

Transformative Game Design 2

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:

-- Added course materials to Choose Your Own Adventure modules

Course Calendar

Transformative Game Design 2: 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: Introducing Yourself and 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.

	- Complete Orientation Quiz by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Watch the first 39 minutes of Sarah Lynne Bowman's "Transformative Role-playing Games: Implementation Basics." - Choose one (1) video to watch from the Art of the Table list under the Overview for Unit 1.
Unit 1	Wednesday: Tabletop Role-playing Games -- Implementation Basics Activities: - Complete Discussion 1: Tabletop Role-playing Games -- Implementation Basics by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Watch the last 39 minutes Sarah Lynne Bowman's "Transformative Role-playing Games: Implementation Basics." - Read three (3) articles from the Recommended Readings list in the Overview for Unit 1.
Unit 1	Friday: Live Action Role-playing Games (Larp) -- Implementation Basics Activities: - Complete Discussion 2: Live Action Role-playing Games -- Implementation Basics by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read Markus Montola's "Role-playing as Interactive Construction of Subjective Diegeses" and Hilda Levin's "Metareflection." - Browse the scenarios provided in the Overview. - Choose three (3) scenarios you are interested in facilitating for your group, ranking them in order of your preference. - Meet for Playtest: Session 0 and establish which games each group member will run in the future (with no duplicates). Use the Consent in Gaming Worksheet for each game to establish boundaries and calibration for play.
Week 2	
Unit 1 and 2	Monday: Role-playing Game Implementation and You Activities: - Complete Reflection Journal 1: Role-playing Game Implementation and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read Leïla Teteau-Surel's "10 Steps for Integrating Transformative Experiences."
Unit 2	Wednesday: Implementation Practice: Session 0 Activities: - Complete Playtest 1: Session 0 by 11:59pm in your time zone. - Plan Playtest 2: Implementation of a Game for Transformative Impacts. Homework:

	• Read Simo Järvelä's "How Real Is Larp?" • Read one (1) article from the Recommended Readings under each of the following categories for a total of two (2) articles: Bleed and Post-game Emotional Reactions.
Unit 2	Friday: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games Activities: • Complete Discussion 3: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Read Lauri Lukka's "The Psychology of Immersion." • Watch the "Bleed Management, De-roling, and Debriefing" roundtable from Living Games Conference 2018.
Week 3	
Unit 2 and 3	Monday: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games and You Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 2: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Watch Elizabeth D. Kilmer et al.'s "Roll for Healing: Therapeutic Game Master Round Table."
Unit 3	Wednesday: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games Activities: • Complete Discussion 4: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose one (1) article from the Recommended readings from each of the following categories for a total of two (2) articles: Effects Studies and Deroling.
Unit 3 and 4	Friday: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games and You Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 3: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games and You by 11:59pm in your time zones. • Read Instructions for Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan. Homework: • Watch Josefin Westborg's "Assessment." • Read the selection from Nicola Whitton on Assessment. • Choose two (2) articles from two (2) different content creators from two (2) separate categories under Recommended Reading: Youth Work; Primary and Secondary Schools; Higher Education; Business; Military; or Activism and Politics.

	Work on Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan.
Week 4	
Unit 4	Monday: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games Activities: - Complete Discussion 5: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Watch Josefin Westborg's "Implementation for Education." - Read Katrin Geneuss' "The Use of the Role-playing Technique STARS in Formal Didactic Contexts." - Work on Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan.
Unit 4 and 5	Wednesday: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games and You Activities: - Complete Reflection Journal 4: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan. - Prepare your facilitation for Playtest 2 if applicable.
Unit 5	Friday: Implementation and Play Experience Activities: - Complete Playtest 2: Implementation of a Game for Transformative Impacts. - Plan Playtest 3: Implementation of a Game for Transformative Impacts. Homework: - Watch the first 50 minutes Sarah Lynne Bowman's "Researching Analog Role-playing Games: Difficulties and Approaches." - Read Annika Waern's "How to Gather Feedback from Players." - Then, choose one (1) article from the following two (2) categories under Recommended Materials for a total of two (2) articles: Research Approaches and Documentation. Optional: Watch the Q&A (0:50-1:19) from Sarah Lynne Bowman's "Researching Analog Role-playing Games: Difficulties and Approaches." - Work on Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan.
Week 5	
Unit 5	Monday: Researching During Implementation and Play Activities:

	- Complete by Discussion 6: Researching During Implementation and Play by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Watch Josefin Westborg's video on "Game Design -- Implementation." - Choose two (2) articles from the Implementation Design category. - Read Mike Pohjola's "Dragonbane Memories." - Work on Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan. Content Advisory on "Dragonbane Memories": Statutory rape, sexual abuse, organizer negligence, manipulation. If you need an alternative assignment, please let the instructors know.
Unit 5	Wednesday: Implementation Specifics Activities: - Complete Discussion 7: Implementation Specifics by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan.
Unit 5 and 6	Friday: Scaling Transformative Game Design Activities: - Submit Submission of Major Assignment 1: Scaling Game Design Document and Implementation Plan by 11:59pm in your time zone. - Read Instructions for Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design. Homework: - Prepare your facilitation for Playtest 3 if applicable. - Work on Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design. - Make an appointment at the Language Workshop if you need extra assistance with your writing.
Week 6	
Unit 6	Monday: More Implementation and Play Experience Activities: - Complete Playtest 3: Implementing a Game for Transformative Impacts. Homework: - Review Sarah Lynne Bowman's "Immersion and Shared Imagination in Role-Playing Games." - Work on Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design.

Unit 6	Wednesday: Implementation Team Feedback Brainstorm Activities: - Complete Discussion 8: Implementation Team Feedback Brainstorm by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read two (2) articles from the Motivation section of the Recommended Materials. - Work on Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design.
Unit 6 and 7	Friday: Player Immersion and Motivation Activities: - Submit Discussion 9: Player Immersion and Motivation by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Choose two (2) items to read or watch under the <i>Identity, Players, and Characters</i> section of the Recommended Materials. - Read Josefin Westborg and Carl Nordblom's "Do You Want to Play Ball? How to Be a Good Team Player (in a Single-Team Player vs. Player Game)" in Unit 7. - Work on Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design.
Week 7	
Unit 6 and 7	Monday: Relationship to Character and You Activities: - Complete Reflection Journal 5: Relationship to Character and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read Markus Montola, Jaakko Stenros, and Eleanor Saitta's "The Art of Steering: Bringing the Player and the Character Back Together." - Choose one (1) item to examine from each of the following categories from the Recommended Materials for a total of two (2) items: Play as Labor and Steering for Growth. - Review the description of liberatory steering from Jonaya Kemper's "Wyrding the Self." - Work on Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design.
Unit 7	Wednesday: Player Skills Activities: - Complete Discussion 10: Player Skills by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design.

	• Make an appointment at the Language Workshop if you need extra assistance with your writing.
Unit 7 and 8	Friday: Writing Session Activities: • Complete your appointment at the Language Workshop if you need extra assistance with your writing. Homework: • Read Susanne Vejdemo's "Play to Lift, Not Just to Lose" in Unit 8. • Work on Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design.
Week 8	
Unit 7 and 8	Monday: Implementing Transformative Game Design Activities: • Submit First Complete Draft of Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design by 11:59pm in your time zone. • Read Peer Review Instructions for Major Assignment 2. • Send First Complete Draft of Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design to your peers in your group by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Read Josephine Baird, Sarah Lynne Bowman, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas' "Liminal Intimacy: Role-playing Games as Catalysts for Interpersonal Growth and Relating." • Choose one (1) item to examine under the Role-playing and Relationships section of the Recommended Materials. • 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: Interpersonal Relationship Dynamics, Play, and You Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 6: Interpersonal Relationship Dynamics, Play, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose three (3) items to examine from three (3) different content creators about three (3) different games from the Recommended Materials for Unit 8. • 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 and 9	Friday: Learning from Play Experiences Activities: • Complete Discussion 11: Learning from Play Experiences by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • 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.
Week 9	
Unit 9	Monday: Play Documentation and You Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 7: Play Documentation and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • 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.
Unit 9	Wednesday: Peer Reviews Activities: • Send all Peer Reviews: Major Assignment 2 to your peers if you have not already. Homework: • Choose one (1) item to examine from the each of the following categories from the Recommended Materials list for a total of three (3) items: Conflict Resolution/Transformation; Gender and Sexuality; and Power and Oppression. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback.
Unit 9	Friday: Conflict and Implementation Activities: • Complete Discussion 12: Conflict and Implementation by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose one (1) item to examine from the each of the following categories from the Recommended Materials list for a total of three (3) items: Accessibility; Class and Capitalism; and Law. • Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback.
Week 10	
Unit 9 and 10	Monday: Implementation, Conflict, and You Activities:

	- Complete Reflection Journal 8: Implementation, Conflict, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback.
Unit 10	Wednesday: Implementing Transformative Game Design and You Activities: Complete Reflection Journal 9: Implementing Transformative Game Design and You by 11:59pm in your time zone.
Unit 10	Friday: Implementing Transformative Game Design Submit Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design by 11:59pm in your time zone.

Course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor(s). Please note that schedule changes may occur during the semester.

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.

Welcome! Start Here for Important Information from Your Instructors



Hello everybody and welcome to the course!

Dear Game Design Students,

Welcome to Transformative Game Design 2! We are delighted that you are joining us on this journey into exploring design principles involved when implementing role-playing

games as vehicles for personal and social change. This course explores specific concepts and practices to consider when implementing for transformative impacts.

Course Period

This course takes place **15 January - 24 March 2024 (weeks 03 – 12)**. All Units will be made available closer to the first day of the course.

Required Materials

All readings, videos, podcasts, and other materials are embedded in the course. You can find links under the relevant Units and specific Assignments.

Assignment Overview

This course is taught mostly **asynchronously**, meaning that your course materials and the majority of your interactions will take place here online. These assignments are **Discussions, Journals, Peer Reviews, and Major Assignments**. Rather than attending a scheduled lecture at a regular time, you will instead **complete the assignments required of you by 11:59pm** on the due date they are assigned. Note that you will use your own time zone, meaning that others may be posting at different times.

Course Schedule

Assignments are due on **Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays**. Make sure to review the [linked Schedule under Modules](#) and plan your time accordingly.

The entire course, including Units 1-10 is contained under the heading [Modules, which is linked here](#).

Discussion Posts

Essential to your work each week are your discussion posts, including (and especially) your responses to your peers. As this course is distance learning, active engagement with your peers in the discussion forum is the lifeblood in this 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 Unit 1 for more information.

Video Conference Playtests

The exception is your Playtest and Feedback sessions, which you will need to schedule as a video conference with your peers based on your available schedule. Make sure that you sign up for a group based on your preferred schedule for these meetings under **People --> Groups**. You will need to attend **a minimum of 3 synchronous meetings with your group** in order to take part in the necessary activities of the course, as playtest and feedback are essential to practicing implementation. You can find more information about joining your group under "Sign up for Your Playtest and Feedback Group."

Game Design

In addition to your discussions and journals, you will also be **playing at least one (1) role-playing game** with your group from the provided list of scenarios **hacked to steer toward a transformative impact and/or learning objective**. You will also **design the scaled up implementation of your nanogame developed in previous courses in the track**. You can use the nanogame you designed in Introduction to Transformative Game Design and/or Transformative Game Design 1, but the scaling is the important part for this course, i.e. creating the implementation plan for a longer, more extensive game.

Importantly, you will not playtest your scaled game in this class, but rather a game from the assigned list. **Each playtest should last no longer than 2 hours: 45 min-1.5 hours for workshop, play, and debriefing** (depending on the game), and **15-30 minutes on player feedback on facilitation/implementation**. It is hugely important that you keep track of time in order to be respectful of the needs of your peers. Groups cannot exceed 4 members, so your game should be hacked by you to be played by **2-4 people** (including yourself if appropriate).

Writing Assignments

Based on your design, playtests and feedback sessions, you will complete **two Major Assignments**: one (1) Scaling Implementation Plan and (1) Scaling Transformative Game Design paper.

Deliverables

- **Discussion Boards Assignments:** You are expected to participate in all discussion assignments in the Units, 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.
- **Major Assignment 1 -- Scaling Implementation Plan:** You will write an implementation plan containing short sentences (1-2 sentences) for each of the required questions about the implementation details of your scaled game. This document should be 1700-2300 words, not including subject headings.
- **Major Assignment 2 -- Scaling Transformative Game Design:** You will compose an academic article with a revised version of your implementation plan, integrating and citing concepts from the Implementation and Play Units of the class with regard to your design choices. You will submit a complete first draft for peer feedback, then revise your assignment based upon these comments for your final submission at the end of the course.
- **Peer Feedback -- Implementing Transformative Game Design:** You will read the first complete draft of Major Assignment 2 for each of your peers in your group and respond to the required feedback questions to help them improve their work.

Forms of Teaching

Teaching is comprised of:

- Video lectures by the instructors, guest lecturers, and other sources
- Articles and other resources

Technical Requirements

- You will need a computer, word processor software (such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs), video conferencing software (such as Zoom) and consistent Internet access

Writing Assistance

Uppsala University offers writing support through the [linked Language Workshop](#). We encourage you to make an appointment if you need additional writing support.

Disabilities

If you have disabilities and need accommodations, please contact the [Disabilities office linked here](#)

Plagiarism

Before taking your Orientation Quiz, please watch this important video on plagiarism, which can have serious consequences at Uppsala University:

<https://youtu.be/7bmpVGkwyKQ?si=-PJTWWZFXf9WQ2Wr>

Contacting Your Instructors

Be sure to email Sarah at sarah.bowman@speldesign.uu.se and Josephine Baird josephine.baird@speldesign.uu.se if you are experiencing any difficulties or have questions. Please use your student email account.

Orientation Quiz

The course is divided into ten (10) Units, which you will find listed under the Modules tab. Please review the Schedule and familiarize yourself with the Units. Then, take your Orientation Quiz.

[Click here to take your Orientation Quiz.](#)

Design Credits

This course was designed by Sarah Lynne Bowman, Josefin Westborg, Elektra Diakolambrianou, and Josephine Baird. It has been revised with feedback from Kaya Toft Thejls.

Graphic design by Liliia Chorna.

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.
- **Major Assignment 1 -- Scaling Implementation Plan:** These documents should contain short (1-2 sentences) answers to each of the questions listed under each subheading for the implementation plan of your scaled up game. The word limit for this assignment is 1700-2300 words, not including subject headings. Please read the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 1](#) for more details.
- **Major Assignment 2 -- Implementing Transformative Game Design:** You will add components of academic analysis in addition to your revised version of your implementation plan, integrating and citing concepts from the Implementation and Play Units of the class with regard to your design choices. You will submit a complete first draft for peer feedback, then revise your assignment based upon these comments for your final submission at the end of the course. Your word limit 2600-3700, **not including** subject headings or Appendices. Please read the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2](#) for more details.
 - Your assignment should integrate at least **two (2) separate concepts** from different sources and content creators from the Implementation Units (1-5) and **two (2) separate concepts** from different sources and content creators from the Play Units (6-7). You will discuss the ways in which these sources have informed your design choices. These sources should be cited in [Chicago Author-Date format](#) or another citation style of your choice. Note that citations must be consistent and correct according to the style guide.
- **Peer Reviews Major Assignment 2 -- Scaling Transformative Game Design:** You will read the first complete draft of Major Assignment 2 for each of your peers in your group and respond to the required feedback questions to help them improve their work.

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

On successful completion of Transformative Game Design 2, the student should be able to:

- **Show Knowledge of the Field:** Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to implementation of transformative analog games, including logistics and safety.

- **Design Workshops, Use Game Play and Implementation:** Design, experience, iterate, and critique workshops and implementation strategies for transformative analog games that have specific growth-related goals.
- **Perform Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:** Compose written texts and other communication materials on the implementation of transformative analog 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 -- Show Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to implementation of transformative analog games, including logistics and safety.
 - *Learning Objective 3 -- Perform Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on the implementation of transformative analog 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 -- Show Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to implementation of transformative analog games, including logistics and safety.
 - *Learning Objective 3 -- Perform Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on the implementation of transformative analog games in various formats for distinct audiences.
 - *Success Criteria:* Complete your journals answering all questions thoroughly.

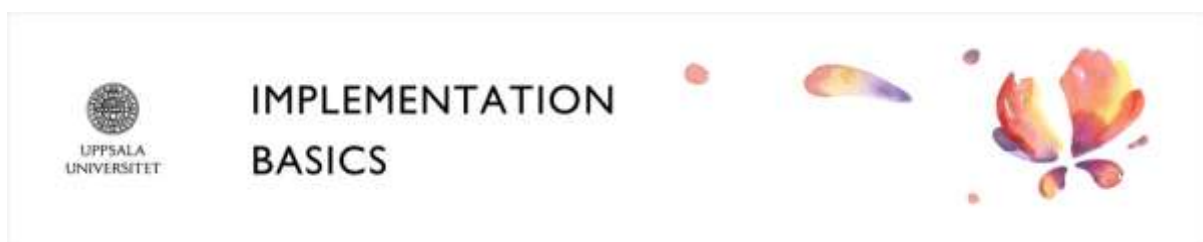
- **Major Assignment 1 -- Scaling Implementation Plan:** You will compose an academic article with a revised version of your implementation plan, integrating and citing concepts from the Implementation and Play Units of the class with regard to your design choices. You will submit a complete first draft for peer feedback, then revise your assignment based upon these comments for your final submission at the end of the course. Your word limit 2600-3700, not including subject headings or Appendices. Please read the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2](#) for more details.
 - Your assignment should integrate at least **two (2) separate concepts** from different sources and content creators from the Implementation Units (1-5) and **two (2) separate concepts** from different sources and content creators from the Play Units (6-7). You will discuss the ways in which these sources have informed your design choices. These sources should be cited in [Chicago Author-Date format](#) or another citation style of your choice. Note that citations must be consistent and correct according to the style guide.
 - *Learning Objective 1 -- Show Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to implementation of transformative analog games, including logistics and safety.
 - *Learning Objective 2 -- Design Workshops, Use Game Play and Implementation:* Design, experience, iterate, and critique workshops and implementation strategies for transformative analog games that have specific growth-related goals.
 - *Learning Objective 3 -- Perform Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on the implementation of transformative analog games in various formats for distinct audiences.
 - *Success Criteria:* Complete your Game Design Document and Playtest Plan in the required format.

- **Major Assignment 2 -- Scaling Transformative Game Design:**
 - *Learning Objective 1 -- Show Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to implementation of transformative analog games, including logistics and safety.

- *Learning Objective 2 -- Design Workshops, Use Game Play and Implementation:* Design, experience, iterate, and critique workshops and implementation strategies for transformative analog games that have specific growth-related goals.
 - *Learning Objective 3 -- Perform Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on the implementation of transformative analog 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 -- Scaling Transformative Game Design:** 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 -- Show Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to implementation of transformative analog games, including logistics and safety.
 - *Learning Objective 3 -- Perform Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on the implementation of transformative analog 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: Transformative Game Design: Implementation Basics

Overview: Transformative Game Design: Implementation Basics



Welcome to Transformative Game Design 2! This course explores foundational concepts and practices to consider when implementing analog role-playing games for transformative impacts. Remember the concept from the *Larp Design* book that *everything is a designable surface*. Implementation strategies must also be designed as well to ensure your game runs as intended, as we have emphasized in previous classes with your Playtest Plans.

In addition to lectures, discussions, and journals, you will also be planning a Session 0, facilitating 1 existing game by another author, and playing games facilitated 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.

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 must facilitate **one (1) game** with your group members during this course, which you will hack to emphasize a particular transformative impact and/or learning objective. These games are written by other authors, so you will be practicing your facilitation skills and receiving feedback from your peers.
- You will run **one (1)** of these games for your group members for a maximum of **four (4) games per group**. Each playtest should last **no longer than 2 hours: 45 min-1.5 hours for workshop, play, and debriefing (depending on the game), and 15-30 minutes on player feedback** on facilitation/implementation.

- This process will take likely a minimum of 3 sessions: **one meeting (1) for Session 0 and two (2) playtest sessions** of a **maximum of four (4) hours each**. Please plan accordingly.

Major Assignments are papers you will write for the class. The emphasis for these assignments will be creating an implementation plan to scale one (1) of the nano-games you designed in Intro to Transformative Game Design or Transformative Game Design 1.

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 role-playing implementation basics for tabletop, freeform, and larp. Some of you may be highly familiar with this content, whereas for others, it will be new for you. Our hope is that this basic introduction will give you much of the vocabulary needed to understand the rest of the content in this course and future courses in the Transformative Game Design Certificate. We also want you to consider these concepts in terms of transformative impacts and goal-setting, as implementation choices can enhance or inhibit these processes depending upon the circumstances.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Tabletop Role-playing Games Implementation Basics
- Larp Implementation Basics
- Metareflection
- Subjective Diegesis

* * *

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:

- Levin, Hilda. 2020. "Metareflection." In *What Do We Do When We Play?*, edited by Eleanor Saitta, Johanna Koljonen, Jukka Särkijärvi, Anne Serup Grove, Pauliina Männistö, and Mia Makkonen, 63-75. Helsinki: Solmukohta.
- Montola, Markus. 2003. "Role-playing as Interactive Construction of Subjective Diegeses." In *As Larp Grows Up*, edited by Morten Gade, Line Thorup, and Mikkel Sander, 82-89. Denmark: Projektgruppen KP03.

Videos:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2023. "[Transformative Role-playing Games: Implementation Basics](#)." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, January 14.

List of Games for Playtest Facilitation:

- Arons, J. Michael. 2021. "Be Witch." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Barnett, Tracy. 2014. "HERE LIES ____." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cazeneuve, Axiel. 2020. "Talk to Me." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cooper, Tracy. 2021. "Great Unknown." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Note:** This game involves secrecy, but should be hacked for transparency, as all players have access to the scenario.
- Devine, Tim. 2019. "Julia's Lost Treasure." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Holkar, Mo. 2018. "Fake News." Alexandria.dk.
- Lucas, Casey. 2020. "All We Have Is Us." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Nix, Dylan. "Charging of the Light-Bearer." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Reininghaus, Gerrit. 2020. "The Batcave." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Content advisory:** Information about bats, images of bats
- Wood, Laura. 2020. "A Single Step." Golden Cobra Challenge.

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.

Orientation Quiz

1. This course focuses on the design of characters and plot rather than logistics

TRUE / **FALSE**

2. This class features three (3) major assignments

TRUE / **FALSE**

3. I will be playtesting the scaled version of my nano-game in this class

TRUE / **FALSE**

4. This class focuses on the implementation of role-playing game design rather than details of the game itself

TRUE / FALSE

5. I will facilitate one (1) game from the assigned list for my group that I will have hacked for transformative impacts

TRUE / FALSE

6. This course focuses on play experience and player skills

TRUE / FALSE

7. I will need to peer review Major Assignment 2 for my group members

TRUE / FALSE

8. I will playtest a total of four (4) games in this course, including the one I am facilitating

TRUE / FALSE

9. I do not need to cover all of the listed questions under each subcategory for successful completion of Major Assignment 1 and 2

TRUE / **FALSE**

10. I can choose to playtest any game for this course

TRUE / **FALSE**

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 Transformative Game Design 2, your playtests will focus upon your **skills at facilitation and implementation for transformative impacts, rather than the design of the game itself.**

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

1) Game Selection: In preparation for your Session 0, individually choose three (3) games from the below list that you are interested in facilitating for the group.

2) Playtest 1 -- Session 0: Engage in a Session 0, in which you will collectively decide which member of the group is running which scenario. In this Session 0, each facilitators will take turns using the [Consent in Gaming](#) checklist for each game, with each participant listing their various boundaries (including the facilitator). Note that you can choose to create one large checklist for all games or separate checklists for each game (time consuming, but recommended, as each game has different purposes/themes). Players can also choose to veto certain games no questions asked, i.e. X-Card. Make sure to establish safety practices, including any guidelines and mechanics.

If agreement cannot be reached on games to playtest, please contact the instructors.

3) Playtest 2: Implementation of a Game for Transformative Impacts: Each participant will facilitate a game from the list for their playtest group, guiding the group through all the stages. The facilitator should hack the game, identifying a specific transformative impact and/or learning objective they want to emphasize. The facilitator should add or change existing workshops and debriefs to focus upon the desired transformative impact. The facilitator can also hack the time estimates in the game according to the following guidelines.

Each playtest should last no longer than 2 hours: 45 min-1.5 hours for workshop, play, and debriefing (depending on the game), and 15-30 minutes on player feedback on facilitation/implementation.

Thus, Playtest 2 should **last no longer than 4 hours**, not including breaks, i.e. 2 students will be able to facilitate during this session.

4) Playtest 3: Implementation of a Game for Transformative Impacts: Same instructions as Playtest 2.

List of Games for Playtest Facilitation:

- Arons, J. Michael. 2021. "Be Witch." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Barnett, Tracy. 2014. "HERE LIES ____." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cazeneuve, Axiel. 2020. "Talk to Me." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cooper, Tracy. 2021. "Great Unknown." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Note:** This game involves secrecy, but should be hacked for transparency, as all players have access to the scenario.
- Devine, Tim. 2019. "Julia's Lost Treasure." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Holkar, Mo. 2018. "Fake News." Alexandria.dk.
- Lucas, Casey. 2020. "All We Have Is Us." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Nix, Dylan. "Charging of the Light-Bearer." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Reininghaus, Gerrit. 2020. "The Batcave." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Content advisory:** Information about bats, images of bats
- Wood, Laura. 2020. "A Single Step." Golden Cobra Challenge.

Discussion 1: Tabletop Role-playing Games: Implementation Basics

Watch the first 39 minutes of Sarah Lynne Bowman's "[Transformative Role-playing Games: Implementation Basics](#)" (1 hr 18 min total).

Choose **one (1) video** to watch from the Art of the Table list under the Overview for Unit 1.

Note: If you took a break from the Certificate Track and are rejoining us this semester, please add a brief introduction at the beginning of this post.

* * *

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

1. After watching Bowman's video, identify three (3) aspects of implementation that you have considered *the least* when facilitating tabletop role-playing games? You can use experiences from tabletop facilitation or from your nano-games in this class if necessary. What aspects might you find challenging when facilitating your game for this class? Be specific.
2. Describe three (3) recommendations facilitators made in The Art of the Table video. Reflect upon your own experience. For each recommendation, discuss:
 - A. How does this recommendation compare with your own play experience?
 - B. How does this recommendation compare with your own facilitation experience?

- C. How might this recommendation impact your facilitation practice in the future, if at all? Be specific.

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

Discussion 2: Live Action Role-playing Games: Implementation Basics

Watch the final 39 minutes of Sarah Lynne Bowman's "[Transformative Role-playing Games: Implementation Basics](#)" (1 hr 18 min total).

Read **three (3) articles** from the Recommended Readings list in the Overview for Unit 1.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. After watching Bowman's video, identify three (3) aspects of implementation that you have considered *the least* when facilitating live action role-playing games or freeform? Focus on ideas from this video rather than the previous one. You can use experiences from larp or freeform facilitation or from your nano-games in this class if necessary. What aspects might you find challenging when facilitating your game for this class? Be specific.
2. Describe one (1) facilitation recommendation or concept made in each article you read. Reflect upon your own experience. For each recommendation or concept, discuss:
 - A. How does this recommendation or concept compare with your own play experience?
 - B. How does this recommendation or concept compare with your own facilitation experience?
 - C. How might this recommendation or concept impact your facilitation practice in the future, if at all? Be specific.
3. Reflecting on all of the materials from this week, please share one (1) past experience you have had *as a player* from outside of this course that could have been solved by different choices in implementation strategies. What choices would have improved your experience?
 - A. If you cannot think of an example, please invent a hypothetical one and answer the questions accordingly.

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

Reflection Journal 1: Role-playing Game Implementation and You

Read Markus Montola's "Role-playing as Interactive Construction of Subjective Diegeses" and Hilda Levin's "Metareflection."

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. According to Markus Montola, what does "subjective diegesis" mean in role-playing games? What implications does this understanding of play have on our traditional notion of storytelling and documentation? How might an understanding of subjective diegesis impact your implementation practices? Be specific.
2. In your own words, provide a one (1) sentence definition of metareflection based upon your reading. This definition should be your own takeaway rather than an existing definition. Why does Levin think that metareflection is important to consider in role-playing games? Be specific.
3. Choose one (1) Explicit Shift and one (1) Subtle Shift as described in Levin's article.
 1. How might you design the implementation your game to create opportunities for these two forms of metareflection? Focus on new methods rather than ones you have already used.
4. Reflecting on the materials this week, what aspects of implementation interest you the most? Why?

Unit 2: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games

Overview: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games



Unit 2 Overview

In Unit 2, we will discuss considerations when implementing leisure role-playing games for transformative purposes. We will dive a bit deeper into the psychology of play, particularly with regard to bleed, immersion, and post-game emotional reactions. We will consider these topics with regard to implementation strategies in order to best facilitate transformative experiences. Also important to consider is that facilitators are sometimes players in the game as well. Reflect upon the ways in which these phenomena might also affect people implementing games.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Bleed
- Immersion
- Post-game emotional reactions
- Integration
- Debriefing

* * *

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:

- Järvelä, Simo. 2019. "How Real Is Larp?" In *Larp Design: Creating Role-play Experiences*, edited by Johanna Koljonen, Jaakko Stenros, Anne Serup Grove, Aina D. Skjønshjell and Elin Nilsen, 22-24. Copenhagen, Denmark: Landsforeningen Bifrost.
- Lukka, Lauri. 2014. "The Psychology of Immersion." In *The Cutting Edge of Nordic Larp*, edited by Jon Back, 81-92. Denmark: Knutpunkt.
- Teteau-Surel, Leïla. 2021. "10 Steps for Integrating Transformative Experiences." In *Book of Magic: Vibrant Fragments of Larp Practices*, edited by Kari Kvittingen Djukastein, Marcus Irgens, Nadja Lipsyc, and Lars Kristian Løveng Sunde, 117-124. Oslo, Norway: Knutepunkt.

Videos:

- Mersmann, Eric, Kim Sward, Alex Rowland, Raquel Skellington, Sarah Lynne Bowman, and Martin Nielsen. 2018. "[Bleed Management, De-roling, and Debriefing](#)." Living Games Conference. YouTube, May 18.

List of Games for Playtest Facilitation:

- Arons, J. Michael. 2021. "Be Witch." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Barnett, Tracy. 2014. "HERE LIES ____." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cazeneuve, Axiel. 2020. "Talk to Me." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cooper, Tracy. 2021. "Great Unknown." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Note:** This game involves secrecy, but should be hacked for transparency, as all players have access to the scenario.
- Devine, Tim. 2019. "Julia's Lost Treasure." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Holkar, Mo. 2018. "Fake News." Alexandria.dk.
- Lucas, Casey. 2020. "All We Have Is Us." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Nix, Dylan. "Charging of the Light-Bearer." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Reininghaus, Gerrit. 2020. "The Batcave." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Content advisory:** Information about bats, images of bats
- Wood, Laura. 2020. "A Single Step." Golden Cobra Challenge.

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: Session 0

Playtest 1 -- Session 0: Engage in a Session 0, in which you will collectively decide which member of the group is running which scenario. In this Session 0, each facilitators will take turns using the [Consent in Gaming](#) checklist for each game, with each participant listing their various boundaries (including the facilitator). Note that you can choose to create one large checklist for all games or separate checklists for each game (time consuming, but recommended, as each game has different purposes/themes). Players can also choose to veto certain games no questions asked, i.e. X-Card. Make sure to establish safety practices, including any guidelines and mechanics.

If agreement cannot be reached on games to playtest, please contact the instructors.

* * *

List of Games for Playtest Facilitation:

- Arons, J. Michael. 2021. "Be Witch." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Barnett, Tracy. 2014. "HERE LIES ____." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cazeneuve, Axiel. 2020. "Talk to Me." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Cooper, Tracy. 2021. "Great Unknown." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Note:** This game involves secrecy, but should be hacked for transparency, as all players have access to the scenario.
- Devine, Tim. 2019. "Julia's Lost Treasure." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Holkar, Mo. 2018. "Fake News." Alexandria.dk.
- Lucas, Casey. 2020. "All We Have Is Us." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Nix, Dylan. "Charging of the Light-Bearer." Golden Cobra Challenge.
- Reininghaus, Gerrit. 2020. "The Batcave." Golden Cobra Challenge.
 - **Content advisory:** Information about bats, images of bats
- Wood, Laura. 2020. "A Single Step." Golden Cobra Challenge.

Discussion 3: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games

Read Simo Järvelä's "How Real Is Larp?" (2 pages) and Leïla Teteau-Surel's "10 Steps for Integrating Transformative Experiences."

Then read one (1) article from the Recommended Readings under each of the following categories for a total of two (2) articles: Bleed and Post-game Emotional Reactions.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Summarize the concepts presented in the article you read from the Bleed section in 3-4 sentences. Did you find the arguments presented persuasive? Why or why not.
2. Considering the information you read this week, how might you implement a game designed for transformative impacts that maximizes the potential for bleed responsibly? Provide specific examples that would occur *during* the game aside from safety guidelines, such as storytelling techniques, logistical choices, etc.
3. Considering the information you read this week, what sorts of risks might occur when playing emotionally intense role-playing games? What sort of *after* effects have been reported? Be specific.
 - A. Have you experienced these sorts of emotions after a game?
 - B. If so, please describe. If not, why not?
4. Considering the information you read this week, how might you implement a game designed for transformative impacts that helps players integrate their experience. Provide specific examples that would occur *after* the game. You can adapt ideas from Teteau-Surel's player suggestions or offer your own, but the emphasis should be on structures you can provide as a facilitator.

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

Reflection Journal 2: Implementing Transformative Leisure Role-playing Games and You

Read Lauri Lukka's "The Psychology of Immersion" (11 pages).

Watch the "[Bleed Management, De-roling, and Debriefing](#)" roundtable from Living Games Conference 2018 (1 h 14 min).

Then, answer the following questions:

1. What concept surprised or intrigued you the most from Lukka's article? Be specific.
 - A. Does this concept relate to your own play experiences? Why or why not?
 - B. How might a deeper understanding of immersion help you better understand what happened in your players' psychology when engaging with your game?

2. Choose two (2) different recommendations from the "Bleed Management" video that you were not presented in the previous two courses. Do you find these recommendations relevant to your own implementation practices? Why or why not?
3. Reflect upon the game you have designed and implemented in the previous two Transformative Game Design courses. In what one (1) or more ways can you improve in your facilitation skills? Be specific.
4. Based on the materials you read or watched this week, think of one insight that will inform your implementation choices for Major Assignment 1, which involves scaling up your previous nano-game. How will this insight impact your implementation choices? Be specific.

Unit 3: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games

Overview: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games



Unit 3 Overview

In Unit 3, we will discuss considerations when implementing leisure role-playing games for therapeutic purposes. We will explore accounts from therapists about their implementation practices, as well as some effects studies. By effects studies, we mean research where data of all kinds has been collected and analyzed with regard to the effects role-playing might have on players, in this case from a psychological or social mental health perspective. We will consider any differences we might notice between recommendations for leisure and therapeutic implementation. We will also discuss some deroling strategies.

This week, we will cover:

- Accounts of therapeutic implementation
- Effects studies
- Deroling

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 4: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games

Watch Elizabeth D. Kilmer et al.'s "[Roll for Healing: Therapeutic Game Master Round Table](#)" (57 min).

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. In 1-2 sentences each, describe three (3) examples from the therapists of different transformative impacts that either they have personally experienced or witnessed while implementing therapeutic tabletop role-playing games.
2. Describe one (1) challenge mentioned by the therapists. How do they attempt to address this challenge in their practice?
3. Compare this roundtable to the Art of the Table roundtable you watched in Unit 1. What similarities did you notice in these facilitator's approaches? What differences did you notice? Be specific.

4. Even if you are not a therapist, are there any techniques mentioned in the roundtable that might help you implement transformative role-playing games more effectively? Be specific.

A. If not, why not?

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

Reflection Journal 3: Implementing Therapeutic Role-playing Games and You

Choose **one (1) article** from the Recommended readings from each of the following categories for a **total of two (2) articles**: Effects Studies and Deroling.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. In 3-4 sentences, in your own words, describe the Effect Study in terms of how the research was conducted, the method used, the participant population involved, the findings, etc. What transformative impact(s) does this article claim occurred in the test group?
2. Do you have any personal experiences with games where this transformative impact has occurred for you or you have witnessed it occur for someone else, whether role-playing or otherwise?
 - A. If so, please describe and provide specifics.
 - B. If not, why do you think games have not had this impact from your experience?
3. Describe one (1) key deroling strategy that you learned from the article you read in 1-3 sentences. Was the deroling strategy used in acting or in virtual role-playing games? Do you think this strategy might be useful to work into role-playing game implementation? Why or why not?
4. Can you think of implementation situations when deroling would be necessary in therapeutic role-playing games? Be specific.
 - A. Alternatively, can you think of implementation situations where deroling might be undesirable during a therapeutic process? Why or why not?

Instructions for Major Assignment 1: Scaling Implementation Plan

In this assignment, you will create an implementation plan for scaling up your nano-game. Please review the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 1: Scaling Implementation Plan](#).

Later in the course, you will revise this plan based on feedback and expand your analysis based on concepts in the course in **Major Assignment 2: Scaling Transformative Game Design**. Please review the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design](#).

Unit 4: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games

Overview: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games



Unit 4 Overview

In Unit 4, we will discuss considerations when implementing role-playing games for educational purposes. We will look at a wide variety of educational role-playing games, including in youth work, higher education, primary/secondary education, business, military, and activism/politics. We will also discuss assessment.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Accounts of implementation of role-playing games in formal, non-formal, and informal education
- Formative and summative assessment
- Implementation recommendations

* * *

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:

- Geneuss, Katrin. 2021. "The Use of the Role-playing Technique STARS in Formal Didactic Contexts." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 11: 114-131.
- Whitton, Nicola. 2014. *Digital Games and Learning*. Routledge: London. (Selections: p. 104-108)

Videos:

- Westborg, Josefin. 2023. "[Assessment](#)." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, January 26.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2023. "[Implementation for Education](#)." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, January 26.

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: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games

Watch Josefin Westborg's "[Assessment](#)."

Read the selection from Nicola Whitton on Assessment.

Choose **two (2) articles from two (2) different content creators from two (2) separate categories** under Recommended Reading: Youth Work; Primary and Secondary Schools; Higher Education; Business; Military; or Activism and Politics.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Whitton talks about assessment and digital games. How do you think her thoughts might be useful when thinking about assessment in analog role-playing games?
 - A. How do you think Whitton's thoughts might relate to formative and summative assessment? Be specific.
2. Describe the two (2) articles you reviewed in 3-4 sentences for each.
 - A. What was the most important takeaway for you from each of these articles?
3. Based on Westborg's video, how would you go about assessing if a transformative impact or learning objective has been met after a role-playing game? Use a specific example. You can use your game if you prefer or another example.

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

Reflection Journal 4: Implementing Educational Role-playing Games and You

Watch Josefin Westborg's "[Implementation for Education](#)."

Read Katrin Geneuss' "The Use of the Role-playing Technique STARS in Formal Didactic Contexts" (17 pages).

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. After watching Westborg and reading Geneuss, describe three (3) considerations should educators should make during role-playing game implementation.
2. What was most surprising for you after engaging with these materials about implementation in formal education?

3. Are any of these concepts relevant to your own implementation practices?
 - A. If so, which ones?
 - B. If not, why not?
4. What is your relationship to assessment in your own educational journey, either as a student, or as an educator, or both? Use examples.

Playtest 2: Implementation of a Game for Transformative Impacts

Each participant will facilitate a game from the list for their playtest group, guiding the group through all the stages. The facilitator should hack the game, identifying a specific transformative impact and/or learning objective they want to emphasize. The facilitator should add or change existing workshops and debriefs to focus upon the desired transformative impact. Make sure to emphasize any established safety practices, including guidelines and mechanics.

The facilitator can also hack the time estimates in the game according to the following guidelines:

Each playtest should last no longer than 2 hours: 45 min-1.5 hours for workshop, play, and debriefing (depending on the game), and 15-30 minutes on player feedback on facilitation/implementation.

Thus, Playtest 2 should **last no longer than 4 hours**, not including breaks, i.e. 2 students will be able to facilitate during this session.

Unit 5: Research and Implementation Specifics

Overview: Research and Implementation Specifics



Unit 5 Overview

In Unit 5, we will discuss specifics of different approaches to role-playing game research, as well as implementing role-playing games for educational purposes. We will discuss one of the most popular methods in role-playing game studies, participant-

observation ethnography, as well as other approaches to research. We will specifically focus on ways to gather Effects Studies, particularly with regard to the potential benefits of role-playing games. We will consider the act of documentation in terms of research and how it might affect participants.

In terms of implementation, we will look at several videos and articles with recommendations, including information on "gamemastering," or facilitation. We will also read an in-depth case study of larp implementation gone wrong.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Participant-observation ethnography
- Effects/Benefits Research
- Documentation in Research
- Documentation in Implementation
- Best practices for implementation design
- Gamemastering
- A implementation case study

* * *

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:

Videos:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2020. "[Researching Analog Role-playing Games: Difficulties and Approaches](#)." Interacting MindsAU, Dec. 11.
- Waern, Annika. 2019. "How to Gather Feedback from Players." In *Larp Design: Creating Role-play Experiences*, edited by Johanna Koljonen, Jaakko Stenros, Anne Serup Grove, Aina D. Skjønshjell and Elin Nilsen, 373-388. Copenhagen, Denmark: Landsforeningen Bifrost.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2023. "[Game Design: Implementation](#)." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, January 26.

Readings:

- Pohjola, Mike. 2021. "Dragonbane Memories." Nordiclarp.org, August 18.
 - **Content Advisory on "Dragonbane Memories":** Statutory rape, sexual abuse, organizer negligence, manipulation. If you need an alternative assignment, please let the instructors know.

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: Researching During Implementation and Play

Watch the first 50 minutes Sarah Lynne Bowman's "[Researching Analog Role-playing Games: Difficulties and Approaches](#)."

Read Annika Waern's "How to Gather Feedback from Players."

Then, choose **one (1) article** from the following **two (2) categories** under Recommended Materials for a **total of two (2) articles**: Research Approaches and Documentation.

Optional: Watch the Q&A (0:50-1:19) from Sarah Lynne Bowman's "[Researching Analog Role-playing Games: Difficulties and Approaches](#)."

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Describe participant-observation ethnography in 1-2 sentences. What aspects of role-playing do you think this form of ethnography would be helpful in studying?

1. Have you engaged in this type of research? If so, please describe.
2. If not, would you be interested in trying it? Why or why not?
2. Describe three (3) additional methods of researching role-playing games (1-2 sentences each) from these materials. Do you think these methods might be effective tools for this activity? Why or why not?
3. Describe in 3-4 sentences the article you read on documentation.
 1. From your perspective, what considerations does the article make that might impact the play process?
 2. From your perspective, what considerations does the article make that might impact the implementation process?
 3. From your perspective, what considerations does the article make that might impact the research process?

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

Discussion 7: Implementation Specifics

Watch Josefin Westborg's video on "[Game Design Implementation](#)."

Read Mike Pohjola's "Dragonbane Memories."

Then, choose **two (2) articles** from the Implementation Design category.

Content Advisory on "Dragonbane Memories": Statutory rape, sexual abuse, organizer negligence, manipulation. If you need an alternative assignment, please let the instructors know.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Considering Westborg's video on Gamemastering, what three (3) considerations do you think will be most relevant when scaling your game design for Major Assignment 1? Be specific about how you will address these areas.
2. After reading Pohjola's text, what implementation lessons can be learned? Be specific.
3. Describe each article you read in 1-2 sentences. For each article, discuss:
 - A. Is the presented concept(s) relevant to your scaling project? If so, how? Be specific.

B. If not, why not?

4. Are you excited about scaling your game design? If so, why?
5. Do you have any concerns about scaling your game design that you feel comfortable sharing with the rest of the class? If so, please describe.

Submission of Major Assignment 1: Scaling Implementation Plan

For Major Assignment 1, you will choose a game that you designed in Introduction to Transformative Game Design or Transformative Game Design 1. You will scale up this game in one of the following ways:

a) Extended length of single session with additional content/scenes, i.e. 2-8 hours.

b) A multi-day larp, i.e. 24-36 hours.

c) Multiple single sessions with the same character or setting, i.e. a campaign with four (4) sessions lasting 2-4 hours.

Overall, your choices should reflect consideration of impacts on the players in each section, including not only desired transformative impacts, but also any consequences your choices might have on players.

Total word limit for Major Assignment 1: 1700-2300 words. Word limits **do not** include subject headings.

Your paper should cover the following major sections: Game Design and Scaling, as well as the required subheadings. Use separate section headings for each and adhere to the word limits as closely as possible for full credit. Use complete sentences and paragraph form, but be brief and succinct. Some categories will need more description than others.

1) Game Design (200-300 words): Describe your original game design. Focus only on details necessary to understand the desired transformative impact(s), the concept, and the game play.

2) Scaling (1500-2000 words): Describe how you plan to scale your game **using the below outline as subheadings**.

a) Population: Who are your intended players?

b) Type: What type of game will it be?

- Will this game be tabletop, larp, or freeform?
- Is your game intended to be Leisure Transformational, Therapeutic, or Educational? Why?

- How many sessions (one-shot or campaign) and how long will each game session be, i.e., 4 hours, 3 days, etc.?

c) Facilitation: How many facilitators will you need? How will runtime game mastering occur? Are external responsible parties required, i.e. teachers or counselors?

d) Logistics: What are the logistical details necessary for the game to be successfully implemented?

- **Size:** How big will your player base be?
- **Space:** In which space(s) will the group play?
- **Time:** How long will the game session(s) take? How many game sessions will there be, i.e. single session, multiple sessions, and/or multiple days per session?
- **Atmosphere:** What atmosphere will you create through location, sound design, scenography, and other factors?
- **Tools:** What tools will be needed for the game to be implemented, including costumes, props, etc.?
- **Preparation:** What preparations are needed to ensure smooth implementation:
 - What will you provide (or not provide) in terms of food, restroom facilities, sleeping arrangements?
 - What preparations do you and any other facilitators need to make before play can begin?
 - How will cleanup occur?
 - What do players need to do to prepare before the game?
- **Creation:** Who is responsible for the creation of the fiction?
 - How will worldbuilding and character creation occur?
 - To what degree can player choices impact the game during runtime, i.e. what is their degree of agency?

e) Game Activities: Expand upon your original idea with additional activities and/or modules.

- What specific activities or modules will you prepare?
- What intended transformational impacts and/or learning objectives do these activities have? Be specific.

f) Interaction: How will players interface with the others?

- How will players interact with each other during the game?
- How will players establish character relations?
- How will they interact with the facilitators during the game?
- How will they interact with the game world and/or environment? Be specific.

g) Framing: How will you frame the game according to your desired transformative impacts and/or learning objectives?

- What workshops will you include and how will they contribute to the desired transformative impacts?
- How will debriefing take place?
- What other post-game processing activities do you have planned? Be specific.

h) Support: What can players expect in terms of support throughout the process?

- How will players be instructed to support one another before, during, and after play?
- What safety mechanics and/or techniques will you include?
- How will facilitators support players before, during, and after play? If relevant, include the activities of any additional responsible parties who will support learning and emotional well-being, i.e. teachers, counselors, etc.

i) Communication: How will facilitators communicate with players and vice versa throughout the process?

- How will you promote this game and recruit players?
- How will players contact you before, during, and after the game session(s)? How often will you be available for contact?
- How often will you contact them?

j) Documentation: Will you record what occurs before, during, and after the game?

- How will you document the game, if at all?
- How will you obtain consent for documentation?
- In what contexts or publication venues will documentation be used? Be specific.

3) Game Design Document: As an Appendix, include your Game Design Document from Transformative Game Design 1.

Unit 6: Player Immersion, Motivation and Relationship Dynamics

Overview: Player Immersion, Motivation, and Relationship to Character



Unit 6 Overview

In Unit 6, we will explore theories of immersion, motivation, and player relationship to character from the role-playing game discourse. Role-playing, like many other forms of embodied play, can be considered an altered state of consciousness. While it shares commonalities with other modalities such as acting, improv, etc., the role-playing game activity is unique as a phenomenological state due to the many activities, thought processes, and emotions players juggle during play.

Thus, although much can be learned about these states by studying adjacent states of consciousness, reading theory in the role-playing game discourse can provide exceptional insight into the complexities of the play experience, as well as how various game activities can differ in terms of what types of attention they require. i.e. *immersion*. From this perspective, players can also learn to articulate and express their *creative agendas*, meaning the types of role-playing activities they most prefer. These creative agendas are indicative of *motivation*, i.e. what motivates players to seek out certain types of activities or groups.

Although these concepts have overlap, please note that while immersion is a neutral state, describing "what happens" when a player is engaged in an attentive state on a facet of the game, motivation is a play preference, i.e. a facet of the game that players find particularly engaging.

Finally, analyzing these states give us insight into the relationship between players and their characters -- not only the relative similarities and differences between self-concept and character-concept, but also degree of perceived closeness or distance to the character to one's daily self during play.

While this Unit focuses mostly on the theoretical side of play experience, consider the ramifications these concepts have on design and implementation. Also, reflect upon your own experiences of play and facilitation with regard to these theories. How would you self-define if using this terminology to describe your engagement?

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Immersion
- Motivation
- Relationship to Character

* * *

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. 2018. "Immersion and Shared Imagination in Role-Playing Games." In *Role-Playing Game Studies: Transmedia Foundations*, edited by José P. Zagal and Sebastian Deterding, 379-394. 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.

Instructions for Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design

For this assignment, you will revise this plan based on feedback and expand your analysis based on concepts in the course in **Major Assignment 2: Scaling Transformative Game Design**. Please review the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2: Scaling Transformative Game Design](#).

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.

Playtest 3: Implementing a Game for Transformative Impacts

Each participant will facilitate a game from the list for their playtest group, guiding the group through all the stages. The facilitator should hack the game, identifying a specific transformative impact and/or learning objective they want to emphasize. The facilitator should add or change existing workshops and debriefs to focus upon the desired transformative impact. Make sure to emphasize any established safety practices, including guidelines and mechanics.

The facilitator can also hack the time estimates in the game according to the following guidelines:

Each playtest should last no longer than 2 hours: 45 min-1.5 hours for workshop, play, and debriefing (depending on the game), and 15-30 minutes on player feedback on facilitation/implementation.

Thus, Playtest 3 should **last no longer than 4 hours**, not including breaks, i.e. 2 students will be able to facilitate during this session.

Discussion 8: Implementation Team Feedback Brainstorm

For this discussion, we will be doing an asynchronous role-playing exercise. Each of you will play specialists on a design team working on this scaled project. Even if the project is smaller scale than would normally necessitate these roles, consider what expertise this character would contribute to the team.

1) Attach your **Major Assignment 1: Scaling Implementation Plan**.

2) Respond to the work of two (2) of your peers **as one of the following roles each (two different roles total)** as if you are giving feedback on a design proposal from your project leader. Try to give feedback from the perspective of a role no one else has embodied for that particular project. Give at least five (5) sentences of feedback, including your recommendations and at least one (1) question. The roles are:

- Physical Logistics Specialist
- Communication Specialist
- Safety Specialist
- Accessibility Specialist
- Cultural Consultant
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist
- Education Specialist
- Mental Health Professional
- Workshop Designer
- Documentation Lead

Then, de-role, **separating the next question with three asterisks (* * *)**.

3) Write a brief reflection about your experience playing that role on a team.

- A. Did you find it relatable? Why or why not?
- B. Did you find it illuminating? Why or why not?
- C. Do you think this role might be helpful to you when implementing your scaled project? Why or why not?

Discussion 9: Player Immersion and Motivation

Review Sarah Lynne Bowman's "Immersion and Shared Imagination in Role-Playing Games." Note that while we have covered similar content in previous classes, this chapter presents more comprehensive information on various psychological states of immersion.

Then, read **two (2) articles** from the Motivation section of the Recommended Materials.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Out of each of the types of immersion described in Bowman's article, which one(s) do you think you are designing for in your game? Give specific examples.
2. In 3-4 sentences each, describe each article on Motivation that you read. Note that some content may be similar between articles; if so, find a new angle to discuss each article.
3. Choose one (1) motivation from either article that you find **most** relatable. Provide an example of a game **you have enjoyed** in which you played with this specific creative agenda/motivation, whether consciously or unconsciously. What was pleasurable about that experience? Be specific.
4. Choose one (1) motivation from either article that you find **least** relatable. Provide an example of a game **you did not enjoy** in which you played with this specific creative agenda/motivation, whether consciously or unconsciously. What was unpleasant about that experience? Be specific.
5. When scaling your game, how might you approach handling players who have different preferences in terms of creative agendas/motivations? Be specific.

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

Reflection Journal 5: Relationship to Character and You

Choose **two (2) items** to read or watch under the *Identity, Players, and Characters* section of the Recommended Materials.

Then, answer the following questions:

1. For each article:
 - A. Provide a 3-4 sentence summary of the key ideas in the text.
2. Did any ideas within this text resonate with your own experiences playing games, whether role-playing or otherwise?
 - A. If so, please describe in detail.
 - B. If not, why?
3. Describe an aspect of your own identity as you understand it that you have explored through play, whether in this class or in other play experiences.
 - A. Has this exploration led to change in your identity or self-concept over time? If so, please describe. If not, why not?
 - B. If you have never explored identity through play, why not?

4. How might a deeper understanding of identity and play influence your facilitation of role-playing games? Be specific.

Unit 7: Player Skills and Interpersonal Relationship Dynamics

Overview: Player Skills and Interpersonal Relationship Dynamics



Unit 7 Overview

In Unit 7, we will discuss the **labor** involved in play, not only in implementation, but specifically on the part of players. Participation in role-playing games is not a passive activity. As we have explored, it involves a certain degree of attention in order to achieve immersion. It also often involves other forms of labor, be it physical, emotional, intellectual, or professional.

In specific, we will discuss **practical player skills**, in particular: **steering**, **working with plot**, **spotlighting**, and **playing to lift**.

Steering is a method by which players make choices off-game that impact their actions within the game. We will read the original steering theory, then consider it with regard to Jonaya Kemper's concept of *liberatory steering* as a transformational process. Steering is also an important tool for implementation, as it helps facilitators guide the game toward intended impacts.

Players can **work with plot** in a variety of ways that can move the game forward, slow it down, or stall it. Players can develop specific skills at working with plot, as well as involving other players, like volleying a ball back and forth as we will learn from Josefin Westborg's article.

Spotlighting is a method of drawing attention through play, as well as passing that attention to other people. Players have different levels of confidence and skill at spotlighting; it is important to practice as players and especially as an active facilitator.

Playing to lift is a method of providing support for other participants. It can involve encouragement off-game or in-game, spotlighting in terms of giving their character

moments to shine, etc. Playing to lift emphasizes not just one playstyle with regard to one's personal experience, but emphasizes the interconnectivity between players within a system of play.

Along these lines, we will also discuss various factors pertaining to **interpersonal relationship dynamics**, both within and outside of role-playing games. We will explore role-playing games as a fundamentally *relational* activity. Most role-playing games involve extensive interaction between characters; even if the player is engaging alone, they are relating to some aspect of the game, the character, the environment, etc. Due to the high degree of surrender involved in creative play, role-playing games invite a certain degree of *intimacy* between facilitators, players, characters, and the game. Understanding relationship dynamics within games can help us steer toward transformative impacts both as players and as facilitators.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Play as labor
- Steering
- Working with plot
- Spotlighting
- Playing to lift
- Interpersonal Relationship Dynamics
- Intimacy

* * *

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:

- Baird, Josephine, Sarah Lynne Bowman, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas. 2022. "Liminal Intimacy: Role-playing Games as Catalysts for Interpersonal Growth and Relating." In *The Magic of Games*, edited by Nikolaus Koenig, Natalie Denk, Alexander Pfeiffer, and Thomas Wernbacher, 169-171. Edition Donau-Universität Krems.
- Montola, Markus, Jaakko Stenros, and Eleanor Saitta. 2015. "The Art of Steering: Bringing the Player and the Character Back Together." In *The Knudepunkt 2015 Companion Book*, edited by Charles Bo Nielsen, 94-105. Copenhagen, Denmark: Rollespilsakademiet.
- Vejdemo, Susanne. 2018. "Play to Lift, Not Just to Lose." Nordiclarp, February 21.

- Westborg, Josefin, and Carl Nordblom. 2017. "Do You Want to Play Ball? How to Be a Good Team Player (in a Single-Team Player vs. Player Game)." In *Once Upon a Nordic Larp... Twenty Years of Playing Stories*, edited by Martine Svanevik, Linn Carin Andreassen, Simon Brind, Elin Nilsen, and Grethe Sofie Bulterud Strand, 130-140. Oslo, Norway: Knutepunkt.

Materials to review:

- Kemper, Jonaya. 2020. "Wyrding the Self." In *What Do We Do When We Play?*, edited by Eleanor Saitta, Johanna Koljonen, Jukka Särkijärvi, Anne Serup Grove, Pauliina Männistö, and Mia Makkonen. Helsinki, Finland: Solmukohta.

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: Player Skills

Read Josefin Westborg and Carl Nordblom's "Do You Want to Play Ball? How to Be a Good Team Player (in a Single-Team Player vs. Player Game)" and Markus Montola, Jaakko Stenros, and Eleanor Saitta's "The Art of Steering: Bringing the Player and the Character Back Together."

Then, choose **one (1) item** to examine from **each** of the following categories from the Recommended Materials for a **total of two (2) items**: Play as Labor and Steering for Growth.

Finally, review the description of *liberatory steering* from Jonaya Kemper's "Wyrding the Self."

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. In 1-2 sentences, describe how labor is discussed in the article you read. What sort of labor do you think you might be asking players to perform in your current game design? Be specific.
2. Choose one (1) skill discussed in Westborg and Nordblom that you would like to develop as a player. Be specific.
 - A. How might developing this skill be useful in other areas of your life, if at all?
 - B. If not, why not?
3. In 1-2 sentences, describe your understanding of steering based upon Montola, Stenros, and Saitta's article. Then, give a 1-2 sentence definition of liberatory steering. Can you think of an example of a role-playing situation in which you have steered as a player, whether in these courses or other environments?
 - A. If so, please describe.
 - B. If not, why not?
4. In 3-4 sentences, describe the play account from the article you read under Steering for Growth.
 - A. From what you can discern, how did the author(s) or other players engage in steering?
 - B. Based on the article, did the author(s) or other players experience personal growth as a result of this play experience? Why or why not?

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

Reflection Journal 6: Interpersonal Relationship Dynamics, Play, and You

Read Susanne Vejdemo's "Play to Lift, Not Just to Lose" and Josephine Baird, Sarah Lynne Bowman, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas' "Liminal Intimacy: Role-playing Games as Catalysts for Interpersonal Growth and Relating."

Choose **one (1) item** to examine under the Role-playing and Relationships section of the Recommended Materials.

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Can you think of a role-playing experience in which you played to lift another player?
 - A. If so, please describe.
 - B. If not, consider a hypothetical role-playing situation and describe.
2. Describe one (1) of the theories of interpersonal relating described in the Baird, Bowman, and Hugaas article. How might this theory help explain a play experience you have had in the past? Be specific.
 - A. If you have no personal experience, consider a hypothetical role-playing situation and describe.
3. Describe in 3-4 sentences the main concepts in the item you examined under Role-playing and Relationships.
 - A. How might these concepts inform your play practices? Be specific.
 - B. How might these concepts inform your design practices? Be specific.
 - C. How might these concepts inform your implementation practices? Be specific.

Submission of First Complete Draft of Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design

For Major Assignment 2, you will revise your [Major Assignment 1: Scaling Implementation Plan](#) according to feedback from your peers and your instructors.

You will then write an academic paper that describes your scaled version of your game, applies concepts from the course, and analyzes the process of integrating feedback. For more information, read [Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design](#).

Peer Review Instructions for Major Assignment 2

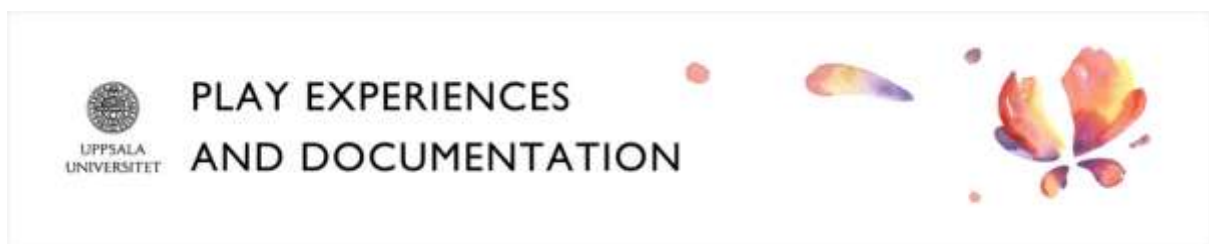
In this class, you will be peer reviewing the work of the members of your playtest group. For peer review, read the paper, answer the following questions, and send them to your peers.

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 cover letter 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 8: Play Experiences and Documentation

Overview: Player Experiences and Documentation



Unit 8 Overview

In Unit 8, we will examine accounts of player experience and documentation. Here, our emphasis is not on documentation that does not just cover the design or intent of the game, but also the experiences of actual play. These accounts can be written from a first- or third-person perspective, meaning we are learning about what occurred during

implementation through the perspective of the author through first-hand or third-hand experience.

The common joke in role-playing communities, "No plot survives contact with the players" is particularly apt here. When reading these accounts, consider how much of the play experience described is influenced by a) the game design, b) implementation strategies, or c) player impetus/choice. Some accounts might emphasize how well the design and implementation led toward the intended goals of the game, whereas others may emphasize moments where players "hacked the larp" or took it in an unexpected direction. Either way, play accounts can be critical as sites from which not only to learn practices to encourage vs. avoid, but also the nature of the role-playing experience itself.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Play documentation
- Learning from 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 11: Learning from Play Experiences

Choose **three (3) items** to examine from **three (3) different content creators** about **three (3) different games** from the Recommended Materials for this Unit.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

For **each item**, answer the following:

1. In 3-4 sentences, detail the name of the game, its basic design, and the play experience described.
 - A. Describe **one (1) positive play experience** described in the item, if applicable.
 - B. Describe **one (1) critique of the play experience** described in the item, if applicable.
2. Did you find any of these reflections relatable? Why or why not?
3. What did you learn from this item that might help you in your design and implementation practice? Be specific.

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

Submission of Peer Reviews: 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.

comments, please provide a thorough and persuasive explanation why.

Reflection Journal 7: Play Documentation and You

Consider the following post-game processing activities from Bowman and Hugaas' "Transformative Role-play: Design, Implementation, and Integration":

- Journaling
- Studio art
- Performance art
- Game design
- Fiction writing
- Storytelling
- Documentation for private use
- Documentation for public consumption
- Theorizing
- Researching

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Outside of this course's assignments, have you ever engaged in the one (1) or more of the above activities after a role-playing experience?
 - A. If so, **describe one (1) example** at length, including the circumstances leading up to the practice. How did you proceed with this practice after play? Was what you created for an external audience? Was this process helpful for you? Why or why not?
 - B. If not, **consider one (1) practice** that might help you process your experiences in the future. How would you proceed with this practice? Would it be created for an external audience? Why might this process be helpful for you?
2. What is your strongest takeaway from analyzing play documentation in this Unit? Be specific.

3. Briefly describe your experience facilitating your game for transformative impacts in this class.
 - A. Did the experiment seem to "work?" If so, in what ways?
 - B. If not, why not?
 - C. What feedback did you receive about your facilitation?
4. Briefly describe your experience playtesting other games for transformative impacts facilitated by your peers in this class.
 1. Did the experiments seem to "work?" If so, in what ways?
 2. If not, why not?
 3. What feedback did you give to your peers about their facilitation?
5. What takeaways do you have from the facilitation experience as a whole? Be specific.

Unit 9: Conflict and Implementation

Overview: Conflict and Implementation



Unit 9 Overview

In Unit 9, we will discuss various topics related to conflict and role-playing game implementation. As usual, we will discuss ways in which players can explore conflict within games as content, but also conflicts that can occur as a result of issues with implementation and play.

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Accessibility
- Conflict Resolution/Transformation
- Class and Capitalism
- Gender and Sexuality

- Power and Oppression
- Law

* * *

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. 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.
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Discussion 12: Conflict and Implementation

Choose **one (1) item** to examine from each of the following categories from the Recommended Materials list for a total of **three (3) items**: Conflict Resolution/Transformation; Gender and Sexuality; and Power and Oppression.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. For each item:
 - A. Describe the item in 3-4 sentences. What sorts of conflicts are explored in this article, whether in-game or off-game? Be specific.
 - B. Describe a takeaway from this item. In your opinion, what implications might this takeaway have for implementation practice? Be specific.
2. What surprised or intrigued you from these materials? Be specific.

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

Reflection Journal 8: Implementation, Conflict, and You

Choose **one (1) item** to examine from each of the following categories from the Recommended Materials list for a total of **three (3) items**: Accessibility; Class and Capitalism; and Law.

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. For each item:
 - A. Describe the item in 3-4 sentences. What sorts of conflicts are explored in this article, whether in-game or off-game? Be specific.
 - B. Describe a takeaway from this item. In your opinion, what implications might this takeaway have for implementation practice? Be specific.
2. Did you find any of the contents of these items relatable? Why or why not?

Unit 10: Implementing Transformative Game Design

Overview: Implementing Transformative Game Design



Unit 10 Overview

Welcome to our last unit on your reflections and analysis of the transformative game implementation practices. In this unit, you will reflect upon the course as a whole, as well as your implementation design. You will also submit your Final Draft of Major Assignment 2.

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.
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- 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 9: Implementing Transformative Game Design 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 facilitator 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. If you plan to proceed with Cultivating Transformational Communities, what are you most hoping to learn?
7. Any other comments?

Submission of Final Draft of Major Assignment 2: Implementing Transformative Game Design

For your final draft of Major Assignment 2, you will revise your [Major Assignment 1: Scaling Implementation Plan](#) according to recommendations from your peers in [Discussion 8: Implementation Team Feedback Brainstorm](#), as well as feedback from your instructors. You will submit this paper for peer review and detail recommendations from your peers, revising accordingly.

In addition to your revised Implementation plan, you will add components of academic analysis, integrating and citing concepts from the Implementation Units (1-5) and Play Units (6-7) of the class with regard to your design choices. You will submit a complete first draft for peer feedback, then revise your assignment based upon these comments for your final submission at the end of the course. Your word limit is 2600-3700, **not including** subject headings or Appendices.

Overall, your choices should reflect consideration of impacts on the players in each section, including not only desired transformative impacts, but also any consequences your choices might have on players. Cite all sources in [Chicago Author-Date](#) or another consistent citation style.

Use separate section headings for each of the below required sections and adhere to the word limits as closely as possible for full credit. You may use contents from your

revised Game Design Document. Use complete sentences and paragraph form, but be brief and succinct. Some categories will need more description than others.

Note that the emphasis for this paper is design of the **implementation strategy**, not the game components. While you can add a couple of sentences about what sorts of additions you wish to make to the game's structure, they should not be the focus of the paper.

Total word limit for Major Assignment 2: 2600-3700. Word limits **do not** include subject headings or Appendices.

1) Game Design (200-300 words): Describe your original game design. Focus only on details necessary to understand the desired transformative impact(s), the concept, and the game play.

2) Scaling (1500-2000 words): Describe how you plan to scale your game **using the below outline as subheadings**. Try to limit your answers to one sentence per question if possible.

a) Population: Who are your intended players?

b) Type: What type of game will it be?

- Will this game be tabletop, larp, or freeform?
- Is your game intended to be Leisure Transformational, Therapeutic, or Educational? Why?
- How many sessions (one-shot or campaign) and how long will each game session be, i.e., 4 hours, 3 days, etc.?

c) Facilitation: How many facilitators will you need? How will runtime game mastering occur? Are external responsible parties required, i.e. teachers or counselors?

d) Logistics: What are the logistical details necessary for the game to be successfully implemented?

- **Size:** How big will your player base be?
- **Space:** In which space(s) will the group play?
- **Time:** How long will the game session(s) take? How many game sessions will there be, i.e. single session, multiple sessions, and/or multiple days per session?
- **Atmosphere:** What atmosphere will you create through location, sound design, scenography, and other factors?

- **Tools:** What tools will be needed for the game to be implemented, including costumes, props, etc.?
- **Preparation:** What preparations are needed to ensure smooth implementation:
 - What will you provide (or not provide) in terms of food, restroom facilities, sleeping arrangements?
 - What preparations do you and any other facilitators need to make before play can begin?
 - How will cleanup occur?
 - What do players need to do to prepare before the game?
- **Creation:** Who is responsible for the creation of the fiction?
 - How will worldbuilding and character creation occur?
 - To what degree can player choices impact the game during runtime, i.e. what is their degree of agency?

e) Game Activities: Expand upon your original idea with additional activities and/or modules.

- What specific activities or modules will you prepare?
- What intended transformational impacts and/or learning objectives do these activities have? Be specific.

f) Interaction: How will players interface with the others?

- How will players interact with each other during game?
- How will players establish character relations?
- How will they interact with the facilitators during game?
- How will they interact with the game world and/or environment? Be specific.

g) Framing: How will you frame the game according to your desired transformative impacts and/or learning objectives?

- What workshops will you include and how will they contribute to the desired transformative impacts?
- How will debriefing take place?
- What other post-game processing activities do you have planned? Be specific.

h) Support: What can players expect in terms of support throughout the process?

- How will players be instructed to support one another before, during, and after play?
- What safety mechanics and/or techniques will you include?
- How will facilitators support players before, during, and after play? If relevant, include the activities of any additional responsible parties who will support learning and emotional well-being, i.e. teachers, counselors, etc.
- How will you address accessibility needs?

i) Communication: How will facilitators communicate with players and vice versa throughout the process?

- How will you promote this game and recruit players?
- How will players contact you before, during, and after the game session(s)? How often will you be available for contact?
- How often will you contact them?

j) Documentation: How will you record what occurs at before, during, and after the game?

- How will you document the game, if at all?
- How will you obtain consent for documentation?
- In what contexts or publication venues will documentation be used? Be specific.

3) Implementation and Play Concepts (500-750 words): Describe the implementation choices you made and justify why you made them. Make sure to include content from the original sources in each paragraph, cited in-text and in References in Chicago Author-Date or another consistent style of your choice. Each paragraph should apply one (1) concept for a total of four (4) paragraphs maximum:

a) Two (2) separate concepts from different sources and content creators from the Implementation Units (1-5). These concepts can be theoretical or practical, but make sure you tie them concretely to specific choices you made.

b) Two (2) separate concepts from different sources and content creators from the Player Experience Units (6-7). These concepts can be theoretical or practical, but make sure you tie them concretely to specific choices you made.

4) Feedback (300-450 words): Discuss the feedback process, including recommendations from your peers in the Brainstorm session and comments your instructors in their grading feedback when available. Describe any design decisions you made based on this feedback. If you did not revise according to certain feedback, justify why.

5) Conclusion (100-200 words): Analyze the design of implementation process, considering how concepts you explored in this class might impact your implementation choices in the future.

6) Appendix I: Game Design Document: As an Appendix, include your Game Design Document from Transformative Game Design 1.

7) Appendix II: Cover Letter: You must integrate the feedback from your peer reviews and instructor in your Final Draft of Major Assignment 2. You will include a cover letter that addresses each of their recommendations and how you integrated them as Appendix II. If you have reasons for not integrating the comments, please provide a thorough and persuasive explanation why.