

COMS 298 (3 CREDITS)
SPECIAL TOPICS: GAMES, MEDIA, AND CULTURE

DEPT. OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
FALL 2016

TIME:	Wednesdays 13:15 to 16:00	TEACHING ASSISTANTS:
LOCATION:	L-CJ 1.114	Adam Stangeby
INSTRUCTOR:	Nic Watson	adamjamesmass@gmail.com
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OFFICE HRS:	Wednesdays 12:00 to 13:00	s.h.loubert@gmail.com
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SECTION 1. COURSE INFORMATION

1.1. Course Overview

1.1.1 CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION: *In just a few decades, digital games have expanded from a poorly-understood, niche for of entertainment, to a mainstream, ubiquitous, multi-billion dollar industry. "Games, Media, and Culture" is a new course that examines the role of games as media and cultural objects. We will explore how to make sense of games, both as players and as scholars. The course offers ample opportunities for students to play, discuss, and experiment with games themselves, as well as with media about games.*

1.1.2 OBJECTIVES:

This course will familiarize students with key texts, ideas, and debates in game studies. Students will...

- become conversant in how digital games emerged historically (weeks 2, 6, 7)
- examine the role of digital games in shaping cultural practices, identities, and communities (weeks 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
- discuss relationship between games as media and the media technologies on which they rely (weeks 6, 7)
- critically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of understanding digital games in the context of other media forms and pre-existing theories of media (weeks 1, 2, 3, 6, 11)
- explore the social implications of games as interactive and participatory media (weeks 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

Readings, discussions, videos, and class activities will equip students with the analytical tools to independently develop research-based responses to / discussions of key questions in the field of game studies.

1.2. Coursework Summary

Content Quizzes (25%)

- In order to ensure that students are completing all reading assignments, ten content quizzes will be administered during class each week. These quizzes will consist of simple multiple-choice or short-answer questions, and will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete. The questions do not require any particularly deep difficult engagement: they should be easy to answer if you have done the reading, but not-so-easy otherwise.
- These quizzes are to be completed *individually, without collaboration*, and are *closed-book* unless otherwise specified.
- Students may or may not know in advance when a quiz will take place.

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Content Specialist Panels (25%)

- This assignment gives students the opportunity to take direct responsibility for a portion of the course material. In addition to gaining a deeper understanding of the assigned content, students will take on leadership roles as they present and discuss that content with the rest of the class.
- Students will be grouped into panels of 5~7 people. Each panel will be assigned responsibility for one week's worth of course material (readings, videos, etc.). It is the panellists' job to become specialists in that topic.
- Content specialists will post a three-question poll, pertinent to the subject matter, to the course's online space, before the start of the class corresponding to the panel's topic. Other students will respond to the poll. The panel will tabulate and interpret poll results, and provide a 10-minute presentation in-class the following week. This presentation will be followed by discussion and reflection, in which the panellists will be expected to take an active role.
 - Note that the panel will be presenting on the topics covered in the *previous class*.
 - The instructor will apprentice panellists in the process of preparing their presentation, and will assist in running class discussion
- Each student will receive a grade based on the team's performance as a whole (exceptions may be made in extreme circumstances).
- Detailed instructions and criteria will be provided separately.

Term Project (40%)

- Each student will produce a body of work that reflects/demonstrates their critical, analytical engagement with the concepts presented in the course. Students will start working on these projects within the first half of the semester, while final products will be due in December.
- Students will get to choose which of the following types of project they would like to undertake:
 - A traditional, independently-written research paper, of 7~8 pages (a list of possible research questions/topics will be provided); OR
 - A game *paratext*, such as a video documentary, walkthrough, Let's Play video, or critical review that engages with course content and addresses one of the research questions/topics provided (students may work in groups of up to five people; each student will independently write a 3-page reflection/report to accompany the project); OR
 - A game prototype (created using an authoring system such as Game Maker, RPG Maker, Twine, or Inform 7) that critically engages with course content and addresses one of the research questions/topics provided (students may work in groups of up to five people; each student will independently write a 3-page reflection/report to accompany the project).
- Each student will receive an individual grade.
- The project will be completed in stages, each with its own deadline:
 - Project pitches – 28 September before class
 - Each student/group must submit a short online form with a basic description of the proposed project
 - Project proposals – 12 October
 - A longer, more detailed description of the project
 - Project alpha release – 23 November
 - A 50~75% complete version of the project.
 - Final, completed project – 14 December
- Detailed instructions and criteria (including exactly what is expected for each deadline) will be provided separately.

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Participation (10%)

- Students are expected to attend all classes, and to come prepared, having completed all required reading and viewing assignments. Students will be evaluated based on their attendance, preparedness, and the extent to which they engage actively and constructively in class discussions and activities.
- Additionally, all students are expected to respond to the polls posted by content panels, for every week when such polls are posted. Students must respond to the poll by 23:59 on the Friday after it is posted.
- The class has access to an online discussion forum. Posting to this forum is not required (see footnote[†]); however, active and thoughtful engagement in on-topic conversations in this space will reflect favourably on your participation grade. While the forums are not a substitute for in-class participation, if you do miss a lot of class, or you tend to be quiet, this is your opportunity to be heard and to recover some marks. (That said, obvious low-quality filler posts won't help your grade much.)
- See also section 2.4.1, "Participation," under Department Policies.

In Summary:

25%	Content Quizzes
25%	Content Specialist Panels
40%	Term Project
10%	Participation

[†] Except during the week you are acting as a content specialist. Posts you make as part of the content specialists assignment are evaluated separately from participation.

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1.3. Calendar

Note: Reading and viewing assignments may be subject to change with at least 1 week notice. See section 1.4 for full text citations and sources.

WEEK 1. 7 SEPTEMBER – CLASS INTRO / GAMES AS MEDIA

- In-class: Syllabus review
- In-class: Citation and plagiarism discussion
- In-class: Media studies / games as media introduction

WEEK 2. 14 SEPTEMBER – THINK OF THE CHILDREN!! BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH, EFFECTS DISCOURSE, & MORAL PANIC

- **READ:** Goldstein, "Violent Video Games" (pp. 341-353, 13 pages)
- **READ:** Williams, "The Video Game Lightning Rod" (24 pages)
- Optional/Recommended reading: Provenzo, "Research on Video Games"
- **WATCH:** Crash Course Games (YouTube), episodes 1, 2, 3
 - All episodes available at: <https://tinyurl.com/crashcoursegames>
- In-class: Video games effects debate!

WEEK 3. 21 SEPTEMBER – THEORIES OF PLAY I. ANTHROPOLOGY OF PLAY

- **READ:** Malaby, "Beyond Play" (15 pages)
- **READ:** Caillois, excerpts from *Man, Play, & Games*
 - "The definition of play" (pp. 3-10, 8 pages)
 - "The classification of games" (pp. 11-36, 25 pages)
- **WATCH:** Crash Course Games, episodes 4, 5, 6, 7
- **Content specialists panels:**
 - **Team A** administers poll for this week's topic

WEEK 4. 28 SEPTEMBER – THEORIES OF PLAY II. WORK VS. PLAY

- **READ:** Stevens, "Play And Work: A False Dichotomy?" (pp. 316-323, 7 pages)
- **READ:** Yee, "The Labour of Fun" (4 pages)
- **READ:** Pearce, "Productive Play" (8 pages, ~5.5 text)
- **READ:** Kücklich, "Precarious Playbour" (7 pages)
- **WATCH:** Podcast – theorizing work and play (course electronic resources)
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team A** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team B** administers poll for this week's topic
- **Term Project Pitches Due**

WEEK 5. 5 OCTOBER – POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE GAMES INDUSTRY

- **READ:** Consalvo, "The Canadian video game industry", in *Mediascapes* (pp. 238-250, 13 pages)
- **READ:** Dyer-Witheford & de Peuter, "Immaterial labour", in *Games of Empire* (pp. 3-33, 31 pages)
- **WATCH:** Double Fine Adventure! Episode TBA
 - Hyperlink TBA
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team B** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team C** administers poll for this week's topic

WEEK 6. 12 OCTOBER – POWER, IDEOLOGY, AND RHETORIC

- **READ:** Bogost, "Video Games and Ideological Frames" (18 pages)
- **READ:** Allen, "The Unreal Enemy of America's Army" (18 pages)
- In-Class: "Video Games as Literature" course presentation by Will Robinson
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team C** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team D** administers poll for this week's topic

WEEK 7. 19 OCTOBER – VIDEO GAME HISTORY: FROM LAB TO LIVING ROOM

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- **READ:** Brand, "Spacewar" (~19 pages)
- **READ:** Mitchell, "Dynamics of family interaction around home video games" (14 pages)
- **WATCH:** "About VR: Designing for Believability" (GDC Vault)
 - <http://www.gdcvault.com/play/1022815/About-VR-Designing-for>
- In-class: Watch presentation/video by MHRC
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team D** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team E** presents on last week's topic
- **Term Project Proposals Due**

WEEK 8. 26 OCTOBER – GAMES IN MATERIAL CONTEXT: PLATFORM STUDIES

- **READ:** Montfort, "Combat in Context" (~9 pages)
- **READ:** Bogost & Montfort, "Platform Studies: Frequently Questioned Answers" (5 pages)
- **WATCH:** Crash Course Games, episodes 8, 9, 10, 11
- **PLAY:** 30-minute vintage video game assignment (details will be provided)
- In-class: Atari 2600 Combat demo / MHRC Residual Media Lab demo
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team E** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team F** administers poll for this week's topic

WEEK 9. 2 NOVEMBER – GAMING SUBJECTS AND PLAYER IDENTITIES I. WHO THE PLAYERS ARE

- **READ:** Shaw, "Do you identify as a gamer?" (13 pages)
- **READ:** Pearce, "The truth about baby boomer gamers" (read up to the beginning of part II, pp. 142-159, and conclusion, pp. 169-172: ~21 pages)
- **READ:** Bartle, "Players who suit MUDs" (23 pages)
- **WATCH:** Player Histories video (course electronic resources)
- In-Class: ESA, "Essential Facts about the Video and Computer Game Industry: 2016 Sales, Demographics, and Usage Data"
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team F** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team G** administers poll for this week's topic
- **Mid-term grades will be provided today. The course drop deadline is November 6.**

WEEK 10. 9 NOVEMBER – GAMING SUBJECTS AND PLAYER IDENTITIES II. GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND GAMES

- **READ:** Jenson & de Castell, "Theorizing gender and digital gameplay: Oversights, accidents and surprises" (10 pages)
- **READ:** Consalvo, "It's a queer world after all: Studying The Sims and sexuality" (~20 pages)
- **WATCH:** feministfrequency, "Ms. Male Character" (YouTube)
 - <https://youtu.be/eYqYLfm1rWA>
- **WATCH:** #1ReasonToBe 2013 GDC Panel (GDC Vault)
 - <http://www.gdcvault.com/play/1018080/>
- In-Class: GAMBIT Hate-Speech Video
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team G** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team H** administers poll for this week's topic

WEEK 11. 16 NOVEMBER – PLAYER PRACTICES I. PROS, CASUALS, AND CHEATERS

- **READ:** Taylor, "Playing for keeps", in *Raising the Stakes* (30 pages [many pictures])
- **READ:** Consalvo, "Cheating" (5 pages)
- **WATCH:** Crash Course Games, episodes 13, 14 (N.B. we'll watch episode 12 later)
- Recommended reading: Juul, "A Casual Revolution", in *A Casual Revolution* (20 pages)
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team H** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team I** administers poll for this week's topic

WEEK 12. 23 NOVEMBER – PLAYER PRACTICES II. EXTENDING AND TRANSGRESSING PLAY

- **READ:** Postigo, "The socio-technical architecture of digital labour" (15 pages)

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- **READ:** Excerpts from Sihvonon, *Players Unleashed*
 - "Game and its modification" (6 pages)
 - "Histories of modding" (8 pages)
 - "Categories of modding" (8 pages)
 - "Kinky play: pornographic hacking and The Sims" (7 pages)
- **WATCH:** Choice of LP videos (YouTube - TBA)
- **WATCH:** Scully-Baker, "Speed-running as a museum of accidents" (Moodle)
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team I** presents on last week's topic
 - **Team J** administers poll for this week's topic
- **Term Project Alphas Due**

WEEK 13. 30 NOVEMBER – ONLINE GAMES, SPACES, AND COMMUNITIES

- **READ:** Taylor, excerpts from *Play Between Worlds* (7 pages)
 - "How design influences social life"
 - "The shift from provincialism to cosmopolitanism"
- **READ:** Pearce, excerpts from *Communities of Play* (there are lots of pictures, and the "Comments" sections are optional)
 - "An imaginary homeland" (15 pages)
 - "The inner lives of avatars" (14 pages)
- **WATCH:** Crash Course Games, episode 9
- **WATCH:** Gina Hara, "Your Place or Minecraft" – <http://yourplaceorminecraft.com>
- **WATCH:** Lucasfilm's Habitat Promotional Video (YouTube)
 - <https://youtu.be/VVpulhO3jyc>
- In-Class MMORPG activity
- **Content specialist panels:**
 - **Team J** presents on last week's topic

Final projects due Wednesday, 14 December, 2016.

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1.4. Catalogue of Course Texts

1.4.1 OVERVIEW: There is no course pack for this class. Many texts are available online from their authors' or publishers' own websites (URLs are provided). Others can be obtained through the Concordia Library's E-Journals system. The remaining texts will be provided in digital form through the library-maintained digital course reserves system.

1.4.2 TIPS AND TRICKS:

- For any resource with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier), you can quickly find it online by going to <https://dx.doi.org/> and pasting the DOI into the search box.
 - As a shortcut, you can even put the DOI directly into the URL query, and you will automatically be redirected to the resource's home page. For example, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1555412007299434> will redirect to the URL for the Malaby reading.
 - Citations should supply DOIs instead of normal URLs whenever DOIs are available. DOIs are guaranteed to be unique and stable over time.
- The full text for articles from most journals (including all those on this syllabus) is available through the Concordia library's online system. Full text download links may *appear* to be unavailable if you are accessing an article's URL from off-campus. In such cases, this quick trick lets you convert an article's normal URL into a Concordia-specific access URL so that you can get the full text.
 - Prepend the URL with "0-" (zero + dash) and add ".mercury.concordia.ca" before the first slash.
 - For example, the normal public URL with no full-text available
<http://gac.sagepub.com/content/2/2/95>
becomes this URL with a full-text PDF download link
<http://0-gac.sagepub.com.mercury.concordia.ca/content/2/2/95>
 - You will be prompted to log into the library website if you have not already done so.

1.4.3 CATALOGUE

Allen, R. (2011). The unreal enemy of *America's Army*. *Games & Culture* 6(1), 38-60.
doi:10.1177/1555412010377321
Source: E-Journals

Bartle, R. (1996). Hearts, clubs, diamonds, spades: Players who suit MUDS.
<http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/hcde.htm>

Bogost, I. (2006). Video games and ideological frames. *Popular Communication* 4(3), 165-183.
<http://bogost.com/downloads/I.%20Bogost%20PopComm%204-3.pdf>

Bogost, I., & Montfort, N. (2009, December). *Platform studies: Frequently questioned answers*. Paper presented at Digital Arts and Culture, Irvine, CA.
http://bogost.com/downloads/bogost_montfort_dac_2009.pdf

Brand, S. (1972, December). Spacewar: Fanatic life and symbolic death among the computer bums. *Rolling Stone*. http://www.wheels.org/spacewar/stone/rolling_stone.html

Caillois, R. (2001). *Man, play, and games* (Trans. Meyer Barash). Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Excerpts:

"The definition of play" (pp. 3-10)

"The classification of games" (pp. 11-36)

Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve

Consalvo, M. (2003). *It's a queer world after all: Studying The Sims and sexuality*. New York, NY: GLAAD Center for the Study of Media and Society.
Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve

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- Consalvo, M. (2013). The Canadian video game industry. In L. R. Shade (Ed.), *Mediascapes: New patterns in Canadian communication* (4th ed.) (pp. 238-250). Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.
Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve
- Consalvo, M. (2014). Cheating. In B. Perron & M. J. P. Wolf (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to video game studies* (pp. 106-109). New York, NY: Routledge.
E-book: http://encore.concordia.ca/iii/encore/record/C__Rb3234919
- Dyer-Witthford, N., & G. de Peuter. (2009). Immaterial labour. In N. Dyer-Witthford & G. de Peuter, *Games of empire* (pp. 3-33). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve
- Goldstein, J. (2005). Violent video games. In J. Raessens and J. Goldstein (Eds.), *Handbook of computer game studies* (pp. 341-353). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve
- Jenson, J., & de Castell, S. (2008). Theorizing gender and digital gameplay: Accidents, oversights and surprises. *Edulamos: Journal of Computer Game Culture* 2(1), 15-25.
<http://www.eludamos.org/index.php/eludamos/article/viewarticle/vol2no1-4/49>
- Juul, J. (2009). A casual revolution. In *A casual revolution* (pp. 1-20). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve
- Kücklich, J. (2005). Precarious playbour: Modders and the digital games industry. *The Fibreculture Journal* 5. <http://five.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-025-precarius-playbour-modders-and-the-digital-games-industry/>
- Malaby, T. (2007). Beyond play: A new approach to games. *Games and Culture* 2(2), 95-113.
doi:10.1177/1555412007299434
Source: E-Journals
- Mitchell, E. (1985). Dynamics of family interactions around home video games. *Marriage & Family Review* 8(1-2), 121-135. doi: 10.1300/J002v08n01_10
Source: E-Journals
- Montfort, N. (2006). Combat in context. *Game Studies* 6(1).
<http://gamestudies.org/0601/articles/montfort>
- Pearce, C. (2006). Productive play: Game culture from the bottom up. *Games & Culture*, 1(1), pp. 17-24. doi:10.1177/1555412005281418
Source: E-Journals
- Pearce, C. (2008). The truth about baby boomer gamers. *Games & Culture* 3(2), 142-174.
doi:10.1177/1555412008314132
Source: E-Journals
- Pearce, C. (2009). *Communities of play* (pp. 69-83). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Excerpts:
 "An imaginary homeland" (pp. 69-83)
 "The inner lives of avatars" (pp. 111-123)
 "Patterns of emergence" (pp. 137-154)
Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve
- Postigo, H. (2016). The socio-technical architecture of digital labor: Converting play into YouTube money. *New Media & Society* 18(2), 332-249. doi:10.1177/1461444814541527
Source: E-Journals

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- Shaw, A. (2012). Do you identify as a gamer? Gender, race, sexuality, and gamer identity. *New Media Society* 14(1), 28-44. doi:10.1177/1461444811410394
Source: E-Journals
- Sihvonen, T. (2011). *Players unleashed! Modding The Sims and the culture of gaming*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Excerpts:
 "Game and its modification," pp. 9-15
 "Histories of modding," pp. 57-64
 "Categories of modding," pp. 87-94
 "Kinky play: pornographic hacking and *The Sims*," pp. 178-184
Source: Concordia Library – Digital Reserve
- Stevens, P. (1980). Play and work: A false dichotomy? In H. B. Schwartzman (Ed), *Play and culture: 1978 proceedings of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play*. New York, NY: Leisure Press.
Source: Concordia Library - Digital Reserve
- Taylor, T. L. (2006). *Play between worlds*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Excerpts:
 "How design influences social life" and "The shift from provincialism to cosmopolitanism", pp. 58-65
Source: Concordia Library – Digital Reserve
- Taylor, T. L. (2012). Playing for keeps. In *Raising the stakes: E-sports and the professionalization of computer gaming* (pp. 3-33). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Source: Concordia Library – Digital Reserve
- Williams, D. (2003). The video game lightning rod: Constructions of a new media technology, 1970-2000. *Information, Communication & Society* 6(4), 523-550. doi:10.1080/1369118032000163240
Source: E-Journals
- Yee, N. (2006). The labor of fun: How video games blur the boundaries of work and play. *Games and Culture*, 1(1), 68-71. doi:10.1177/1555412005281819
Source: E-Journals

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SECTION 2. CLASSROOM POLICIES

2.1. Written Work

2.1.1 LANGUAGE OF SUBMITTED WORK: You may submit written work in either English or French. This applies only to work that is submitted directly to the professor for evaluation; communications with the rest of the class (e.g. forum postings) must be in English. You are encouraged to make clear, concise, and intelligible writing your priority when choosing which language to use. Even as an Anglophone professor with an imperfect comprehension of French, I will still find it much easier to understand what you meant if you submit a clearly-written French paper, rather than a poorly-written English one.

Important note: even if you write in French, please observe English-language, North American typographic and punctuation conventions, specifically those established by the APA style guide. This means, for instance, enclosing quotations like “this” instead of like «this».

2.1.2 FORMAT: Written work is to be submitted in printed hard-copy unless otherwise specified. Use standard, white, letter-size paper, with one-inch margins on all sides, and black, double-spaced text. I am not a stickler for Times New Roman 12 point font, but whatever font you choose should be *equivalent* to that (i.e. roughly the same number of words per page). Furthermore, it should be readable and non-distracting (*do not use Papyrus or Comic Sans MS!*). If in doubt, stick to TNR 12 point, as this is what most professional manuscripts require anyway. Note that all assignment page counts assume Times New Roman 12 point, so if your six-page assignment comes out to a little longer than six pages when typed in Georgia, make sure it still meets the minimum in TNR.

2.1.3 CITATION: All sources must be cited. Taking quotes or ideas from another source without citing them is plagiarism! (See Section 2.2.2, below). You must use **APA citation style** for all citations in written work (even if you write in French). Use of any other citation style may result in loss of marks. Failure to use citations where they are needed will result in referral to the Office of the Associate Dean if plagiarism is suspected.

Concordia Library Citation and Style Guides:

<http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations>

APA Formatting and Style Guide at Purdue's OWL:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

2.2. University Rights and Responsibilities

2.2.1 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: “The Academic Code of Conduct sets out for students, instructors and administrators both the process and the expectations involved when a charge of academic misconduct occurs. The regulations are presented within the context of an academic community which seeks to support student learning at Concordia University.” (From Article 1 of the Academic Code of Conduct).

Full text: <http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity/offences.html>

2.2.2 PLAGIARISM: The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as **“the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement.”** This includes material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It also includes material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It further

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includes, for example, the work of a fellow student, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, or a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased from any source. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone—it can refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. “Presentation” is not limited to written work. It includes oral presentations, computer assignments, and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into any other language and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. **In Simple Words: Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying where you obtained it!**

Source: Academic Integrity Website: <http://concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity>
Work submitted in this course that is determined to be plagiarized, in whole or in part, will receive an automatic mark of zero. This classroom policy applies in addition to department and university policies that provide for penalties and disciplinary actions in plagiarism cases.

2.2.3 OTHER COMMON VIOLATIONS

Note that violations of the Academic Code of Conduct are *not* limited to plagiarism. Violations can also include, but are not limited to:

- Forging or falsifying a doctor’s note, e.g. in order to get an absence excused, or an extension on an assignment
- Signing an attendance sheet with another person’s name, or having another person sign an attendance sheet on one’s own behalf
- Falsifying research data, or presenting data that are known to be falsified

2.2.4 DISABILITY: The University’s commitment to providing equal educational opportunities to all students includes students with disabilities. To demonstrate full respect for the academic capacities and potential of students with disabilities, the University seeks to remove attitudinal and physical barriers that may hinder or prevent qualified students with disabilities from participating fully in University life. Please see the instructor during the first class if you feel you require assistance.

For more information, please see <http://concordia.ca/offices/acsd>

2.2.5 SAFE SPACE CLASSROOM: Concordia classrooms are considered ‘safe space classrooms’. In order to create a climate for open and honest dialogue and to encourage the broadest range of viewpoints, it is important for class participants to treat each other with respect. Name-calling, accusations, verbal attacks, sarcasm, and other negative exchanges are counter-productive to successful teaching and learning.

The purpose of class discussions is to generate greater understanding about different topics. The expression of the broadest range of ideas, including dissenting views, helps to accomplish this goal. However, in expressing viewpoints, students should try to raise questions and comments in ways that will promote learning, rather than defensiveness and feelings of conflict in other students. Thus, questions and comments should be asked or stated in such a way that will promote greater insight into the awareness of topics as opposed to anger and conflict. The purpose of dialogue and discussion is not to reach a consensus, nor to convince each other of different viewpoints. Rather, the purpose of dialogue in the classroom is to reach higher levels of learning by examining different viewpoints and opinions with respect and civility.

2.3. Other Class-specific Policies

2.3.1 DEADLINES AND LATE SUBMISSIONS: Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. In general, submitting work after the deadline will result in grade penalties, up to and including receiving a mark of zero on the assignment. Specific information on deadlines,

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acceptable submission methods, and lateness penalties will be provided with each assignment's instructions.

- Requests for deadline extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis
 - You can get one 24-hour extension for free. Some restrictions apply. See section 2.3.3, below.
 - Note that I will tend to be more sympathetic to requests made well in advance of the deadline than those made at 11:00 PM the night before, so if you anticipate struggling to complete your work on time, I strongly encourage you to discuss this with me sooner rather than later.
- Written assignments must generally be submitted on paper. Electronic submission will be permitted in certain cases.
 - Anything submitted electronically must still be submitted in advance of the deadline. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct files are properly submitted on time.
 - This means you should double-check your submitted files to make sure they are in working order, and leave yourself time to deal with unforeseen technical issues that may arise.
- "Technical difficulties" will not generally be accepted as a valid excuse for missing deadlines.
 - In particular, if a student "accidentally" submits an incorrect or corrupted file before the deadline, and the follows up after the deadline with a story along the lines of, "Oops! Not sure how that happened. Here's the file I meant to send you," that student can generally expect to be penalized for late submission.
 - Operating systems get corrupted, hard drives fail, USB sticks get lost, and accounts get hacked. It is your responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect your course work from such disasters. A good plan involves keeping copies both on your local device and in cloud storage (e.g. DropBox, Google Drive).

2.3.2 ATTENDANCE (CLASS-SPECIFIC POLICIES):

- Lateness and absence can be either *excused* or *unexcused*.
 - Valid excuses for lateness or absence include these:
 - Health issues that hinder your ability to get to class or to participate.
 - Communicable illnesses – if you're contagious, please do us all a favour and *just stay home*. If you absolutely must attend, please be courteous and keep your distance from others.
 - Certain legitimate university-related activities, which must be disclosed well in advance, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - Compassionate leave (e.g. illness or death of close kin).
 - Zombie apocalypse.
 - The following are not valid reasons for being late or missing class:
 - Being up late the previous night; sleeping in; forgetting to set your alarm; alarm clock malfunction.
 - Missing your bus; your bus never shows up; slow traffic; your carpool driver cancels; your car breaks down.
 - You have to drive your friend to the airport / to work / to the doctor / whatever.
 - You leave early for vacation, or return late from vacation.
 - You have a work shift that conflicts with your class attendance.
- If you have to miss class for health reasons, I do not need to know all the gory details. However, if you have already used your free pass (see 2.3.3, below) or want to avoid using it, you will need to show a doctor's note.

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- Each unexcused absence will cost 30% of your participation mark (3% of your final mark). Students with more than three unexcused absences will be dropped from the course.
- Even excused absences, with sufficient frequency, could affect your ability to complete the course. If you miss a significant amount of class, you should discuss with the instructor as soon as possible to determine how you can make up for lost time and fulfill the course requirements. You may end up having to apply through Birks Student Service Center for Late Completion (an INC or MED notation on your transcript).
- Even if you are excused from attending a class, you are still responsible for meeting all assignment deadlines. If there is work to hand in, send a copy with a classmate or email a digital copy to the instructor with an explanation (it is a good idea to do both, if possible). If you miss class on a day you are scheduled to present, you will have to discuss with the instructor how to make up the missed work.
 - You are also responsible for getting caught up on any material you may have missed. You should ask a classmate for notes about what you missed. For additional assistance, you can attend the instructor's or TA's office hours.
 - You should *not* expect us to give you a personal repeat lecture or summary over email, however. Sending one of us an email along the lines of "Gosh! Sorry I couldn't come to class. So, what'd I miss??" isn't likely to get you very far.
- Classmates should not try to cover for each other's absences by signing attendance sheets on each others' behalf. You are all theoretically adults, so each of you can take responsibility for your own attendance.
 - Signing in on someone else's behalf (or having someone else sign your name for you) is an offence under the Academic Code of Conduct, and any students caught doing this will be subject to disciplinary action.

2.3.3 ONE FREE PASS:

- Everyone gets ONE late day or unexcused absence without losing participation marks – no questions asked. The following caveats apply:
 - Assignments must still be handed in on time. You must either arrange to have a classmate deliver your work to the professor, or ask the professor for permission to submit electronically.
 - If you miss a quiz, you will receive a mark of zero for that quiz. No opportunities for make-up quizzes will be given for unexcused absences.
 - If you miss class on a day you are supposed to be giving a presentation, this will negatively affect your grade.
- For work that is submitted directly to the professor, everyone gets ONE free 24-hour extension, no questions asked. The following caveats apply:
 - You cannot use your free extension to defer or postpone quizzes.
 - You cannot use your free extension to defer or postpone in-class presentations, or any tasks that involve providing materials to the class as a whole.
 - In particular, content specialist panels *must* adhere to the schedule for posting online polls and giving presentations.

2.3.4 EMAIL POLICY: Please allow up to 48 hours to receive a response for any emails you send to the professor or TA. We receive high volumes of email, and are not glued to our inboxes 24/7. "Urgent" questions sent by email the night before an assignment deadline are not likely to get answered in time, so don't leave everything to the last minute.

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2.4 Department Policies

2.4.1 PARTICIPATION: This grade is based on overall punctuality and attendance in the classes, labs and workshops. Student preparedness, initiative and *level of class engagement* is evaluated (this means participating in discussions and demonstration of familiarity with required readings). Participation also includes completing all required readings and all assignments **on time**. Students are expected to be collegial, respectful and tolerant of peers, teaching assistants, technical instructors, and professors. The best classroom experience will occur with courteous and engaged participation and interaction with each other, the work, the discussions, and debates.

2.4.2 ATTENDANCE (DEPARTMENT POLICIES): Regular attendance is a requirement. Students are expected to actively participate in all classes, workshops, critiques, discussions, and labs associated with courses, and to complete all required course work according to deadlines and guidelines as assigned. Failure to comply can result in loss of marks. See also class-specific attendance policies, section 2.3.2.

2.4.3 ELECTRONIC DEVICES: No electronic devices may be used once the class starts. All mobile phones, iPods, PDAs, cell phones, laptops etc. *must be turned off and put away.* The only exceptions are if the Office of Disabilities has authorized such use, or the instructor specifically grants permission for use.

2.4.4 NUMERICAL GRADE, LETTER GRADE & OFFICIAL GRADE POINT EQUIVALENTS

Numerical Grade	Letter Grade	Official Grade Point
94 - 100	A+	4.33
90 - 93	A	4.0
86 - 89	A-	3.67
82 - 85	B+	3.3
78 - 81	B	3.0
74 - 77	B-	2.67
70 - 73	C+	2.33
66 - 69	C	2.0
62 - 65	C-	1.67
58 - 61	D+	1.33
54 - 57	D	1.0
50 - 53	D-	0.67
0 - 49	F	0.0

Please note the individual instructors may elect to use numerical grades, letter grades or both for individual assignments, while all final marks for the course are given as letter grades at the university level.

A = Superior work in both content and presentation. This is a student who appears, even at an early stage, to be a potential honours student. The work answers all components of a question. It demonstrates clear and persuasive argument, a well-structured text that features solid introductory and concluding arguments, and examples to illustrate the argument. Few, if any, presentation errors appear.

B = Better than average in both content and presentation. This student has the potential for honours, though it is less evident than for the A student. Student's work is clear and well structured. Minor components of an answer might be missing, and there may be fewer illustrations for the argument. Some minor but noticeable errors in presentation may have interfered with the general quality of the work.

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- C = Student demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the material. Ideas are presented in a style that is at least somewhat coherent and orderly. Occasional examples are provided to support arguments. Presentation errors that affect the quality of the work are more apparent than in B work. Some components of a question may have been omitted in the response.
- D = Student has only a basic grasp of the material. Sense of organization and development is often not demonstrated in the response. Few, if any, examples are provided to illustrate argument. Major components of a question might have been neglected; and major presentation errors hamper the work.
- F = Shows an inadequate grasp of the material. Work has major errors of style; and provides no supporting illustration for argument. Ideas are not clear to the reader. Work lacks a sense of structure.

Additional criteria, parameters and guidelines will be handed out in class when each assignment is introduced and discussed.

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SECTION 3. LIST OF STUDENT SERVICES AND USEFUL RESOURCES

1. Communication Studies Academic Advisor:
Ms. Sheelah O'Neill
Sheelah.ONeill@concordia.ca
2. Counselling and Psychological Services:
<http://concordia.ca/students/counselling-life-skills>
3. Concordia Library Citation and Style Guides:
<http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations>
See also the APA Formatting and Style Guide at Purdue's OWL:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
4. Student Success Centre
<http://concordia.ca/students/success>
5. Health Services:
<http://concordia.ca/students/health>
6. Financial Aid and Awards:
<http://concordia.ca/offices/faao>
7. HOJO (Off Campus Housing and Job Bank):
<http://csu.qc.ca/hojo>
8. Academic Integrity:
<http://concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity>
9. Access Centre for Students with Disabilities:
<http://concordia.ca/offices/acsd>
10. CSU Advocacy Centre:
<http://csu.qc.ca/advocacy>
11. Dean of Students Office:
<http://concordia.ca/offices/dean-students>
12. International Students Office:
<http://concordia.ca/students/international>
13. Student Hub:
<http://concordia.ca/students>
14. Department of Communication Studies:
<http://www.concordia.ca/artsci/coms.html>
15. BA Coms announcement list:
To subscribe, send an email to majordomo@lists.concordia.ca with 'subscribe bacoms' (no quotes) as the only text in your message. Save the reply for future reference.
16. Postings for internships and paid work for students in the Department of Communication Studies only (BA students cannot take internships in their first year)
<http://comsopps.concordia.ca>
17. Pictures of cats to help you get through the semester:
<http://www.cutestpaw.com/tag/cats/>
<https://www.reddit.com/r/catpictures>