DIG 6436 - PLAYABLE TEXTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Section: 0M01

College of Arts and Humanities

Dean's Office CAH

Course Information

Term: Fall 2025
Class Meeting Days: W
Class Meeting Time: 06:00PM - 07:50PM
Class Meeting Location: TCH 0351
Modality: M
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Mike Shier
Office Location: TCH 321A
Office Hours
W 3:00-6:00 and by appointment
Phone: 407.823.1290
Email: Mike.Shier@ucf.edu

Course Description

DIG 6436 CAH-DEANCAH 3(3,0)Playable Texts and Technology: PR: Graduate standing or C.I. How texts and technologies invite and invoke play, exploring theories and practices such as analog games, interactive fiction, literary games, historical simulation, mixed reality narratives. Occasionally

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop an understanding of playable texts: what they are, where they come from, and what they eventually could be
- Explore the connections between traditional texts and playable ones
- Understand the role of rules-based systems in knowledge-making
- Analyze the roles of technology and culture in emergent playable texts
- Create playable texts through the exploration of multiple digital tools
- Understand the historical and modern context of playable texts through a range of critical and theoretical lenses

Required Course Materials and Resources

Intersectional Tech
ISBN: 9780807174401
Authors: Kishonna L. Gray
Publisher: LSU Press
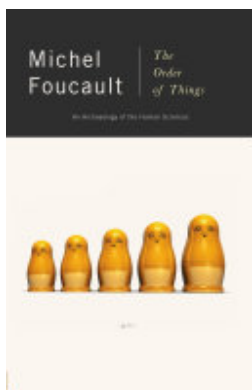**Publication Date:** 2020-09-02
Online Access: https://muse.jhu.edu/book/77262

The Order of Things
ISBN: 9780679753353
Authors: Michel Foucault
Publisher: Vintage
Publication Date: 1970-01-01

The Well-Read Game
ISBN: 9780262382922
Authors: Tracy Fullerton and Matthew Farber
Publication Date: 2025-02-01
Online Access:
https://direct.mit.edu/books/monograph/5933/The-Well-Read-GameOn-Playing-Thoughtfully

Other readings as supplied in modules
Authors: Various

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Due Date	Assignment	Deliverable	Points
When completed	Discussion Lead	Presentation	20
10/8/25	Prospectus	Paper	20
11/12/25	Draft of Final Project	Various	20
12/1/25	Final Project	Various	40

Discussion Lead (20 pts)

Students will choose a week to lead discussion on that week's readings and topics.

Prospectus (20 pts)

Students will deliver a proposal for their final project--outlining tools, methodologies, theoretical lenses, and whatever else they need to complete their proposed project.

Draft of Final Project (20 pts)

Students will submit a functional draft of their final project, which is expected to have room for revision.

Final Project (40 pts)

Students will submit a final version of their project for evaluation. Creative options will include a critical and self-evaluative statement.

Grading Scale

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	64-66%
D-	61-63%
F	0-60%

Policies for Course Grade

Makeup Work Policy

Work missed due to a communicated absence with the instructor can be made up on a timeline determined between the student and instructor.

Missed/Late Assignments

Extended deadlines can be granted at student request anytime before the due date of a particular assignment. Accordingly, late work for established deadlines will not be accepted.

Attendance

This is a graduate seminar centered around discussion and play. As such, active meeting face to face is expected and required to complete the course. Excessive absences will be discussed with the student on a case-by-case basis.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

When is it okay to use AI tools in this course?

I encourage you to use AI tools for:

- Tutorials on any of the digital tools in this course
- Help when you get stuck (e.g. asking copilot how to add music to a Twine story)
- Help brainstorming ideas for your projects
- Comparing and contrasting which tool to select or theoretical framework to use for a paper topic
- The initial part of your research where you're brainstorming or narrowing your topic

When is it not okay to use AI tools in this course?

Please do not use AI tools for:

- Writing your papers or preparing your discussion lead
- Conducting the entirety of your research

- Creating the entirety of your playable text

- Summarizing books and articles so you don't have to read them

Why? *Because if you don't do these things unassisted, you won't actually learn much in this course.*

There are many AI tools, and if I have to encourage one I would select Microsoft's **Copilot** since UCF has a special license that will not use your input to train its data. You can access this through Teams, Outlook, or a dedicated web portal. When logged in with your nid, you will be using this special education license version.

In the event that you do use AI to help or use an idea from it, it is always best policy to acknowledge it in your own work or cite the AI tool if necessary.

If you want any clarification, do not hesitate to ask questions. Undocumented or unacknowledged use of AI is a violation of academic integrity policies for this course.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF [Student Accessibility Services](#) website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; [sas@ucf.edu;](#) Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at [Student Conduct and Integrity Office](#). According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *[The Golden Rule](#)*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at [Let's Be Clear](#) and [UCF Cares](#).

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – [Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance](#) & [askanadvocate@ucf.edu](#)
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – [Student Accessibility Services](#) & [sas@ucf.edu](#)
- [Access and Community Engagement](#) (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – [Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office](#) & [complianceandethics@ucf.edu](#)
- The [Ombuds Office](#) is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the [ONAC website](#) or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the [online form](#). UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the [Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage](#).

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online [here](#).
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video [here](#) to learn more.
  - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
  - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
  - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the [UCF Alert](#) system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your [contact information is up to date](#).

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Course Schedule

Week	Topic
1	Electronic Literature
2	The Order of Things (Part 1)
3	The Order of Things (Part 2)
4	Early Playable Texts
5	Choose Your Own Adventure
6	TTRPGs
7	Tools Week
8	Card Games / Prospectus Due
9	Board Games
10	Intersectional Tech (Part 1)
11	Intersectional Tech (Part 2)
12	MUDs / RPGs
13	Draft Week
14	What is an Author?
15	Thanksgiving (No Class)
16	Final Project Due