

Cultivating Transformative Communities

Course material is also available in the form of an online course on the EDGE website
<https://erasmusedge.eu/>

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

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Course information

Welcome! Start Here for Important Information from Your Instructors



Hello everybody and welcome to the course!

Dear Game Design Students,

Welcome to Cultivating Transformational Communities! We are delighted that you are joining us on this journey into understanding how to transform conflict and create safer containers for transformative role-playing games. This course explores foundational concepts and practices to consider when building the communities that surround play.

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.

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

Assignment Overview

This course is taught mostly **asynchronously**, meaning that your course materials and the majority of your interactions will take place in this learning management system, Studium. 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 Course Calendar](#) and plan your time accordingly.

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 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 two (2) synchronous**

meetings with your group in order to take part in the necessary activities of the course, as playtesting and giving feedback to each of your group members are essential to Research Through Design. 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 **role-playing scenarios about crisis management** and then **designing one (1) autobiographical nanogame** on a subject of your choice with a transformative goal in mind. A nanogame is a short role-playing game with condensed instructions that can be played in a short amount of time, in this case one that can be played over video conferencing. Your game should not exceed 45 minutes to play, with an additional 15 minutes for feedback, for a total of **1 hour maximum per playtest**. 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 nanogame should be designed 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 (2) Major Assignments: one (1) Game Design Document** and **one (1) academic 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 -- Transformative Game Design Proposal:** You will write a short paper about your transformative game design project.
- **Game Design Document and Playtest Plan:** These documents should contain all the instructions for your nanogame that facilitators and participants need to play, as well as your plans for playtesting and receiving feedback.
- **Major Assignment 2 -- Transformative Game Design:** You will compose an academic article using Research Through Design as a method based upon your process of designing, playtesting, and analyzing the results of your nanogame. 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 -- Transformative Game Design:** You will read the first complete draft of Major Assignment 2 for one to three (1-3) of your peers in your group and respond to the required feedback questions to help them improve their work. Peer review is essential to the examination process in academic work.
 - For consideration for a grade of **Pass** on your own Major Assignment 2, you must complete one (1) peer review for a member of your group.
 - For consideration for a grade of **Pass with Distinction** on your own Major Assignment 2, you may complete peer reviews for *all* members of your group (2 reviews for a group of 3 including yourself; 3 reviews for a group of 4).

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. You will have time in this course set aside for visits, but please schedule early to avoid delays at the end of the course period.

Disabilities

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

Plagiarism

The use of AI is strictly prohibited in this class and is considered plagiarism. You must write your and assignments posts in your own words based on your reflection on the course materials. You should use the Chicago Author-Date citations provided in the course materials whenever possible. You should not need to include additional

sources, but if you do, you must construct your citations yourself rather than relying on machine technology.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bmpVGkwyKQ>

Contacting Your Instructors

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

Orientation Quiz

The course is divided into ten (10) Units, which you will find listed under the Modules tab on the left-hand side of Studium. 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. Curricular materials have been added by members of the Erasmus+ EDGE Cooperation Partnership. It has been revised with feedback from Kaya Toft Thejls.

Graphic design by Liliia Chorna.

Course Calendar

Cultivating Transformative Communities: Course Schedule

- For detailed requirements for assignments, see the [Schedule & Instructions link](#).
- **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 comment upon your posts.
- Discussions and Journals marked as **Optional for Pass** are recommended to skip if you want to go for a **Pass** instead of a **Pass with Distinction**. You will still be required to examine the homework materials leading up to those assignments.

- On some days, students have the choice of either attending a **synchronous ROCKET session on Zoom** (highly recommended), or completing the written homework for that day.

Unit	Requirements
Week 1	
Unit 1	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. Homework: - Watch Caro Murphy's "Creating Transformative Communities" and Diana J. Leonard's "Promoting Healthy Communities in Larp." - Read Lizzie Stark's "Building Larp Communities: Social Engineering for Good" and Laura Wood's "Why Larp Community Matters and How We Can Improve It." - Read Bowman's "Interactional Dynamics in Role-Playing Games" Optional: Read Baird and Bowman's "The Transformative Potential of Immersive Experiences Within Role-playing Communities."
Unit 1	Activities: - Complete Discussion 1: Leveling Up Role-playing Communities by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Watch (0:33:00 - 01:05:00) from Angie Bandhosingh's "Roleplaying with Kids: Creating Transformative Experiences for Children Under 12." - Watch Bowman's "Safety in Role playing Games Part V: Cultivating Safer Communities." - Read Kim's "Writing an Autobiographical Game." - If needed, review Bowman's "Safety in Role playing Games Part I."
Unit 1 and 2	Activities: - Complete Reflection Journal 1: Safety, Autobiographical Games, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - In preparation for Playtest 1, familiarize yourself with the "Crisis Management Workshop from Living Games 2016." Read Page 7 carefully before the session for best practices. - Read Nilsen's "High on Hell," Pedersen's "Tears and the New Norm," Pedersen's "Your Larp's Only As Safe As its Safety Culture," and Bowman's "A Matter of Trust: Larp and Consent Culture." Content advisory for "High on Hell": This article includes mentions and descriptions of addiction, incarceration, violence, sexualized violence, dehumanization, verbal and

	physical abuse, and indoctrination. Please contact your instructor if you need any alternative assignment. Choose one (1) article to read from the Consent category.
Week 2	
Unit 2	Activities: - Complete Discussion 2: Cultures of Hardcore, Consent, and Safety by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read from the beginning of Bowman, Hugaas, and Sekulic's "Chapter 5" to the end of section "5.3 Psychological risks in implementation" in <i>Implementing</i> (209-222). Optional: Read Bowman and Hugaas' "Philosophies of Psychological Safety in Role-playing Games."
Unit 2	Activities: - Complete Playtest 1: Crisis Management Scenarios by 11:59pm in your time zone. - Schedule Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games. Do not playtest your autobiographical game until after you have completed Major Assignment 1 Homework: - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. - Read the Diversity and Conflict section. - Read Vanek's "Behind the Larp Census: 29.751 Larpers Can't (All) Be Wrong." - Read Burton, Trammell, and Jones' "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Role-playing Games."
Unit 2	Activities: - Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. - Complete Reflection Journal A: Diversity, Conflict, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. - Read Instructions for Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document. Homework: - Choose three (3) items that you have not yet read for this course from three (3) of the following categories: Triggers, Activation, and Emotional Flooding; Bleed; Alibi; and Post-Game Emotional Reactions. - Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Week 3	
Unit 2 and 3	Activities: Complete Discussion 3: Emotional Intensity and Role-playing Games.

	Homework: • Read Torner's "Just (the Institution of Computer) Game Studies." • Choose one (1) item from different content creators (unless two are specified) to examine under the following categories for a total of two (2) items: Analog Role-playing Game Academics and Academia and Leisure Communities • Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 3	Activities: • Optional for Pass: Complete Discussion 4: Analog Role-playing Game Studies by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. ◦ Watch Bowman's "Introduction to Conflict Transformation." ◦ Examine all sections of the Introduction to Conflict Transformation module. • Make an appointment at the Language Workshop if you need extra assistance with your writing. • Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 3 and 4	Activities: • Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. ◦ Complete Discussion A: Introduce Yourself and Connect by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose one (1) of the following: ◦ Watch Diakolambrianou and Bowman's "Groups: Processes, Dynamics, Facilitation and Creativity" or ◦ Review section "3.8: Theories of Interaction" from Chapter 3 by Diakolambrianou et al. of <i>Transformative Role-playing Game Design</i>. • Optional: Read Leonard and Arango's "The Dynamic Life Cycle of Live Action Role-play Communities." • Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Week 4	
Unit 4	Activities: • Complete Discussion 5: Group Work, Listening, and Feedback by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Read from the beginning of Bowman, Hugaas, and Sekulic's "Chapter 5" section "5.6 Pre-game communication and workshops" to the end of section "5.8 After the game" in <i>Implementing</i> (228-236).

	• Make an appointment at the Language Workshop if you need extra assistance with your writing. • Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 4	Activities: • Complete appointment with the Language Workshop (if needed). Homework: • Work on Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document.
Unit 4	Activities: • Submit Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document by 11:59pm in your time zone. • Read Instructions for Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities. Homework: • Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. ◦ Examine all sections from the Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs module. ◦ Examine all sections from the Nonviolent Communication and "I" Statements modules. • Read Toft and Harrer's "Design Bleed: A Standpoint Methodology for Game Design."
Week 5	
Unit 4 and 5	Activities: • Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. ◦ Complete Discussion B: Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Watch Ane Marie Anderson and Martin Nielsen's "Pillars and Parasites." • Read Rafael Boccamazzo's "Lessons Learned from Both Sides of Games" and Teos Abadía's "The Community Rises at the D&D Creator Summit." <i>Content Advisory for Boccamazzo:</i> Discussion of harassment, threats, and mental health challenges. Let the instructor know if you need an alternative assignment • Review Bowman's "Social Conflict in Role-playing Communities: An Exploratory Qualitative Study." • Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 5	Activities: • Choose one (1) of the following:

	- Attend ROCKET Session 1 on Zoom from 11:30 am–1:30 pm CEST, Zoom link under Modules, or - Complete Reflection Journal 2: Community Toxicity, Dysfunction, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read until the end of Bowman, Hugaas, and Sekulic's "Chapter 5" starting with section "5.10 Conflicts and implementing RPGs" (241-245). Optional: Watch Ford's "Mind the Gap: Barriers to Larping for People from Backgrounds of Structural Poverty." - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 5 and 6	Activities: - Complete Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games. - Schedule Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games (if needed). - Schedule appointment with the Language Workshop (if needed). Homework: - Choose three (3) items to examine from different content creators in the following categories under Recommended Materials for a total of three (3) articles: Social Status/Appearance; Race/Ethnicity; and Gender/Sexuality. Optional: Read Williams, Kirschner, Mizer, and Deterding's "12. Sociology and Role-playing Games." - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Week 6	
Unit 6	Activities: - Complete Discussion 6: Social Identities and Conflicts in RPG Communities by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 6	Activities: - Complete appointment with the Language Workshop (if needed). Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.
Unit 6	Activities: - Complete Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games (if needed). Homework: - Work on Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities.

Week 7	
Unit 6	Activities: • Submit First Draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities by 11:59pm in your time zone. • Read Peer Review Instructions for Major Assignment 2. • Send First Complete Draft of Major Assignment 2 to your peers in your group by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. ◦ Examine all sections from the Conflict Styles module. ◦ Take the Elements Conflict Styles Assessment, reviewing the scores for your own reference. • Work on Peer reviews.
Unit 6 and 7	Activities: • Choose one (1) of the following: ◦ Attend ROCKET Session 2 on Zoom from 11:30 am–1:30 pm CEST, or Zoom link under Modules, or ◦ Log into the ROCKET Studium shell. ▪ Complete Discussion C: Conflict Styles by 11:59pm in your time zone. Activities: • Work on Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2, sending your feedback as soon as it's ready. Homework: • Read James Mendez Hodes' "Representation Tier List." • <i>Review:</i> Diana J. Leonard, Jovo Janjetovic, and Maximilian Usman's "Playing to Experience Marginalization: Benefits and Drawbacks of 'Dark Tourism' in Larp." • Optional: Choose one (1) item to examine from different content creators in the following categories for a total of two (2) items: Accessibility and Neurodiversity. • Optional: Read Axiel Cazeneuve's "The Paradox of Inclusivity." • Revise Major Assignment 2 according to peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 7	Activities: • Complete Reflection Journal 3: Representation, Inclusion, and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: • Choose one (1) item to examine from different content creators from the following three (3) categories for a total of three (3) items: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety. • Work on Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2, sending your feedback as soon as it's ready.

	Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Week 8	
Unit 8	Activities: - Complete Discussion 7: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety. Homework: - Read +Bowman, Hugaas, and Sekulic's "Chapter 5" section "5.5 Safer play" (222-228) and section "5.9 Safer community container setting (236-241). - Work on Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2, sending your feedback as soon as it's ready. - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 8	Activities: - Send 1-3 Peer Reviews: Major Assignment 2 to your peers if you have not already. - Also upload your reviews under the assignment link in Studium for grading Homework: - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 8	Activities: Optional for Pass: Complete Discussion D: Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception Checking by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Read the Living Games Conference 2018's "Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior" and "Internal Procedures." - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Week 9	
Unit 8	Activities: - Complete Reflection Journal 4: Codes of Conduct, Encouraged Behavior, and Internal Procedures by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: Log into the ROCKET shell in Studium. - Examine all materials under the Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception Checking module. Optional: Choose one (1) item to examine under Cultures of Care. Optional: Watch John Stavropoulos' "Innovating for Growth: Designing a Culture of Safety in Games."

	Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback.
Unit 8 and 9	Activities: Optional (but recommended): - Attend ROCKET Session 3 on Zoom from 11:30 am–12:30 pm CEST. - Complete appointment with the Language Workshop (if needed). Homework: - Choose one (1) item to examine from three (3) of the following cultures for a total of three (3) items: Russia and Belarus; Spain; Greece; North America; Switzerland and France; Singapore; the Arab World; and China. - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 9 and 10	Activities: - Complete Discussion 8: RPG Communities Around the World by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: - Make an appointment at the Language Workshop if you need extra assistance with your writing. - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback.
Week 10	
Unit 10	Activities: - Complete Reflection Journal 5: Transformational Communities and You by 11:59pm in your time zone. Homework: Optional: Choose one (1) podcast from the Backstory Podcast from the Recommended Materials list to examine. - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback.
Unit 10	Activities: - Complete appointment with the Language Workshop (if needed). Homework: - Revise Major Assignment 2 based on peer and instructor feedback when available.
Unit 10	Activities: Submit Final Draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities 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. Any changes will be announced in class and posted as a Studium Announcement.

Schedule & Instructions

Course Activities

All class sessions take place in Studium, with the exceptions of group playtest and feedback sessions, which transpire in a video conferencing software of your choice. Uppsala supports Zoom for student use.

All activities and homework assignments are **listed in the Course Calendar in sequential, chronological order. Modules** are also organized in sequential order. To find a specific assignment or due date scroll down or use CTRL-F and search.

This course integrates **asynchronous and synchronous virtual exchange activities** between multiple universities in a program called **ROCKET**. The asynchronous ROCKET activities are compulsory unless otherwise states. Synchronous ROCKET activities are usually given an alternative written assignment for students who cannot attend over Zoom (but synchronous sessions are highly recommended).

All activities are compulsory unless marked **Optional** in the Course Calendar. You will need to **plan 20 hours a week for all activities**, e.g., the equivalent of a 50% job, so please plan your schedule accordingly. We have done our best to weigh 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.

- Submit all deliverables in the **corresponding links in the Units under Modules**.
- You must **complete all requirements of assignments**, including replies to your peers, for full credit.
- **Optional assignments will be marked accordingly** in the Course Calendar. They enable you to achieve a Pass with Distinction instead of a Pass so you can make decisions about your workload.
- **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.

- All discussion posts require **replies to two peers**, which should be in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format, as described in the Unit instructions.
- Plagiarism and the use of generative AI for writing tasks is not permitted in any courses in the Transformative Game Design Master's and may result in disciplinary measures.

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 (see below). 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 45 days after the original due date. Re-exams requires that you apply to be made part of the assessment. Contact your instructor over email for approval to turn in any late work.

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 the two Major 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 or Complete for all other assignments (Discussions, Journals, and Game Design Document). **In this course, an overall grade of Pass on these assignments is 70% in the Assignments Weighted Total.**

Students must also take part in all playtests and provide one (1) peer review for a member of their playtest group, provided that member submits on time.

From Fall 2024: For the grade **Pass with Distinction**, students are required to achieve the grade Pass with Distinction on the two Major 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 or Complete for all other assignments (Discussions and Journals). **In this course, an overall grade of Pass with Distinction on these assignments is 85% in the Assignments Weighted Total.** A grade of Complete is also needed for the Game Design Document.

Students must also take part in all playtests and provide peer reviews for all members of their playtest group, provided the members submit on time. (2 reviews in groups of 3 total including the reviewer; 3 reviews in groups of 4 total).

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, as well as to learn to navigate the Learning Management System, Studium. 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 based upon an attached rubric.

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.

Rules for generative AI:

You may not use AI tools in this class. We would much rather read a post with imperfect spelling and grammar or structure than a post that was constructed largely by a computer. An exception is spelling/grammar checker in Google Docs or Word.

See the Department Standards for the general rules for using generative AI.

Assessments & Deliverables

Deliverables:

- **Discussion Boards Assignments:** You are expected to participate in each discussion assignment, including your initial posts and posts to the required number of peers throughout the week in Ask a Question, Answer a Question format.
- **Reflection Journal Assignments:** You are also expected to complete Reflection Journals at the end of each Unit. Note that only your instructors and you can see your journals.

- **Zoom ROCKET sessions:** On certain days, you have the option to join two-hour Zoom ROCKET sessions on conflict transformation instead of submitting the written work for that day. You are still expected to review that days' course materials.
- **Major Assignment 1 -- Autobiographical Game Design Document:** This document should contain all the instructions for your nano-game that facilitators and participants need to play, as well as your plans for playtesting and receiving feedback. Please read the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 1](#) for more details.
- **Major Assignment 2 -- Cultivating Transformational Communities:** In this paper, you will describe and analyze your Autobiographical Nano-game Design, applying relevant concepts from the course. Please read the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2](#) for more details.
- **Peer Review -- Major Assignment 2:** You will read the first complete draft of Major Assignment 3 for 1-3 of your peers in your group and respond to the required feedback questions to help them improve their work.

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

Policy on Generative AI

Introduction – No use of generative AI (GAI) is permitted in this course. The use of GAI is considered a breach of academic honesty with the same penalties as plagiarism.

Rationale – Engaging with this course is primarily about your intellectual, emotional, and creative growth. Work generated by AI does not reflect your growth, nor does it prepare you for the critical thinking and communication skills required in the working world or as an engaged community member.

Your job as a student is to engage with course materials, develop your critical thinking skills, create games from your own imagination, personally reflect on the content from your unique perspective, and articulate your own thoughts through writing and presentation skills, cite credible scholarly sources where appropriate.

My job is to assess how well you have performed these tasks. I am interested and enthusiastic about hearing your unique perspective, not the “right answer.” The answers GAI provides are often highly inaccurate and shallow. Furthermore, they can contain ethically problematic statements that run counter to meeting our learning objectives and cultivating a supportive atmosphere in the classroom.

- **Penalties** – Using generative AI in any assignment may result in a failing grade and/or report to the university for academic dishonesty. Issues with grammar and structure are unlikely to lead to a failing grade on an assignment, but the use of GAI likely will. This is not an English course; do not worry too much about grammar or writing a “perfect” paper.
- **Prohibited** –
 - Students are not permitted to submit assignments created using generative AI for their written work or presentations.
 - Students can use the built in grammar/spelling checkers in web browsers, Google Docs, or Microsoft Word. However, students may not use built-in AI tools such as Google Gemini or Microsoft Co-pilot, nor may they use any other AI tool to generate text or alter spelling/grammar. Grammarly is no longer a permitted resource for this reason.
 - Students may not use generative AI for research. GAI is not considered a credible source, as it often “hallucinates” falsehoods as truth, does not cite where it finds them, or invents citations that do not exist. Instead, students must consult original sources and cite them, such as sources from Google Scholar and the Uppsala Library.
 - Note that you will **likely not need to include any external sources** outside of the ones cited for you and included in the Overviews for each Unit. You may use those citations, as well as links to the sources we cite, e.g., (Montola 2010, in Diakolambrianou et al. 2024).

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.

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

Learning Objectives

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

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

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

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

communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.

- *Learning Objective 3: Academic, Professional, and Reflective Writing:* Compose written texts and other communication materials on game design, safety practices and community building related to transformative analog role-playing games in various formats for distinct audiences.
- *Success Criteria:* Complete your journals answering all questions thoroughly.

- **Major Assignment 1 -- Autobiographical Game Design**

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

- **Major Assignment 2 -- Cultivating Transformational Communities:**

- *Learning Objective 1: Knowledge of the Field:* Discuss topics, themes, and theories related to building and managing communities featuring transformative analog role-playing games with an emphasis on safety and inclusion.
- *Learning Objective 2: Game Design, Safety Design and Playtesting:* Design, experience, iterate, and critique role-playing

games as well as safety, and analyze community building practices related to transformative analog role-playing games.

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

Orientation Quiz

1. I have an option to attend the synchronous ROCKET sessions or to complete an alternative assignment.
TRUE / FALSE
2. In this course, I will be designing a new nano-game on autobiographical themes.
TRUE / FALSE
3. We will be using two shells for this course: one for the main course and one for ROCKET.
TRUE / FALSE

4. After completing all four courses in the first year, I will receive a Certificate in Transformative Game Design.

TRUE / FALSE

5. The ROCKET discussion forums and journals are optional.

TRUE / **FALSE**

6. In this course, we will discuss ways to address harassment in role-playing communities.

TRUE / FALSE

Unit 1: Cultivating Transformational Communities

Overview: Cultivating Transformational Communities



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

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

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

Discussion forum engagement is the lifeblood of the course. Since we are all in different time zones, please post your initial discussions the night before the class day. Then, engage in the discussion forum by responding to **at least two (2) of your**

peers in **Ask a Question, Answer a Question** format. See the **Discussion Forum Instructions** in the Unit for more information.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* * *

Unit 1 Overview

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

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

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

In this Unit, we will cover:

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

- Crisis Management

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

Required materials:

Readings:

- Baird, Josephine, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2022. "The Transformative Potential of Immersive Experiences Within Role-playing Communities." *Revista de Estudos Universitário* 48: 1-48.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2010. "Interactional Dynamics in Role-Playing Games." In *The Functions of Role-Playing Games: How Participants Create Community, Solve Problems, and Explore Identity*. McFarland. 55-79.
- Stark, Lizzie. 2014. "Building Larp Communities: Social Engineering for Good." *Leaving Mundania*, March 18.
- Wood, Laura. 2021. "Why Larp Community Matters and How We Can Improve It." In *Book of Magic: Vibrant Fragments of Larp Practices*, edited by Kari Kvittingen Djukastein, Marcus Irgens, Nadja Lipsyc, and Lars Kristian Løveng Sunde. Oslo, Norway: Knutepunkt.

Videos:

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

Playtesting:

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

Review:

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

Discussion Forum Instructions

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

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

Sign up for Your Playtest and Feedback Group

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

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

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

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

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

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

Discussion 1: Leveling Up Role-playing Communities

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

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

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

1. Describe one (1) example of community building in role-playing games according to Bowman's ethnography in "Interactional Dynamics."
 1. Do you find this example relatable or recognizable? If so, how? If not, why?
2. Describe the profile that Bowman describes with regard to the "typical" role-player.
 1. Do you find these descriptions relatable or recognizable? If so, how? If not, why?
3. Describe at least one (1) problem with RPG communities present in the reading or video, whether implicit or explicit. In other words, what problem(s) are these recommendations trying to solve? You may need to extrapolate.
 - A) Have you experienced or witnessed this problem in your own communities, whether in role-playing games or otherwise? If so, describe.
 - B) If not, why?
4. Describe at least two (2) solutions recommended in these materials.
 - A) How might you implement these solutions into your own community building practices, if at all?
 - B) If you would not implement them, why?

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

Reflection Journal 1: Safety, Autobiographical Games, and You

Watch (0:33:00 - 01:05:00) from Angie Bandhosingh's "[Roleplaying with Kids: Creating Transformative Experiences for Children Under 12.](#)"

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

Read Kim's "[Writing an Autobiographical Game.](#)"

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

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Discuss one (1) recommendation that Bandhosingh mentions with regard to safety and working with children.
 1. How might this recommendation relate to your own practices, if at all? Be specific.
2. Describe one (1) safety issue you have witnessed or experienced in communities to which you belong, whether role-playing game related or otherwise.
 - A) If you have not witnessed or experienced safety issues, why do you think that might be?
3. Describe one (1) practice that Bowman discusses that you have seen or implemented yourself in communities to which you belong, whether role-playing game related or otherwise.
 - A) How effective was this strategy? Be specific.
 - B) If you have not seen these practices, which one (1) did you find the most surprising or intriguing? Be specific.
4. In 1-2 sentences in your own words, describe autobiographical games as discussed by Kim. Have you ever designed a game with autobiographical elements, whether in this course or elsewhere? If so, describe.
 - A) If not, why not?
5. Consider an aspect of your own life you would be interested in exploring through role-playing game design. Briefly brainstorm how you would integrate this aspect into a game, whether directly or metaphorically.

Unit 2: Emotional Safety in Role-playing Games

Overview: Emotional Safety in Role-playing Communities



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

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

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Diversity and conflict
- Bleedhunting
- Culture of hardcore
- Consent culture
- Triggers, activation, and emotional flooding
- Bleed
- Alibi

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

* * *

Required materials:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2017. "A Matter of Trust: Larp and Consent Culture." Nordiclarp.org, February 3.

- Nilsen, Elin. 2012. "High on Hell." In *States of Play: Nordic Larp Around the World*, edited by Juhana Pettersson, 10-11. Helsinki, Finland: Pohjoismaisen roolipelaamisen seura.
 - **Content advisory for "High on Hell":** This article includes mentions and descriptions of addiction, incarceration, violence, sexualized violence, dehumanization, verbal and physical abuse, and indoctrination. Please contact your instructor if you need any alternative assignment.
- Pedersen, Troels Ken. "Tears and the New Norm." Nordiclarp.org, February 13.
- Pedersen, Troels Ken. 2015. "Your Larp's Only As Safe As Its Safety Culture." Leaving Mundania, August 4.
- Resolutions Northwest. 2020. "The 'Isms.'" Adapted from Equity-Informed Mediation Training by Austin Community College. Conflict Transformation Academy.
- Vanek, Aaron. 2015. "Behind the Larp Census: 29.751 Larpers Can't (All) Be Wrong." In *The Knudepunkt Companion Book*, 16-23. Rollespilsakademiet.

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 2: Cultures of Hardcore, Consent, and Safety

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

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

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

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Compare and contrast the perspectives on highly emotional play discussed in Nilsen and Pedersen.
 - A. What play experiences do they describe?
 - B. How do the two authors' tend to experience emotional play? Be specific.
 - C. Which perspective do you find the most relatable from your own play experiences? Why?
2. Give a 1-2 sentence summary Bowman's article on consent. How is consent in role-playing games defined in the article? Be specific.
3. According to Bowman, in your own words, describe the culture of hardcore. What arguments do players from this perspective make against certain safety measures? Be specific.
4. Reflect upon the communities within which you play, including this course as needed. Where do you think they fall along the culture of hardcore vs. safety culture spectrum? Give examples.

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

Playtest 1: Crisis Management Scenarios

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

Familiarize Yourself with the Crisis Management Workshop. In preparation for your first session, familiarize yourself with the "Crisis Management Workshop from Living

Games 2016." We recommend reading Page 7 carefully before the session for best practices.

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

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

Schedule Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games

If you have not done so already, schedule [Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games](#).

Playtest 2 **should take place after** you submit [Major Assignment 1](#). Check the Course Calendar for dates.

Important: Please do not playtest without completing your game design document in MA1, as you are testing that procedure specifically.

Your playtest should take no more than **one (1) hour per game** including workshop, game play, debriefing, and feedback. You may need multiple playtests depending on time constraints, so plan accordingly.

Reflection Journal A: Diversity, Conflict, and You

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Instructions for Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document

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

Discussion 3: Emotional Intensity and Role-playing Games

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

Then, answer the following questions for each item:

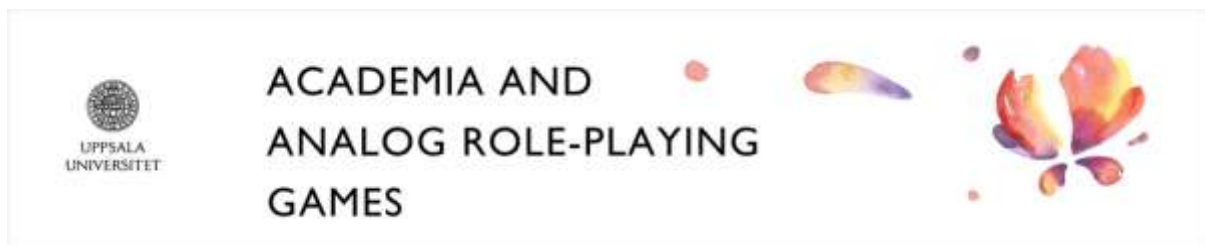
1. Describe the content of the item in 3-4 sentences.

- A. Did you find anything surprising or intriguing?
- B. Did you find this content personally relatable? Why or why not?
- C. How might a group intentionally set the container to address the content in this article for the purposes of transformative play? Be specific.

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

Unit 3: Academia and Analog Role-playing Games

Overview: Academia and Analog Role-playing Games



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

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

Required Materials:

Readings:

- Toft, Ida, and Sabine Harrer. 2020. "Design Bleed: A Standpoint Methodology for Game Design." In *Proceedings from DiGRA '20 – Proceedings of the 2020 DiGRA International Conference: Play Everywhere*: 1-18.
- Torner, Evan. 2018. "Just (the Institution of Computer) Game Studies." *Analog Game Studies* 5, no. 2 (June 3).

Readings (ROCKET Studium):

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024. "Basic Human Needs." ROCKET Shell.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024. "Emotions and Feelings." ROCKET Shell.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024. "Overview: Introduction to Conflict Transformation." ROCKET Shell.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024. "Overview: Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs." ROCKET Shell.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024. "Presenting Issues and Triggering Events." ROCKET Shell.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024. "Positions and Interests." ROCKET Shell.
- Hoffman Institute. 2015. "Feelings ListLinks to an external site.Open this document with ReadSpeaker docReader Links to an external site.." Hoffman Institute.

Videos (ROCKET Studium):

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2025. "Introduction to Conflict TransformationLinks to an external site.." ROCKET - Erasmus. YouTube, January 13.

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: Analog Role-playing Game Studies

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

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

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. According to Torner, describe two (2) reasons that analog role-playing games have been marginalized in game studies as a whole.
 - A. What are the historical reasons stated?
 - B. What social or cultural factors might be at play?
2. Describe the content of the first item you examined in 3-4 sentences. What information was new to you or stood out?
3. Describe the content of the second item you examined in 3-4 sentences. What information was new to you or stood out?
4. What sort of research would you most like to read in analog role-playing game studies?
 - A. Do you think you might ever publish on these topics? Why or why not?

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

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Unit 4: Group Dynamics and RPG Communities

Overview: Group Dynamics and RPG Communities



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

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

This week, we will cover:

- Tuckman and Wheelan's models of the life cycle of groups
- Counselling theories on group work, listening, and feedback
- Role-play practice on Positions, Interests, Feelings, and Needs

Required materials:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, and Nikola Sekulic. 2026. "Chapter 5: Cultivating Safer Transformational Communities." In *Implementing Transformative Role-playing Games* Download *Implementing Transformative Role-playing Games*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, Simon Brind, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, 249-307. *Transformative Play Research 2*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala University Press.

Group Patterns:

Choose one (1) of the following:

Videos:

- Diakolambrianou, Elektra, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2023. "Groups: Processes, Dynamics, Facilitation, and CreativityLinks to an external site.." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube.

Readings:

Review section "3.8: Theories of Interaction" from:

- Diakolambrianou, Elektra, Sarah Lynne Bowman, Simon Brind, Josefin Westborg, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas. 2024. "Theory, Key Concepts, and Inspirational MaterialsLinks to an external site.." In Transformative Role-playing Game Design, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, Elektra Diakolambrianou, and Simon Brind, 80-139. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Transformative Play Research 1. Uppsala University Publications.

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: Group Work, Listening, and Feedback

Choose one (1) of the following:

- Watch Diakolambrianou and Bowman's "Groups: Processes, Dynamics, Facilitation and Creativity" **or**
- Review section "3.8: Theories of Interaction" from Chapter 3 by Diakolambrianou et al. of *Transformative Role-playing Game Design*.
- **Optional:** Read Leonard and Arango's "The Dynamic Life Cycle of Live Action Role-play Communities."

Then, answer the following questions:

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

- Does theory resonate with your experiences in groups? If so, how?
 - If not, why?
- How might this theory inform your group container setting in future transformative role-playing game facilitation? Be specific.
 - If not at all, why?

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

Submission of Major Assignment 1: Autobiographical Game Design Document

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

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

Examples include:

- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race/Ethnicity
- Ability

- Neurotypicality/neurodiversity
- Class
- Appearance
- Religion
- Social Status
- Cultural affiliation
- Subcultural affiliation
- Any other significant factor.

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

Your nano-game should include:

- Instructions on how you would like players to engage with this content. Instructions on what types of play to avoid.
- A specific desired transformative impact or learning objective.
- At least one (1) workshop activity that will guide players on how to play the game.
- At least one (1) emotional, intellectual, or educational debrief question related to your desired transformative impact or learning objective.
- Description of your plan for holding the transformational container in terms of safety, including guidelines, mechanics, negotiations, aftercare, etc.

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

Instructions for Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities

For this assignment, you will compose an analysis of your autobiographical nano-game design, feedback, and iteration process, as well as community design takeaways based on concepts in the course in **Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational**

Communities. Please review the linked instructions for [Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities](#).

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

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

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Unit 5: Conflict and RPG Communities

Overview: Conflict and RPG Communities



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

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

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

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Conflict styles

- Toxic and dysfunctional behaviors in role-playing communities
- Recommendations for addressing toxicity and dysfunction
- Positionality
- Reflexivity

Click here to access the ROCKET Studium page.

Required Materials:

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, and Nikola Sekulic. 2026. "Chapter 5: Cultivating Safer Transformational Communities." In *Implementing Transformative Role-playing Games*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, Simon Brind, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, 249-307. Transformative Play Research 2. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala University Press.

Videos:

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

Readings:

- Abadía, Teos. 2023. "The Community Rises at the D&D Creator Summit" The Alphastream Game Design Blog, April 7.
- Boccamazzo, Rafael. 2023. "Lessons Learned from Both Sides of Games" TheeDoctorB. Tumblr, January 19.

Content Advisory: Discussion of harassment, threats, and mental health challenges.

Review:

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

Discussion Forum Instructions

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

- Reply to your peers with at least five (5) substantive sentences. Sentences like "Hello" and "Good post" do not count toward this length requirement.
- When possible, seek out students who have not yet received a response.

- One of these sentences should ask a question of each peer based upon the content of their post. This question should be related to the substance of their post.
- Check the discussion forum throughout the week.
- When your peers respond to your posts, answer their questions, then ask a question in return to further the conversation.
- Similarly, when you ask a question, monitor the thread for responses, answer their question, and ask another question in return, etc.
- When responding to your peers, search for posts that do not yet have replies rather than focusing on specific people.
- Respond in this manner often throughout the next week for full participation.

ROCKET Session 1 Zoom Login Information

Please use this link and password for all synchronous sessions in ROCKET. You will need to download Zoom ahead of time, or you can use Zoom in the browser if you select that option.

Zoom link: <https://tinyurl.com/mbus942z>

Password: 819588

Reflection Journal 2: Community Toxicity, Dysfunction, and You

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

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

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

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

Then, answer the following questions:

1. According to Anderson and Nielsen, in 1-2 sentences, describe two (2) traits that "pillars" of RPG communities exhibit. Then describe two (2) traits "parasites" exhibit.
2. In 1-2 sentences, describe the situation Boccamazzo discusses in his article.

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

Playtest 2: Autobiographical Games

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

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

Schedule Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games

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

Unit 6: Social Identities and Conflict in Role-playing Games

Overview: Social Identities and Conflict in Role-playing Games



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

In this Unit, we will cover:

- Sociology and role-playing games
- Social status
- Appearance
- Class
- Gender/Sexuality
- Race/Ethnicity

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: Social Identities and RPG Communities

Choose **three (3) items** to examine from different content creators in the following categories under Recommended Materials for a total of **three (3) articles**: Social Status/Appearance; Race/Ethnicity; and Gender/Sexuality.

Optional: Read Williams, Kirschner, Mizer, and Deterding's "Sociology and Role-playing Games."

* * *

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Describe in 1-2 sentences the central claim of each article that you read and answer these questions (one paragraph each):
 - A. What evidence does the author make to support this claim?
 - B. What consequences might issues regarding the social identities in question have upon individuals within transformative play communities? Be specific.

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

Playtest 3: Autobiographical Games

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

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

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

Please submit your first complete draft of Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities **here at this link**. You will also send this draft to one or more of your peers in your group for review over email, Discord, or another preferred channel of communication. Then, you will integrate their feedback in your final draft. Please read [Major Assignment 2: Cultivating Transformational Communities](#) for more details.

Note: You will only include **Appendix II: List of Recommendations from Peer(s) and Instructors and Revisions** in your Final Draft submission. This Appendix will be based on recommendations related to the academic writing in this First Complete Draft, not earlier work, as you will discuss earlier feedback in the body of the paper.

Peer Review Instructions for Major Assignment 2

Please read the [Peer Review Instructions for Major Assignment 2 linked here](#).

ROCKET Session 2 Zoom Login Information

Please use this link and password for all synchronous sessions in ROCKET. You will need to download Zoom ahead of time, or you can use Zoom in the browser if you select that option.

Zoom link: <https://tinyurl.com/mbus942z>

Password: 819588

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

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

Unit 7: Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Overview: Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility



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

In this Unit, we will cover:

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

Required Materials:

- Mendez Hodes, James. 2022. "Representation Tier List"
[Jamesmendezhodes.com](https://jamesmendezhodes.com), December 29.
- *Review*: Leonard, Diana J., Jovo Janjetovic, Maximilian Usman, "Playing to Experience Marginalization: Benefits and Drawbacks of 'Dark Tourism' in Larp."
International Journal of Role-Playing 11: 25-47.

Discussion Forum Instructions

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

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

Reflection Journal 3: Representation, Inclusion, and You

Read James Mendez Hodes' "Representation Tier List."

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

Then, answer the following questions:

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

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

Unit 8: Safer Community Container Setting

Overview: Safer Community Container Setting



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

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

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

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

In this Unit, we will discuss:

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

* * *

Required Materials:

Readings:

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

Discussion Forum Instructions

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

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

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

Discussion 7: Safety Teams, Anti-Harassment Movements, and Organizer Safety

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

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

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

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

Submit Peer Reviews for Major Assignment 2

In this class, you will be peer reviewing the work of **one to three (1-3) members** of your playtest group. Your peer review should focus on your peer's **academic writing in Major Assignment 2** rather than feedback on their game design, which you have already provided in the playtest.

For peer review, read the paper, answer the following questions, and send them to your peer.

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?

* * *

Remember, for consideration for a grade of **Pass** on your own Major Assignment 2, you must complete one (1) peer review for a member of your group.

For consideration for a grade of **Pass with Distinction** on your own Major Assignment 2, you may complete peer reviews for *all* members of your group who submitted their assignment by the deadline (2 reviews for a group of 3 including yourself; 3 reviews for a group of 4).

If one or more peers did not submit their assignment by the deadline, please focus only on the draft(s) available.

Discussion D: Worldview, Cognitive Dissonance, and Perception

Checking – (Post in ROCKET Shell)

Instructions in ROCKET Shell

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

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

Then, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the contents of the Code of Conduct, including consequences for breaches, in 3-4 sentences.
 - A. In 1-2 sentences, if you were adapting this Code to your own role-playing community, what would you add to the Code?
 - B. In 1-2 sentences, what would you remove?
2. Describe the contents of the Guidelines for Encouraged Behavior in 3-4 sentences.

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

ROCKET Session 3 Zoom Login Information

Please use this link and password for all synchronous sessions in ROCKET. You will need to download Zoom ahead of time, or you can use Zoom in the browser if you select that option.

Zoom link: <https://tinyurl.com/mbus942z>

Password: 819588

Unit 9: RPG Communities Around the World

Overview: RPG Communities Around the World



Welcome to our Unit on RPG Communities Around to the World! We have discussed styles and cultures of play before and examined various traditions. We will expand that work in this Unit to more broadly look at trends in various geographic areas with regard to community norms surrounding play. We will also look at online environments as spaces where people from multiple cultural backgrounds can meet through technology.

Discussion Forum Instructions

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

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

Discussion 8: RPG Communities Around the World

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

Then, answer the following questions:

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

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

Unit 10: Transformational Communities and You

Overview: Transformational Communities and You



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

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

Discussion Forum Instructions

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

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

Reflection Journal 5: Transformational Communities and You

Answer the following questions:

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

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

For your Final Draft of Major Assignment 2, you will write a 1200-2000 word academic paper containing the following sections:

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

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

2. Application of Theory and Best Practices to Design

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

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

In addition, include:

- 1. **References:** References should be organized in alphabetical order.
- 2. **Appendix I:** Revised Game Design Document of Autobiographical Nano-game
 - Your Game Design Document should contain all the instructions for your nano-game that facilitators and participants need to play. **These instructions should not exceed 1300 words Times New Roman 12 point font.**

3. **Appendix II:** List of Recommendations from Peer(s) and Instructors and Revisions

- Include a point-for-point list indicating how and where in the text you addressed each point of feedback on your First Complete Draft of Major Assignment 2 you received from your peer reviewer(s) and your instructor. If you decided not to integrate one or more recommendations, please provide a persuasive reason why. In this way, you are iterating not only on your game design, but on your academic work.