird and Bowman's "The Transformative Potential of Immersive Experiences Within Role-playing Communities."
Unit 1	Wednesday: Community Building and Transformational Containers <u>Activities:</u> - Complete Discussion 1: Community Building and Transformational Containers by 11:59pm in your time zone. <u>Homework:</u> - Watch Caro Murphy's "Creating Transformative Communities" and Diana J. Leonard's "Promoting Healthy Communities in Larp." - Read Lizzie Stark's "Building Larp Communities: Social Engineering for Good." and Laura Wood's "Why Larp Community Matters and How We Can Improve It."
Unit 1	Friday: Leveling Up Role-playing Communities <u>Activities:</u> - Complete Discussion 2: Leveling Up Role-playing Communities by 11:59pm in your time zone. <u>Homework:</u> - Watch Bowman's "Safety in Role playing Games Part V: Cultivating Safer Communities." - Read Kim's "Writing an Autobiographical Game." - If needed, review Bowman's "Safety in Role playing Games Part I."
Week 2	
Unit 1 and 2	Monday: Safety, Autobiographical Games, and You <u>Activities:</u> - Complete Reflection Journal 1: Safety, Autobiographical Games, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. <u>Homework:</u> - In preparation for your first session, familiarize yourself with the "Crisis Management Workshop from Living Games 2016." We recommend reading Page 7 carefully before the session for best practices.
Unit 2	Wednesday: Crisis Management Scenarios <u>Activities:</u> - Complete Playtest 1: Crisis Management Scenarios by 11:59pm in your time zone. <u>Homework:</u> - Read Nilsen's "High on Hell," Pedersen's "Tears and the New Norm," Pedersen's "Your Larp's Only As Safe As Its Safety Culture," and Bowman's "A Matter of Trust: Larp and Consent Culture." Content advisory for "High on Hell": This article includes mentions and descriptions of addiction, incarceration,

	violence, sexualized violence, dehumanization, verbal and physical abuse, and indoctrination. Please contact your instructor if you need any alternative assignment. Choose one (1) article to read from the from the Consent category.
Unit 2	Friday: Cultures of Hardcore, Consent, and Safety Activities: - Complete Discussion 3: Cultures of Hardcore, Consent, and Safety by 11:59pm in your time zone. - Read Instructions for Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document. Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Week 3	
Unit 2	Monday: Autobiographical Nano-game Brainstorming Activities: - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document. Homework: - Choose three (3) items that you have not yet read for this course from three (3) of the following categories: Triggers, Activation, and Emotional Flooding; Bleed; Alibi; and Post-Game Emotional Reactions. - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 2 and 3	Wednesday: Emotional Intensity and Role-playing Games Activities: - Complete Discussion 4: Emotional Intensity and Role-playing Game by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read Torner's "Just (the Institution of Computer) Game Studies." - Choose one (1) item from different content creators (unless two are specified) to examine under the following categories for a total of two (2) items: Analog Role-playing Game Academics and Academia and Leisure Communities. - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 3	Friday: Analog Role-playing Game Studies Activities: Complete Discussion 5: Analog Role-playing Game Studies by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework:

	- Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Examine all sections of the Introduction to Conflict Transformation module. - Watch Diakolambrianou and Bowman's "Groups: Processes, Dynamics, Facilitation and Creativity." - Read Leonard and Arango's "The Dynamic Life Cycle of Live Action Role-play Communities." - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Week 4	
Unit 3 and 4	Monday: Group Work, Listening, and Feedback Activities: - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Complete Discussion A: Introduce Yourself and Connect by 11:59pm in your time zone. - Complete Discussion 6: Group Work, Listening, and Feedback by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Choose two (2) items to examine from the Activism and Democratic Participation section under Recommended Materials. - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 4	Wednesday: Activism and Democratic Participation Activities: - Complete Discussion 7: Activism and Democratic Participation by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Examine all sections from the Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs module. - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 4	Friday: Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs Activities: - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Complete Discussion B: Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Week 5	
Unit 4 and 5	Monday: Autobiographical Game Design Document Activities: Submit Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document by 11:59pm in your time zone.

	- Read Instructions for Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities. - Schedule Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games. Homework: - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Examine all sections from the Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception Checking module; and the Nonviolent Communication and "I" Statements module. - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 5	Wednesday: Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception Checking; Nonviolent Communication and "I" Statements. Activities: - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Complete Discussion C: Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception Checking by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Watch Ane Marie Anderson and Martin Nielsen's "Pillars and Parasites." - Read Rafael Boccamazzo's "Lessons Learned from Both Sides of Games" and Teos Abadía's "The Community Rises at the D&D Creator Summit." Content Advisory for Boccamazzo: Discussion of harassment, threats, and mental health challenges. Let the instructor know if you need an alternative assignment - Review Bowman's "Social Conflict in Role-playing Communities: An Exploratory Qualitative Study." - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 5	Friday: Community Toxicity, Dysfunction, and You Activities: - Complete Reflection Journal 2: Community Toxicity, Dysfunction, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read Toft and Harrer's "Design Bleed: A Standpoint Methodology for Game Design." - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Examine all sections in the Conflict Styles module. - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Week 6	
Unit 5	Monday: Conflict Styles Activities:

	- Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Complete Discussion D: Conflict Styles by 11:59pm in your time zone, Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities. - Read Williams, Kirschner, Mizer, and Deterding's "12. Sociology and Role-playing Games."
Unit 5	Wednesday: Autobiographical Games Activities - Complete Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games. - Schedule Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games (if needed). Homework: - Read Vanek's "Behind the Larp Census: 29.751 Larpers Can't (All) Be Wrong." - Choose one (1) item to examine from the category Social Status and Appearance under Recommended Materials. - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 5 and 6	Friday: Sociology, Status, and Appearance, 1st ROCKET Session 9-11am CET Activities: - Complete Discussion 8: Sociology, Status, and Appearance by 11:59pm in your time zone. - If you volunteered, attend the 1st ROCKET Session, 9-11am CET. Zoom link TBD. - If participating, you will do the reading for this day, but Discussion 8 is not mandatory. Homework: - Choose two (2) items to examine from different content creators in the following categories under Recommended Materials for a total of four (4) articles: Race/Ethnicity and Gender/Sexuality. - Make an appointment at the Language Workshop if you need extra assistance with your writing. - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Week 7	
Unit 6	Monday: Race/Ethnicity and Gender/Sexuality Activities: - Complete Discussion 9: Race/Ethnicity and Gender/Sexuality by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.

Unit 6	Wednesday: Autobiographical Games and/or Writing Workshop Activities: • Complete Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games (if needed). • Complete appointment with the Language Workshop (if needed). Homework: • Watch Ford’s “Mind the Gap: Barriers to Larping for People from Backgrounds of Structural Poverty.” • Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Examine all sections of The 'Isms and Conflict module. • Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 6	Friday: The 'Isms, Conflict, and You Activities: • Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. Complete Reflection Journal A: The 'Isms, Conflict, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Read Axiel Cazeneuve’s “The Paradox of Inclusivity.” • Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Week 8	
Unit 6	Monday: First Draft and Peer Review Activities: • Submit First Draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities by 11:59pm in your time zone. • Read Peer Review Instructions for Major Assignment 2. • Send First Complete Draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities to your peers in your group by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose one (1) item to examine from different content creators in the following categories for a total of two (2) items: Accessibility and Neurodiversity. • Work on Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2, sending your feedback as soon as its ready. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 6 and 7	Wednesday: Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Activities: • Complete Discussion 10: Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Read James Mendez Hodes' "Representation Tier List."

	• <i>Review:</i> Diana J. Leonard, Jovo Janjetovic, and Maximilian Usman's "Playing to Experience Marginalization: Benefits and Drawbacks of 'Dark Tourism' in Larp." • Work on Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2, sending your feedback as soon as its ready. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 7	Friday: Cultural Consulting and You, 2nd ROCKET Session 9-11am CET Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 3: Cultural Consulting and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. • If you volunteered, attend the 2nd ROCKET Session, 9-11am CET. Zoom link TBD. ◦ If participating, you will do the reading for this day, but Reflection Journal 3 is not mandatory. Homework: • Choose one (1) item to examine from different content creators from the following three (3) categories for a total of three (3) items: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety. • Work on Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2, sending your feedback as soon as its ready. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
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Unit 7 and 8	Monday: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety Activities: • Complete Discussion 11: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Read the Living Games Conference 2018's "Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior" and "Internal Procedures." • Work on Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2, sending your feedback as soon as its ready. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 8	Wednesday: Codes of Conduct, Encouraged Behavior, and Internal Procedures Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 4: Codes of Conduct, Encouraged Behavior, and Internal Procedures by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose one (1) item to examine under Cultures of Care.

	• Watch John Stavropoulos' "Innovating for Growth: Designing a Culture of Safety in Games. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 8 and 9	Friday: Safer Community Container Setting and You, 3rd ROCKET Session, 9-11am CET Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 5: Safer Community Container Setting and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. • Complete Peer Reviews of Major Assignment 2 if you have not done so already. • If you volunteered, attend the 3rd ROCKET Session, 9-11am CET. Zoom link TBD. ◦ If participating, you will do the reading for this day, but Reflection Journal 5 is not mandatory. Homework: • Choose one (1) item to examine from three (3) of the following cultures for a total of three (3) items: Russia and Belarus; Spain; Greece; North America; Switzerland and France; Singapore; the Arab World; and China. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Week 10	
Unit 9	Monday: RPG Communities Around the World Activities: • Complete Discussion 12: RPG Communities Around the World by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose one (1) podcast from the Backstory Podcast from the Recommended Materials list to examine. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 9 and 10	Wednesday: Backstory Bonus Round Activities: • Complete Discussion 13: Backstory Bonus Round by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 10	Friday: Transformational Communities and You Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 6: Transformational Communities and You.

	• Submit Final Draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities by 11:59pm in your time zone.
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Course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor(s). Please note that schedule changes may occur during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and posted as a Studium Announcement.

Course Material

All course materials are embedded as files in the course or linked. Make sure to review the Overviews for each Unit, as well as the linked materials in the instructions of each assignment.

[A complete list of Course Materials is linked here](#), including required, recommended, and further reading in the field.

Assessments & Deliverables

Deliverables:

- **Discussion Boards Assignments:** You are expected to participate in each discussion assignment, including your initial posts and posts to the required number of peers throughout the week in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.
- **Reflection Journal Assignments:** You are also expected to complete Reflection Journals at the end of each Unit. Note that only your instructors and you can see your journals.
- **Zoom Workshops:** On certain days, you have the option to join two-hour Zoom workshops on conflict transformation instead of submitting the written work for that day. You are still expected to review that days' course materials.
- **Major Assignment 1 -- Autobiographical Game Design Document:** This document should contain all the instructions for your nano-game that facilitators and participants need to play, as well as your plans for playtesting and receiving feedback. Please read the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 1](#) for more details.
- **Major Assignment 2 -- Cultivating Transformational Communities:** In this paper, you will describe and analyze your Autobiographical Nano-game Design,

applying relevant concepts from the course. Please read the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2](#) for more details.

- **Peer Review -- Major Assignment 2:** You will read the first complete draft of Major Assignment 3 for each of your peers in your group and respond to the required feedback questions to help them improve their work.

Assessment: Deliverables will be graded based on completion of the required components on a Fail (U)/Pass (G)/Pass with Distinction basis.

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

Learning Objectives

On successful completion of Cultivating Transformational Communities, the student should be able to:

- *Learning Objective 1: Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to building and managing communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.
- *Learning Objective 2: Game Design, Safety Design and Playtesting:* Design, experience, iterate, and critique role-playing games as well as safety, and analyze community building practices related to transformative analog role-playing games.
- *Learning Objective 3: Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on game design, safety practices and community building related to transformative analog role-playing games in various formats for distinct audiences.

Please see below for specific Learning Objectives and Success Criteria for each type of assignment:

- **Discussion Boards Assignments:** You are expected to participate in each discussion assignment, including your initial posts and posts to the required number of peers throughout the week in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.
 - *Learning Objective 1: Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to building and managing communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.
 - *Learning Objective 3: Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on game design, safety practices and community

building related to transformative analog role-playing games in various formats for distinct audiences.

- *Success Criteria:* Complete your initial posts answering all questions thoroughly. Reply to at least three (3) posts of your peers throughout the week in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.
- **Reflection Journal Assignments:** You are also expected to complete Reflection Journals at the end of each Unit. Note that only your instructors and you can see your journals.
 - *Learning Objective 1: Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to building and managing communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.
 - *Learning Objective 3: Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on game design, safety practices and community building related to transformative analog role-playing games in various formats for distinct audiences.
- *Success Criteria:* Complete your journals answering all questions thoroughly.
- **Major Assignment 1 -- Autobiographical Game Design**
 - *Learning Objective 1: Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to building and managing communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.
 - *Learning Objective 2: Game Design, Safety Design and Playtesting:* Design, experience, iterate, and critique role-playing games as well as safety, and analyze community building practices related to transformative analog role-playing games.
 - *Learning Objective 3: Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on game design, safety practices and community building related to transformative analog role-playing games in various formats for distinct audiences.

- *Success Criteria:* Complete your Game Design Document and Playtest Plan in the required format.

- **Major Assignment 2 -- Cultivating Transformational Communities:**
 - *Learning Objective 1: Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to building and managing communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.
 - *Learning Objective 2: Game Design, Safety Design and Playtesting:* Design, experience, iterate, and critique role-playing games as well as safety, and analyze community building practices related to transformative analog role-playing games.
 - *Learning Objective 3: Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on game design, safety practices and community building related to transformative analog role-playing games in various formats for distinct audiences.
- *Success Criteria:* Complete your paper in the required format with each section. Include the minimum number of sources included and cited properly.

- **Peer Feedback -- Cultivating Transformational Communities:** You will read the first complete draft of Major Assignment 2 for each of your peers and respond to the required feedback questions to help them improve their work.
 - *Learning Objective 1: Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to building and managing communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.
 - *Learning Objective 3: Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on game design, safety practices and community building related to transformative analog role-playing games in various formats for distinct audiences.
- *Success Criteria:* Complete responses to each required question on the prompt in response to the drafts of each member of your group.

Unit 1: Cultivating Transformational Communities

Overview: Cultivating Transformational Communities



Welcome to Cultivating Transformational Communities! This course explores foundational concepts and practices to consider when community building around analog role-playing games for transformative impacts. Remember the concept from the *Larp Design* book that *everything is a designable surface*. As we have discussed before, engaging in transformative processes requires a lowering of vigilance and surrender to the process. Community design has a tremendous impact on participant feelings of safety and trust, which are necessary to establish and maintain not only during the game itself, but before, after, and between sessions.

In addition to lectures, discussions, and journals, you will also be **role-playing scenarios related to crises in community management, designing one (1) autobiographical nanogame** related to a social identity you personally have, and **playtesting games** designed by your group members.

Most class activities are asynchronous, meaning that you will submit your work on specific due dates, but there are no assigned class times where you must log in. These activities are typically discussion boards, journals, peer reviews, and major assignments.

Discussion forum engagement is the lifeblood of the course. Since we are all in different time zones, please post your initial discussions the night before the class day. Then, engage in the discussion forum by responding to **at least two (2) of your peers** in **Ask a Question, Answer a Question** format. See the **Discussion Forum Instructions** in the Unit for more information.

- This course, you will also engage in mandatory discussion forums in a different Studium shell with students from two other universities. More on this below.

Reflection journals are viewable only by your instructors, although in many cases, you will also post assignments in the discussion board for your peers. In Reflection journals, you will consider the work you have read, watched, and discussed all week and tie it to your personal thoughts and experiences.

Playtesting and feedback sessions will take place over video conferencing within your peer group. We recommend Zoom, as Uppsala provides this software [for free linked here](#). We will give you options for groups, but you will schedule meeting times within your group. Please try to be as flexible as possible with one another, as we are logging in from various parts of the world and have different schedules of availability.

- You will spend one session role-playing and debriefing at least **four (4) Crisis Management scenarios** related to role-playing communities with your group.
- You will design and playtest **one autobiographical (1) game** with your group members during this course, which will be based upon a social identity you personally have.
- Each group member's playtest should be a maximum of 1 hour -- maximum of 45 min for game play and 15 min total for feedback.
- This process will take likely a minimum of 3 sessions: **one meeting (1) for Crisis Management and two (2) playtest sessions of a maximum of four (4) hours each**. Please plan accordingly.

Zoom Workshops for conflict transformation will take place three times in the course. In these synchronous sessions, you will connect with students in two other courses and practice skills using role-playing and other methods. If you cannot attend, you can do written work that day instead. Please sign up at the beginning of the semester so we can plan. More below.

Major Assignments are papers you will write for the class. The emphasis for these assignments will be creating your autobiographical nanogame, iterating upon it once, and grounding your design in theory.

Please familiarize yourself with the contents of the course including the syllabus, the calendar, and the units, then take your Orientation Quiz, which is linked in this Unit.

* * *

Unit 1 Overview

In Unit 1, we will discuss the purpose behind cultivating transformational communities, as well as practices related to designing autobiographical games. By now, we have covered the importance of workshopping and debriefing in maximizing the potential for transformative impacts. However, our concern for this course are the frames around the frames -- i.e. the community container setting needed to build sufficient trust in participants to engage, e.g., the community building practices around the game that support long-term transformation. While conscious container setting is not always present when players have transformative experiences in RPGs, we believe it to be essential to transformative game design practice.

Thus, this course will discuss various topics related to role-playing communities including both problems that can arise and ways to potentially address such issues. These problems can arise from powerful emotional responses to games; the marginalization of RPGs in academia; changing group dynamics and toxicity; social conflicts related to race, gender, sexuality, and class; issues with equity, inclusion, and accessibility; harassment; and compromised organizer safety. While this course will not offer solutions to these problems, as many of them are endemic to human societies in general, we will explore approaches that communities have employed, as well as brainstorming our own. The ultimate goal of this course is for you to carefully consider ways to provide *containment* for the community that provides adequate support for players and organizers alike, especially when role-playing for transformative impacts.

Finally, this year, we have a wonderful Erasmus-funded opportunity to connect students and courses at three universities: Uppsala, Göttingen, and Groningen! [You can read more about ROCKET here](#). We will be sharing materials on conflict transformation, engaging in discussion forums, and engaging in workshops over Zoom that will include practicing skills using role-playing games. This week, we begin, as you will be engaging in discussion forums with students from undergraduate courses on Academic Writing and Intercultural communication. Most excitingly, if you would like to practice your facilitation skills, we can offer you the opportunity to do so during these workshops. (Facilitation would require 1-2 additional Zoom calls for onboarding). We are excited to expand our transformative play community to other universities!

In this Unit, we will cover:

- RPGs as Community Building Practices
- Cultivating Safer Communities
- Consensus Reality and Collective Consciousness
- RPG Groups as Transformational Containers
- Writing Autobiographical Games
- Crisis Management

Note: Some of the materials below may not be available outside of this course. We are providing them as part of your education within this course. Do not distribute PDFs.

Required materials:

Readings:

- Baird, Josephine, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2022. "The Transformative Potential of Immersive Experiences Within Role-playing Communities." *Revista de Estudos Universitário* 48: 1-48.

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2010. "Interactional Dynamics in Role-Playing Games." In *The Functions of Role-Playing Games: How Participants Create Community, Solve Problems, and Explore Identity*. McFarland. 55-79.
- Stark, Lizzie. 2014. "Building Larp Communities: Social Engineering for Good." Leaving Mundania, March 18.
- Wood, Laura. 2021. "Why Larp Community Matters and How We Can Improve It." In *Book of Magic: Vibrant Fragments of Larp Practices*, edited by Kari Kvittingen Djukastein, Marcus Irgens, Nadja Lipsyc, and Lars Kristian Løveng Sunde. Oslo, Norway: Knutepunkt.

Videos:

- Bowman, Sarah Bowman. 2022. "[Safety in Role playing Games Part V: Cultivating Safer Communities -- Sarah Lynne Bowman](#)." Transformative Play Initiative, February 4.
- Kim, Yeonsoo Julian. 2019. "Writing an Autobiographical Game." Nordiclarp.org, September 11.
- Leonard, Diana J. 2018. "[Promoting Healthy Communities in Larp](#)." Keynote at the Living Games Conference 2018. Living Games Conference. YouTube, May 18.
- Murphy, Caro. 2018. "[Creating Transformative Communities](#)." Keynote at the Living Games Conference 2018. Living Games Conference. YouTube, May 20.

Playtesting:

- Steele, Samara Hayley, Sara Hart, John Stavropoulos, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2016. "Crisis Management Workshop Living Games 2016." Workshop at Living Games Conference 2016, Austin, Texas.

Review:

- Bowman, Sarah Bowman. 2022. "[Safety in Role playing Games Part I: Introduction -- Sarah Lynne Bowman](#)." Transformative Play Initiative, February 4.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.

- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Sign up for Your Playtest and Feedback Group

Please sign up for a Playtest and Feedback group under People using the listed time zones. You may choose to play with your group from the previous class or a new group, but your group size should be a maximum of 4. Make sure you have joined a group so that the instructors know who is responsible for playtesting and peer reviewing.

In Cultivating Transformational Communities, you will have **two types of playtests**: practicing crisis management skills and playtesting each others autobiographical nanogames.

You will each engage in the following steps during this course:

1) Familiarize Yourself with the Crisis Management Workshop. In preparation for your first session, familiarize yourself with the "Crisis Management Workshop from Living Games 2016." We recommend reading Page 7 carefully before the session for best practices.

2) Playtest 1 -- Crisis Management Scenarios: Choose at least four (4) scenarios to play with your Playtest group. Make sure to thoroughly debrief the experience.

3) Playtest 2: Playtesting Your Autobiographical Nanogames: Playtest all four (4) nanogames written by group members and give feedback. You will only playtest these games once. Game play should not exceed 45 minutes and feedback should not exceed 15 minutes including workshop and debrief, for a total of one (1) hour maximum per game. Time yourselves.

Discussion 1: Community Building and Transformational Containers

Read Bowman's "Interactional Dynamics in Role-Playing Games" and Baird and Bowman's "The Transformative Potential of Immersive Experiences Within Role-playing Communities."

Then, answer the following questions (guidelines 1 paragraph per question. A paragraph is 4-6 sentences):

1. In 3-4 sentences, describe three (3) examples of community building in role-playing games according to Bowman's ethnography in "Interactional Dynamics."
 - A. Do you find any of these examples relatable or recognizable? If so, how? If not, why?
2. Describe the profile that Bowman describes with regard to the "typical" role-player.
 - A. Do you find these descriptions relatable or recognizable? If so, how? If not, why?
3. In 1-2 sentences each, in your own words, define consensus reality and collective consciousness as described by Baird and Bowman. Then, describe how role-playing communities relate to these social constructs.
 - A. Do you find any of these examples relatable or recognizable? If so, how? If not, why?
4. Consider one (1) example of role-playing communities as transformational containers from your own experience, whether in this course or elsewhere. In 1-2 sentences describe the circumstances surrounding the transformation you witnessed or experienced.
 - A. What choices did the organizers make with regard to setting the community container? Be specific.
 - B. Did these choices contribute to transformation? If so, how? If not, why?
 - C. Were other factors present that aided in integration of the insights distilled from the game? If so, how? If not, why?

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Discussion 2: Leveling Up Role-playing Communities

Watch Caro Murphy's "[Creating Transformative Communities](#)" and Diana J. Leonard's "[Promoting Healthy Communities in Larp.](#)"

Read Lizzie Stark's "Building Larp Communities: Social Engineering for Good" and Laura Wood's "Why Larp Community Matters and How We Can Improve It."

Then, answer the following questions for **each video and reading**:

1. Describe at least one (1) problem with RPG communities present in the reading or video, whether implicit or explicit. In other words, what problem(s) are these recommendations trying to solve? You may need to extrapolate.
 - A. Have you experienced or witnessed this problem in your own communities, whether in role-playing games or otherwise? If so, describe.
 - B. If not, why?
2. Describe at least two (2) solutions recommended by each author or presenter.
 - A. How might you implement these solutions into your own community building practices, if at all?
 - B. If you would not implement them, why?
3. After addressing each text or video, answer the following question: Are there any recommendations you would add that were not mentioned by the authors?
 - A. If so, describe one (1).

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Reflection Journal 1: Safety, Autobiographical Games, and You

Watch Bowman's "[Safety in Role playing Games Part V: Cultivating Safer Communities.](#)"

Read Kim's "Writing an Autobiographical Game."

If needed, review Bowman's "[Safety in Role playing Games Part I.](#)"

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Describe one (1) safety issue you have witnessed or experienced in communities to which you belong, whether role-playing game related or otherwise.
 - A. If you have not witnessed or experienced safety issues, why do you think that might be?
2. Describe one (1) practice that Bowman discusses that you have seen or implemented yourself in communities to which you belong, whether role-playing game related or otherwise.
 - A. How effective was this strategy? Be specific.
 - B. If you have not seen these practices, which one (1) did you find the most surprising or intriguing? Be specific.

3. What one (1) practice would you like to see implemented more widely, whether in your own experience or from the video? Be specific.
4. In 1-2 sentences in your own words, describe autobiographical games as discussed by Kim. Have you ever designed a game with autobiographical elements, whether in this course or elsewhere? If so, describe.
 - A. If not, why not?
5. Consider an aspect of your own life you would be interested in exploring through role-playing game design. Briefly brainstorm how you would integrate this aspect into a game, whether directly or metaphorically.

Unit 2: Emotional Safety in Role-playing Games

Overview: Emotional Safety in Role-playing Communities



Welcome to our unit on Emotional Safety in Role-playing Communities! We have touched upon many of the concepts in this Unit before, but our approach in this course will focus less on game design and more around the community built around the game in terms of emotional safety. We will consider the culture of hardcore in dialectic to cultures of explicit (rather than implicit) consent. We will also read various perspectives on boundary pushing play, including issues of consent, emotional overwhelm, bleed, and alibi.

When reading these texts, consider how the container of the community might be set to try to accommodate a variety of psychological needs with regard to emotional intensity. Also, think about the ways in which the communities within which you started playing treated these topics, as well as attitudes in your current communities (if relevant).

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Diversity and conflict
- Bleedhunting
- Culture of hardcore

- Consent culture
- Triggers, activation, and emotional flooding
- Bleed
- Alibi

Note: Some of the materials below may not be available outside of this course. We are providing them as part of your education within this course. Do not distribute PDFs.

* * *

Required materials:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2017. "A Matter of Trust: Larp and Consent Culture." Nordiclarp.org, February 3.
- Nilsen, Elin. 2012. "High on Hell." In *States of Play: Nordic Larp Around the World*, edited by Juhana Pettersson, 10-11. Helsinki, Finland: Pohjoismaisen roolipelaamisen seura.
 - **Content advisory for "High on Hell":** This article includes mentions and descriptions of addiction, incarceration, violence, sexualized violence, dehumanization, verbal and physical abuse, and indoctrination. Please contact your instructor if you need any alternative assignment.
- Pedersen, Troels Ken. "Tears and the New Norm." Nordiclarp.org, February 13.
- Pedersen, Troels Ken. 2015. "Your Larp's Only As Safe As Its Safety Culture." Leaving Mundania, August 4.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.

- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Playtest 1: Crisis Management Scenarios

Organize a video meeting with your playtest group. Before your playtest:

Familiarize Yourself with the Crisis Management Workshop. In preparation for your first session, familiarize yourself with the "Crisis Management Workshop from Living Games 2016." We recommend reading Page 7 carefully before the session for best practices.

During Playtest 1 -- Crisis Management Scenarios: Choose at least four (4) scenarios to play with your Playtest group. Make sure to thoroughly debrief each experience.

After you conclude the scenarios, schedule **Playtest 2**, which should take place during Unit 5. Check the schedule for more information.

Discussion 3: Cultures of Hardcore, Consent, and Safety

Read Nilsen's "High on Hell," Pedersen's "Tears and the New Norm," Pedersen's "Your Larp's Only As Safe As Its Safety Culture," and Bowman's "A Matter of Trust: Larp and Consent Culture."

Content advisory for "High on Hell": This article includes mentions and descriptions of addiction, incarceration, violence, sexualized violence, dehumanization, verbal and physical abuse, and indoctrination. Please contact your instructor if you need any alternative assignment.

Choose one (1) article to read from the Consent category.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Compare and contrast the perspectives on highly emotional play discussed in Nilsen and Pedersen.
 - A. What play experiences do they describe?

- B. How do the two authors' tend to experience emotional play? Be specific.
 - C. Which perspective do you find the most relatable from your own play experiences? Why?
2. In 1-2 sentences, summarize Pederson's point on safety culture. Do you agree with Pedersen's point from your experience? Why or why not?
 3. Give a 1-2 sentence summary of the article you read on consent. How is consent in role-playing games defined in the article? How is this definition similar or different from Bowman's description of consent-based play? Be specific.
 4. According to Bowman, in your own words, describe the culture of hardcore. What arguments do players from this perspective make against certain safety measures? Be specific.
 5. Reflect upon the communities within which you play, including this course as needed. Where do you think they fall along the culture of hardcore vs. safety culture spectrum? Give examples.

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Instructions for Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document

For Major Assignment 1, you will design an autobiographical nano-game based on a social identity associated with you. Please read the [Major Assignment 1](#) instructions for more details.

Discussion 4: Emotional Intensity and Role-playing Games

Choose **three (3) items** that you have not yet read for this course from **three (3) of the following categories**: Triggers, Activation, and Emotional Flooding; Bleed; Alibi; and Post-Game Emotional Reactions.

Then, answer the following questions for each item:

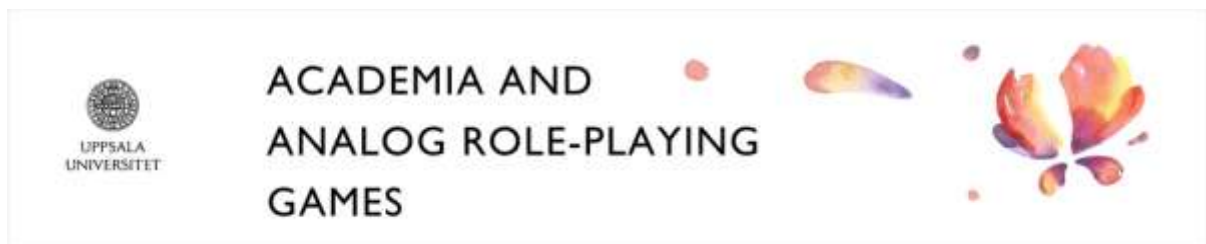
1. Describe the content of the item in 3-4 sentences.
 - A. Did you find anything surprising or intriguing?
 - B. Did you find this content personally relatable? Why or why not?

- C. How might a group intentionally set the container to address the content in this article for the purposes of transformative play? Be specific.

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Unit 3: Academia and Analog Role-playing Games

Overview: Academia and Analog Role-playing Games



Welcome to our unit on Academia and Analog Role-playing Games! This section considers a specific role-playing community: that of scholars studying these games and practices. As you may be aware, analog role-playing games are often marginalized in game studies. We will read material explaining why, which will hopefully also make clear why we believe it is important to maintain academic spaces like these courses. We will also discuss the development of role-playing game studies in various contexts, as well as the relationship between RPG studies and leisure discourse and play communities. Overall, we will emphasize the necessary dependence academia has upon play communities, as studying RPG is quite difficult in most contexts without consulting practitioner experiences in some way.

In addition, we will be exploring conflict transformation, including the core elements influencing interpersonal disputes, conflicts in intercultural communities such as role-playing groups, and academic debate. In particular, we will discuss positions, interests, feelings, and needs, which are core to all conflict. While academic debate often focuses on the position, i.e. "the argument" or "claim," we will consider the ways in which the other elements of conflict underpin positions. Furthermore, some of the materials this week discuss conflicts within academic environments among others. By exploring the core aspects of conflict, we can consider how our own part in helping address conflicts in transformational communities.

[Click here](#) to access the ROCKET Studium page.

Required Materials:

Readings:

- Torner, Evan. 2018. "Just (the Institution of Computer) Game Studies." *Analog Game Studies* 5, no. 2 (June 3).

Required readings (ROCKET Studium):

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024. "Emotions." Conflict Transformation Academy, Austin Community College. Panopto.
- Hoffman Institute. 2015. "Feelings List." Hoffman Institute.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Discussion 5: Analog Role-playing Game Studies

Read Torner's "Just (the Institution of Computer) Game Studies."

Choose **one (1) item from different content creators** (unless two are specified) to examine under the following categories for a **total of two (2) items**: Analog Role-playing Game Academics and Academia and Leisure Communities.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. According to Torner, describe two (2) reasons that analog role-playing games have been marginalized in game studies as a whole.
 - A. What are the historical reasons stated?
 - B. What social or cultural factors might be at play?
2. Describe the content of the first item you examined in 3-4 sentences.
 - A. What information was new to you or stood out?
 - B. Were you familiar with any of the texts, authors, or concepts mentioned before taking this course?
3. Describe the content of the first item you examined in 3-4 sentences.
 - A. What information was new to you or stood out?
 - B. Were you familiar with any of the texts, authors, or concepts mentioned before taking this course?
4. What steps do you think analog role-playing studies could take in the future to gain a bigger foothold in academia? Be specific.
 - A. If you are unsure, what topics would you like to see covered more frequently in role-playing game studies?

Discussion A: Introduce Yourself and Connect! – (Post in ROCKET Shell)

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Discussion B: Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs – (Post in ROCKET Shell)

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Unit 4: Group Dynamics and RPG Communities

Overview: Group Dynamics and RPG Communities



Welcome to Unit 4 on Group Dynamics and Role-playing Communities! We are broadening our scope now from role-playing games in academia to thinking about groups surrounding role-playing as a whole. While, as we have seen, each gaming community has its own values and practices, they also often follow typical group dynamic patterns. In this Unit, Elektra and Sarah will be discussing these group patterns, as well as some strategies for working with groups in terms of setting the group container and giving feedback. We will be looking at theories from sociology, counseling, leadership, and other areas to inform this work. As we move through this material, consider how these broader theories resonate – or fail to resonate – with your own experiences in communities, whether role-playing related or otherwise.

In terms of conflict transformation, we will be exploring the roles of worldview, cognitive dissonance, and perception checking in conflict. Furthermore, we will briefly cover nonviolent communication and practice a version of the script, "I" statements.

This week, we will cover:

- Tuckman and Wheelan's models of the life cycle of groups
- Counselling theories on group work, listening, and feedback
- Features of specific role-playing groups:
 - American larp communities
 - Online streaming fan communities, e.g. Critical Roles
 - Online role-playing magazines, e.g. Nordiclarp.org
 - The Nordic larp community surrounding Knutepunkt/Solmukohta
- Worldview, cognitive dissonance, and perception checking
- Nonviolent communication and "I" statements

Click here to access the ROCKET Studium page.

Required materials:

Group Patterns:

Videos:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2020. "Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception Checking." Center for Peace & Conflict Studies. Austin Community College, Panopto.
- Diakolambrianou, Elektra, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2023. "[Groups: Processes, Dynamics, Facilitation, and Creativity](#)." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube.

Readings:

- Leonard, Diana J., and Grayson Arango. 2013. "The Dynamic Life Cycle of Live Action Role-play Communities." In *The Wyrd Con Companion Book 2013*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman and Aaron Vanek, 125-136. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.

ROCKET:

- Happiness com. 2017. "[WHAT IS: Non Violent Communication](#)." YouTube, November 7.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Discussion 6: Group Work, Listening, and Feedback

Watch Diakolambrianou and Bowman's "[Groups: Processes, Dynamics, Facilitation and Creativity](#)."

Read Leonard and Arango's "The Dynamic Life Cycle of Live Action Role-play Communities."

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe three (3) theories discussed by Diakolambrianou and Bowman in 1-2 sentences each. For each theory, answer:

A. Does theory resonate with your experiences in groups? If so, how?

I. If not, why?

B. How might this theory inform your group container setting in future transformative role-playing game facilitation? Be specific.

I. If not at all, why?

2. In 1-2 sentences, describe the life-cycle derived model of larp group dynamics as discussed by Leonard and Arango.

A. Have you seen these dynamics in your own communities, role-playing or otherwise? If so, please describe.

I. If not, why?

B. What conclusions do Leonard and Arango draw after testing their model? Do you agree with these conclusions based on your experience? Why or why not?

C. How might knowledge of the life-cycle model be important to consider in transformative play communities, if at all? Be specific.

I. If not at all, why?

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Discussion C: Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception Checking – (Post in ROCKET Shell)

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Submission of Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document

For **Major Assignment 1**, you will design an autobiographical nano-game and submit your Game Design Document. The purpose of this nano-game is to explore topics related to social identity with respect to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Choose one (1) social identity associated with you, meaning an identity that is socially recognized and/or imposed upon you. This identity could be one that confers privilege upon you, marginalized you, or both. Consider an aspect you would feel comfortable with the members of your group role-playing, whether as someone with that identity or without it.

Examples include:

- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race/Ethnicity
- Ability
- Neurotypicality/neurodiversity
- Class
- Appearance
- Religion
- Social Status
- Cultural affiliation
- Subcultural affiliation
- Any other significant factor.

Game play should not exceed 45 minutes and feedback should not exceed 15 minutes including workshop and debrief, for a total of **one (1) hour maximum per game**.

Your nano-game should include:

- Instructions on how you would like players to engage with this content. Instructions on what types of play to avoid.
- A specific desired transformative impact or learning objective.

- At least one (1) workshop activity that will guide players on how to play the game.
- At least one (1) emotional, intellectual, or educational debrief question related to your desired transformative impact or learning objective.
- Description of your plan for holding the transformational container in terms of safety, including guidelines, mechanics, negotiations, aftercare, etc.

Your Game Design Document should contain all the instructions for your nano-game that facilitators and participants need to play. **These instructions should not exceed 1000 words in Times New Roman 12 point font.**

Instructions for Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities

For this assignment, you will compose an analysis of your autobiographical nano-game design, feedback, and iteration process, as well as community design takeaways based on concepts in the course in **Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities**. Please review the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities](#).

Note: You will submit a [First Complete Draft](#) of this assignment and send it to your peers for review. Then, you will submit the final draft integrating peer feedback.

Schedule Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games

If you have not done so already, schedule [Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games](#), which should take no more than one (1) hour per game. You may need multiple playtests depending on time constraints, so plan accordingly.

Unit 5: Conflict and RPG Communities

Overview: Conflict and RPG Communities



Welcome to our unit on Conflict and Role-playing Game Communities! As usual, our approach when discussing conflict will be to examine how games can address and sometimes even improve conflict situations, as well as conflicts that arise within RPG communities. While we have discussed conflict in all of these courses, this time we will consider the ways in which conflict impacts community dynamics positively and negatively. We will also discuss Conflict Styles, exploring the different choices of response we have in conflict situations.

You will also discuss positionality and reflexivity in your Major Assignment 2.

Positionality refers to your social identities and cultural backgrounds that inform your position as a researcher and, in this case, a game designer, for example demographic information or involvement in specific subcultures. *Reflexivity* refers to your paradigms, beliefs, and potential biases as a researcher that inform the way you analyze your data. Remember that bias here is not necessarily a bad thing as long as it is openly acknowledged, addressed, and discussed in terms of ways in which it might limit your analysis.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Activism in RPGs
- Democratic participation in RPGs
- Toxic and dysfunctional behaviors in role-playing communities
- Recommendations for addressing toxicity and dysfunction
- Conflict styles
- Positionality
- Reflexivity

[Click here to access the ROCKET Studium page.](#)

Required Materials:

Videos:

- Anderson, Ane Marie, and Martin Nielsen. 2018. "[Pillars and Parasites](#)." Living Games Conference. YouTube, August 17.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2020. "Conflict Styles." Center for Peace & Conflict Studies. Austin Community College.

Readings:

- Abadía, Teos. 2023. "The Community Rises at the D&D Creator Summit." The Alphastream Game Design Blog, April 7.
- Boccamazzo, Rafael. 2023. "Lessons Learned from Both Sides of Games." TheeDoctorB. Tumblr, January 19.
 - *Content Advisory*: Discussion of harassment, threats, and mental health challenges.
- Toft, Ida, and Sabine Harrer. 2020. "Design Bleed: A Standpoint Methodology for Game Design." In *Proceedings from DiGRA '20 – Proceedings of the 2020 DiGRA International Conference: Play Everywhere*: 1-18.

Review:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2013. "Social Conflict in Role-playing Communities: An Exploratory Qualitative Study." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 4: 17-18.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.

- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Discussion 7: Activism and Democratic Participation

Choose **two (2) items** to examine from the Activism and Democratic Participation section under Recommended Materials.

1. Answer the following questions for each item:

- A. What key problem do the author(s) identify with regard to social behavior? Be specific.
- B. According to the author(s) how can role-playing games affect activism and/or democratic participation? Be specific.
- C. Do you find this claim persuasive? Why or why not?
- D. What limitations can you identify in the described RPG intervention and/or community impacts described, if any? Be specific.

2. As a transformative game designer, describe how you might use role-playing games to foster activism and/or democratic participation in your local community. Imagine a specific example you have not implemented before.

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Reflection Journal 2: Community Toxicity, Dysfunction, and You

Watch Ane Marie Anderson and Martin Nielsen's "[Pillars and Parasites](#)."

Read Rafael Boccamazzo's "Lessons Learned from Both Sides of Games" and Teos Abadía's "The Community Rises at the D&D Creator Summit."

Content Advisory for Boccamazzo: Discussion of harassment, threats, and mental health challenges. Let the instructor know if you need an alternative assignment

Review Bowman's "Social Conflict in Role-playing Communities: An Exploratory Qualitative Study."

Then, answer the following questions:

1. According to Anderson and Nielsen, in 1-2 sentences, describe two (2) traits that “pillars” of RPG communities exhibit. Then describe two (2) traits “parasites” exhibit.
2. In 1-2 sentences, describe the situation Boccamazzo discusses in his article.
 1. Which groups are described on “both sides” of the situation and what are their perspectives on the issue?
 2. What behaviors do they exhibit that can be considered toxic and/or dysfunctional?
 3. How might these behaviors inhibit transformational processes?
3. Consider community toxicity and/or dysfunction based on your experience. Describe at least two (2) examples of toxic or dysfunctional group behavior you have witnessed and/or experienced.
4. In 1-2 sentences, summarize the purpose of the creator summit Abadía describes. Then, choose two (2) major takeaways Abadía describes in the article that might help address issues in role-playing game communities.
 - A. For each takeaway, in 1-2 sentences, describe the community problem Abadía describes, as well as the solution offered.
5. What strategies might reduce the amount of toxicity and dysfunction in communities based on the texts or on your own experience? Be specific.

Discussion D: Conflict Styles – (Post in ROCKET Shell)

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games

You will playtest your autobiographical games **one (1) time** for this course. **Game play should not exceed 45 minutes** and **feedback should not exceed 15 minutes** including workshop and debrief, for a total of **one (1) hour maximum per game**. You will iterate upon your Game Design Document based upon feedback from your peers and submit it as an Appendix to **Major Assignment 2**, so make sure to take notes.

Note: You may decide to play all games in one four (4) hour playtest session or break them up into two (2) hour Playtest 2 and Playtest 3 sessions.

Schedule Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games

If you have not done so already, schedule [Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games](#), which should take no more than one (1) hour per game. You may need multiple playtests depending on time constraints, so plan accordingly.

Unit 6: Sociology and Role-playing Games

Overview: Sociology and Role-playing Games



Welcome to our unit on Sociology and Role-playing Games! We have been focusing quite extensively on Psychology in these courses up until this point. In alignment with this course's focus on communities, we will shift gears to consider role-playing through a sociological lens. We will examine sociological theories as they apply to RPGs. Then, we will discuss specific dimensions of social identity that can impact the experiences of role-players and community dynamics. While we have discussed some of these dimensions before with regard to game design and implementation, our focus in this Unit will be on considering how certain sociological factors can impact transformative processes positively and negatively. In our exploration of conflict transformation, will also discuss several additional dimensions of marginalization and privilege with The 'Isms. Consider the ways in which these additional vectors of discrimination might impact members of role-playing communities.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Sociology and role-playing games
- Social status
- Appearance
- Class
- Gender/Sexuality
- Race/Ethnicity
- The 'Isms and conflict

Click here to access the ROCKET Studium page.

Click here to access the ROCKET Zoom Room.

Required Materials:

- Ford, Kol. 2020. "[Mind the Gap: Barriers to Larping for People from Backgrounds of Structural Poverty](#)." Presentation at Solmukohta 2020. Nordic Larp. YouTube, April 10.
- Resolutions Northwest. 2020. "The 'Isms.'" Adapted from Equity-Informed Mediation Training by Austin Community College. Conflict Transformation Academy.
- Vanek, Aaron. 2015. "Behind the Larp Census: 29.751 Larpers Can't (All) Be Wrong." In *The Knudepunkt Companion Book*, 16-23. Rollespilsakademiet.
- Williams, J. Patrick, David Kirschner, Nicholas Mizer, and Sebastian Deterding. 2018. "12. Sociology and Role-playing Games." In *Role-Playing Game Studies: Transmedia Foundations*, edited by José P. Zagal and Sebastian Deterding, 227-244. New York: Routledge.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Discussion 8: Sociology, Status, and Appearance

Read Williams, Kirschner, Mizer, and Deterding's "12. Sociology and Role-playing Games" and Vanek's "Behind the Larp Census: 29.751 Larpers Can't (All) Be Wrong."

Choose **one (1) item** to examine from the category Social Status and Appearance under Recommended Materials.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. In 1-2 sentences, describe three (3) concepts in Williams et al.'s chapter. For each concept, answer:

A. How might this concept illuminate your understanding of social groups within which role-playing occurs, if at all? Be specific.

I. If not, why?

2. Based on Vanek's article, describe the Larp Census project in 1-2 sentences.

A. What were its goals?

B. Do you think it was successful in achieving these goals? Why or why not?

C. What insights can you distill from Vanek's article, if any? Be specific.

3. Describe in 1-2 sentences the central claim of the article from Social Status and Appearance that you read.

A. What evidence does the author make to support this claim?

B. What consequences might issues surrounding social status and/or appearance have upon individuals within transformative play communities? Be specific.

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Discussion 9: Race/Ethnicity and Gender/Sexuality

Choose two (2) items to examine from different content creators in the following categories under Recommended Materials for a total of four (4) articles: Race/Ethnicity and Gender/Sexuality.

Then, answer the following questions for each item:

1. In 1-2 sentences describe one (1) key issue in role-playing game communities discussed by the author(s) regarding race/ethnicity and/or gender/sexuality.
 - A. What examples do the author(s) provide regarding this issue?
 - B. How might this issue create barriers to transformation for individuals from these marginalized identities? Be specific.
 - C. Does the author describe role-playing as a transformative force? If so, in what way?
 - D. What recommendations from the author(s) or your own experience would be helpful to implement in role-playing communities to try to mitigate some of the harm described? Be specific.

Reflection Journal A: The 'Isms, Conflict, and You – (Post in ROCKET Shell)

Can't access rocket and there's no instructions for this reflection journal on the module page

Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games

You will playtest your autobiographical games **one (1) time** for this course. **Game play should not exceed 45 minutes** and **feedback should not exceed 15 minutes** including workshop and debrief, for a total of **one (1) hour maximum per game**. You will iterate upon your Game Design Document based upon feedback from your peers and submit it as an Appendix to **Major Assignment 2**, so make sure to take notes.

Note: You may decide to play all games in one four (4) hour playtest session or break them up into two (2) hour Playtest 2 and Playtest 3 sessions.

Submission of First Draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities

For your First Draft of Major Assignment 2, you will write a 1700-2700 word academic paper containing the following sections:

1. Description and Analysis of your Autobiographical Nano-game Design

- A. In 1-2 paragraphs, describe the content of your autobiographical nano-game, the privilege and/or marginalization explored in the game, and the desired transformative impacts and/or learning objectives.
- B. In 1 paragraph, discuss your positionality as a designer and reflexivity as a researcher. How did these factors inform the Research Through Design process? Be specific.
- C. In 2-3 paragraphs, describe the playtest, feedback, and iteration process.
 - I. What did you learn from the playtest?
 - II. Did your game have the desired impacts on your players? Why or why not?
 - III. What would you change in your design based on feedback?

Note: You will only playtest this game once in your group.

2. Application of Theory and Best Practices to Design

Choose three (3) concepts from this course that can help inform your game design, particularly with regard to cultivating transformational communities around games. Cite all sources in Chicago Author-Date or another consistent style.

- A. In one (1) paragraph, describe **each concept** and cite a source from this course.
- B. Discuss how this concept might relate to your autobiographical nanogame design and implementation process, if at all.
- C. Discuss your takeaways regarding this concept that might inform your cultivation of transformational community practices in the future. Be specific.

Appendix I: Game Design Document

Include a revised version of your Game Design Document from Major Assignment 1 as an Appendix based on any changes made after your playtest.

Peer Review Instructions for Major Assignment 2

In this class, you will be peer reviewing the work of the members of your playtest group. For peer review, read the paper, answer the following questions, and send them to your peers.

- 1. What did you learn from this paper? Be specific.
- 2. What are three (3) strengths of this paper?
- 3. What did you find surprising or intriguing about the concepts presented? Be specific.

4. What areas were underexplored or left you wanting to know more?
5. Are there any required components missing? Be specific.
6. What are at least three (3) concrete, constructive suggestions that you have for your peer regarding their work? You can include implementation suggestions as well as academic suggestions.

Note: You must integrate the feedback from your peers in your [Final Draft of Major Assignment 2](#). You will include a section that addresses each of their recommendations and how you integrated them. If you have reasons for not integrating the comments, please provide a thorough and persuasive explanation why.

Unit 7: Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Overview: Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility



Welcome to our Unit on Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility! We have been discussing these topics throughout these courses, but in this unit, we will be explicitly focusing on the impacts of these topics on communities as a whole beyond the context of specific game designs or play experiences. We will be discussing the difficulties of addressing these topics on a structural and cultural level. We will also discuss the importance of cultural consultancy, sensitivity readings, and other similar practices related to the principle of "nothing for us/about us without us."

In this Unit, we will cover:

- The Paradox of Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Neurodiversity
- Cultural Consulting

Click [here](#) to access the ROCKET Zoom Room.

* * *

Required Materials:

- Cazeneuve, Axiel. 2020. "The Paradox of Inclusivity." In *What Do We Do When We Play?* Solmukohta 2020, edited by Eleanor Saitta, Johanna Koljonen, Jukka Särkijärvi, Anne Serup Grove, Pauliina Männistö, and Mia Makkonen, 244–53. Helsinki: Solmukohta.
- Mendez Hodes, James. 2022. "Representation Tier List." Jamesmendezhodes.com, December 29.
- *Review:* Leonard, Diana J., Jovo Janjetovic, Maximilian Usman, "Playing to Experience Marginalization: Benefits and Drawbacks of 'Dark Tourism' in Larp." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 11: 25-47.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Discussion 10: Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Read Axiel Cazeneuve's "The Paradox of Inclusivity."

Choose **one (1) item** to examine from different content creators in the following categories for **a total of two (2) items**: Accessibility and Neurodiversity.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. In 1-2 sentences, summarize what Cazeneuve describes as the Paradox of Inclusivity.
 - A. How does the author relate this concept to their own experience in the Knutepunkt community?
 - B. Do you find this paradox relatable to your own experience? Why or why not? Be specific.
2. For each of the items you examined, answer the following questions:
 - A. In 1-2 sentences, summarize the author(s)' central claim.
 - B. How does this issue affect role-playing communities according to the author?
 - C. Do you find the topics discussed relatable to your own experience or experiences you have witnessed? Why or why not?
3. How might addressing these issues help cultivate transformational communities on a wider scale? Be specific.

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Reflection Journal 3: Cultural Consulting and You

Read James Mendez Hodes' "Representation Tier List."

Review: Diana J. Leonard, Jovo Janjetovic, and Maximilian Usman's "Playing to Experience Marginalization: Benefits and Drawbacks of 'Dark Tourism' in Larp."

Then, answer the following questions:

1. In 3-4 sentences, describe the main tiers in Mendez Hodes' list.
2. Consider a game you have played with representations of marginalized groups or non-Western cultures. What tier would you say this game featured? Be specific.
3. Consider a game you have designed with representations of marginalized groups or non-Western cultures. What tier would you say this game featured? Be specific.
 - A. If you have not designed games with this content, consider a hypothetical game you might want to design.
4. Have you engaged in cultural consulting or sensitivity readings, either as a consultant yourself or having consulted with someone else? If so, what was that experience like?

5. How might cultural consulting help increase the potential for cultivating transformational communities? Be specific.

Unit 8: Safer Community Container Setting

Overview: Safer Community Container Setting



Welcome to our Unit on Safer Community Container Setting! We have been discussing this topic throughout these courses, but in this Unit, we will speak more explicitly about the sorts of issues that can arise in communities and ways to make them feel safer. We say "safer" because no community -- or life experience, really -- can ever be assured to be completely safe. The goal of safer spaces is for the community to create an experience of *holding* -- meaning that participants feel held before, during, and after the experience. Remember that holding need not be perfect, nor can it be, but it needs to feel adequate -- meaning that if a person finds themselves feeling unsafe for some reason, the community can not only *appear* responsive, but actually *be* responsible to that person's needs. This process is, of course, quite difficult, especially when participants within a community have incompatible needs or when needs are not able to be fully accommodated.

Thus, safety work is never "done," but rather is a commitment to continually learning, listening, and leveling up our skills at community care. Organizers are often held the most accountable for safety -- and rightfully so. Thus, organizers are increasingly adopting safety strategies of various levels of complexity. We will be reviewing the Code of Conduct, Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior, and Internal Procedures from the Living Games Conference as an example, which Sarah co-developed with John Stavropoulous and others. Even with such measures, members of the community may feel that safety structures fall short, as some felt during the Living Games Conference 2018 particularly around responsiveness to the needs of attendees of color. Thus, it is important to be humble, recognize that we can always learn more, be willing to challenge our implicit biases, and continually work on improving in our ability to provide holding for others.

That being said, ideally, the entire community is working together to create a shared culture where "people are more important than games." Examples include wider anti-

harassment movements that have emerged in role-playing communities and discussions around organizer safety. It is important to recognize that while safety conversations are more common within role-playing communities in recent years, they still remain controversial and, in some groups, even taboo. Ultimately, we believe that the perception of safety is an essential component of lasting supported transformation.

In this Unit, we will discuss:

- Cultures of Care
- Safety Teams
- Organizer Safety
- Anti-Harassment Movements

Click here to access the ROCKET Zoom Room.

* * *

Required Materials:

Readings:

- Living Games Conference Safety Team. 2018. "Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior."
- Living Games Conference Safety Team. 2018. "Internal Procedures."

Videos:

- Stavropoulos, John. 2022. "[Innovating for Growth: Designing a Culture of Safety in Games – John Stavropoulos](#)." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, February 15.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.

- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Discussion 11: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety

Choose **one (1) item** to examine from different content creators from the following **three (3) categories** for a total of **three (3) items**: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety.

For each item, describe the author(s)' main claim in 1-2 sentences. Then, answer the following questions:

1. Do you have any personal experience with this topic you feel comfortable sharing with the course?
2. If so, please give content advisories for sensitive topics and do not reveal the identities of any of the parties involved. Alternatively, you can speak in generalities or hypotheticals if that feels better.
3. If you do not have personal experience with these topics, in what circumstances might they be important to explore in the future? Be specific.
4. How might avoiding dealing with topics of this nature become an impediment to transformation?

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Reflection Journal 4: Codes of Conduct, Encouraged Behavior, and Internal Procedures

Read the Living Games Conference 2018's "Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior" and "Internal Procedures."

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the contents of the Code of Conduct, including consequences for breaches, in 3-4 sentences.
 - A. In 1-2 sentences, if you were adapting this Code to your own role-playing community, what would you add to the Code?
 - B. In 1-2 sentences, what would you remove?
2. Describe the contents of the Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior in 3-4 sentences.
 - A. In 1-2 sentences, if you were adapting these Guidelines to your own role-playing community, what would you add to the Code?
 - B. In 1-2 sentences, what would you remove?
3. What is your experience with Codes and Guidelines such as these, if any? Be specific.
 - A. If none, do you think such resources might be helpful to you in community container setting in the future? Why or why not?
4. In 1-2 sentences, describe the scenarios you played in Playtest 1: Crisis Management Scenarios.
 - A. Did any of the scenarios you played relate to Codes of Conduct or Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior? Why or why not?
 - B. Do you feel like you practiced any valuable skills during the scenarios? If so, be specific.
 - I. If not, why not?
 - C. What did you learn from the debrief or metareflection after the scenarios, if anything? Be specific.
5. Have you ever developed a crisis management internal procedures document or process for a game community or another group? If so, please describe.
 - A. If not, why might such a document be important? Be specific.

Reflection Journal 5: Safer Community Container Setting and You

Choose **one (1) item** to examine under Cultures of Care.

Watch John Stavropoulos' "[Innovating for Growth: Designing a Culture of Safety in Games](#)" (1 hr 31 minutes).

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the Cultures of Care article you read in 1-2 sentences. According to the authors, why is this topic important when considering community safety?
 - A. Do you have any personal experience with this topic? If so, please describe.
 - B. If not, consider a circumstance in which it might be important to consider this topic.
2. Discuss three (3) points Stavropoulos makes with regard to ways to innovate games through safety design with 1-2 sentences each. Then, answer the following questions for each point:
 - A. How might this practice promote growth? Be specific.
 - B. What specific example does Stavropoulos provide, if any? Can you think of other examples?
 - C. Do you agree with this point or find it relatable? Why or why not?

Submit Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2

In this class, you will be peer reviewing the work of the members of your playtest group. For peer review, read the paper, answer the following questions, and send them to your peers. You will also upload your peer reviews to this link for grading.

1. What did you learn from this paper? Be specific.
2. What are three (3) strengths of this paper?
3. What did you find surprising or intriguing about the concepts presented? Be specific.
4. What areas were underexplored or left you wanting to know more?
5. Are there any required components missing? Be specific.
6. What are at least three (3) concrete, constructive suggestions that you have for your peer regarding their work?

Note: You must integrate the feedback from your peers and instructor(s) in your Final Draft of Major Assignment 2. You will include a section that addresses each of their recommendations and how you integrated them. If you have reasons for not integrating the comments, please provide a thorough and persuasive explanation why.

Unit 9: RPG Communities Around the World

Overview: RPG Communities Around the World



Welcome to our Unit on RPG Communities Around to the World! We have discussed styles and cultures of play before and examined various traditions. We will expand that work in this Unit to more broadly look at trends in various geographic areas with regard to community norms surrounding play.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Discussion 12: RPG Communities Around the World

Choose **one (1) item** to examine from **three (3)** of the following cultures for a total of **three (3) items**: Russia and Belarus; Spain; Greece; North America; Switzerland and France; Singapore; the Arab World; and China.

Then, answer the following questions:

- 1, Describe the practices surrounding play in the specific culture discussed in the item you examined. What distinguishing features did you notice?
2. How do you think these practices might shape the play culture and community surrounding play?
3. Did you find this play culture relatable? Why or why not?
4. What did you find surprising or intriguing about this information? Be specific.

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Discussion 13: Backstory Bonus Round

Listen to one the following episodes of the Backstory podcast with Alex Roberts:

14. Johanna Koljonen
23. Whitney Beltrán
30. Maury Brown
32. Emily Care Boss
42. Jessica Hammer
53. Jonaya Kemper

Then, answer the following questions:

1. What topics from our courses are primarily covered in this interview: design, implementation, player skills, community building, or others?
2. In 1-2 sentences each, summarize three (3) topics discussed in more detail.
3. How do you think these topics might relate to transformative game design if at all? Be specific.
4. Were there any parts of the conversation you found particularly intriguing or relatable? Why or why not?

5. Were there any parts you wish were discussed in more detail? Why or why not?

Finally, respond to at least two (2) of your peers in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.

Unit 10: Transformational Communities and You

Overview: Transformational Communities and You



Welcome to our Unit on Transformational Communities and You! As you may have suspected by now, we have only scratched the surface in this course on the important topics related to transformational communities. In this Unit, you will submit your final draft of Major Assignment 2, as well as reflect upon your experiences in this course and in the Certificate Track as a whole.

Thank you so much for staying with us on this journey. We hope it has been as meaningful for you as it has been for us.

Discussion Forum Instructions

For all discussion forum assignments, reply to at least two (2) of your peers using the Ask a Question, Answer a Question format:

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.
- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.

- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

Reflection Journal 6: Transformational Communities and You

Answer the following questions:

1. What has your experience in this class been like?
2. What were the most interesting aspects of this course for you, if any? Be specific.
3. What were the most challenging parts of this course for you, if any? Be specific.
4. How have you grown as a community builder during this course, if at all? Be specific.
5. How have you grown as an academic during this course, if at all? Be specific.
6. What have been the most important takeaways from the Certificate program as a whole for you? Be specific.
7. Any other comments?

Submission of Final Draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities

For your Final Draft of Major Assignment 2, you will write a 2000-3000 word academic paper containing the following sections:

1. Description and Analysis of your Autobiographical Nano-game Design

- A. In 1-2 paragraphs, describe the content of your autobiographical nano-game, the privilege and/or marginalization explored in the game, and the desired transformative impacts and/or learning objectives.
- B. In 1 paragraph, discuss your positionality as a designer and reflexivity as a researcher. How did these factors inform the Research Through Design process? Be specific.
- C. In 2-3 paragraphs, describe the playtest, feedback, and iteration process.

- I. What did you learn from the playtest?
- II. Did your game have the desired impacts on your players? Why or why not?
- III. What would you change in your design based on feedback?

Note: You will only playtest this game once in your group.

2. Application of Theory and Best Practices to Design

Choose three (3) concepts from this course that can help inform your game design, particularly with regard to cultivating transformational communities around games. Cite all sources in Chicago Author-Date or another consistent style.

- A. In one (1) paragraph, describe **each concept** and cite a source from this course.
- B. Discuss how this concept might relate to your autobiographical nanogame design and implementation process, if at all.
- C. Discuss your takeaways regarding this concept that might inform your cultivation of transformational community practices in the future. Be specific.

3. Instructor and Peer Review Feedback

For your final draft, in 2-3 paragraphs, detail the specific feedback you received on this draft from your instructor and peer reviews. Describe any changes you made based on this feedback. If you did not revise according to certain feedback, justify why.

Appendix I: Game Design Document

Include a revised version of your Game Design Document from Major Assignment 1 as an Appendix based on any changes made after your playtest.