

Course Syllabus: ATEC 6356.501

TRANSMEDIA WORLDS

AKA: "MECHANICS OF STORY II"



Course Information

ATEC	6356	501	Interactive Narrative	Transmedia Worlds	Wed : 7:00pm-9:45pm ATC_2.811
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Class Blog: <http://www.adambrackin.com/transmedia-worlds>

Professor Contact Information: adam.brackin@utdallas.edu → (albrackin@gmail.com)

Adam L. Brackin, Ph.D - Research Assistant Professor, ATEC - University of Texas at Dallas

OFFICE: **ATC_2.811** (OFFICE PHONE: **972-883-4350**) Mobile: 214-354-6161 (Leave Message!)

OFFICE HOURS: **Monday & Wednesday 10-11:30, 1:15-3:30** (& other days by appointment)

Course Description

[**Formerly "Interactive Story"**) Not long ago we were spectators, passive consumers of mass media. Today, we ARE media. Abandoning our role as passive audience members, we approach television shows, movies, even advertising as invitations to join in - as experiences to immerse ourselves in at will. This course will be taught as a follow up to ATEC "Mechanics of Story" though courses can be taken out of sequence or independent of one another. (May be repeated for credit as topics vary to a maximum of 9 credit hours.)

Students must be actively enrolled in or officially auditing this class in order to attend it due to UTD policy, fire code, and very real seating restrictions.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students will rethink the ancient art of narrative for a two way world by engaging in an exhaustive investigation of a transmedia/cross-media commercial entertainment property. Innovators and story mechanics are changing how we play, communicate, and think. We will critically examine numerous examples of this from current transmedia narrative worlds, then create our own adaptations and entries within these worlds. From marketing to experimental forms, interactive narrative is as surprising as it is inevitable and we are the witnesses to the emergence of this new form of storytelling in which the audience becomes the player and potentially author in their own right.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Art of Immersion: How the digital generation is remaking Hollywood, Madison Ave, and the way we tell stories.
by Frank Rose (Hardcover), W. W. Norton & Company; First Edition (2011) 0393076016

Reality is Broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world.
by Jane McGonigal (Hardcover), Penguin Press; First Edition (2011) 1594202850

(And selected short readings online and given in class as well as various selections from the "book" list - TBD.)

Additional Recommended Readings (from IF:MofS):

The Hero with a Thousand Faces

by Joseph Campbell (Hardcover), New World Library, (July 28, 2008) 1577315936

The Art And Craft Of Storytelling: A Comprehensive Guide to Classic Writing Techniques

by Nancy Lamb (Paperback) F&W Media, Inc., (December 15, 2008) 1582975590

The Hero's Journey

by Harold Bloom (Hardcover), Facts On File, Inc. (January 30, 2009) 0791098036

Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives

by Pat Harrigan (Hardcover) MIT Press (May 29, 2009) 0262232634

Quests: Design, Theory, and History in Games and Narratives

by Jeff Howard (Paperback), A K Peters Ltd (February 26, 2008) 156881347

Course Content, Assignments, & Academic Calendar

Students will complete reading assignments throughout the semester followed by group discussion and/or individual analysis on the class blog as a part of a daily participation grade. Students will turn in five deliverables throughout the semester: first by becoming an expert in a given transmedia universe by researching and ingesting ALL related media and writing about it, then presenting it to the class, next by creating an Original Intellectual Property Adaptation in an appropriate other media format and presenting it to the class, followed by a post-mortem of the creative process. A more detailed description of any weekly reading assignments and other requirements will be posted on the Class Blog: www.adambrackin.com/transmedia-worlds

(Course requirements or due-dates may be amended or changed; such changes will be given in writing, with sufficient advance notice for completion.)

TENTATIVE TOPICS:

- The art of visualization:** *Paratext and the real, "real" IP?*
- Adapting to adaptations:** *Lost in translation, or necessary fulfillment?*
- The misunderstanding of story and game:** *How do you engage with it?*
- The importance of choice:** *Interacting with interactivity.*
- The blurring of linear and nonlinear:** *Does the sequence matter? Can it (not)?*
- Audience to author:** *Audience, agency, the storyteller, and me!*
- The fusion of entertainment and marketing:** *What function does it serve?*
- The blurring of fiction and reality:** *Where does "ludic activity" begin?(Reality TV & Vlogs)*
- Collaboration and Emergence:** *Fun times with strangers! (MMO, ARG, & TMI)*

Note: These Case Studies are tentative, flexible, and subject to change as "new media" never stops!

JAN 15	WEEK 1	Defining "Interactive" Storytelling: <i>What is it? What isn't it? (Hugo & LOST)</i>
JAN 22	WEEK 2	Adaptation & Visualization 1 (<i>Tolkein and Jackson's Middle Earth</i>)
JAN 29	WEEK 3	Adaptation & Visualization 2 (<i>Hogwarts & Hunger Games</i>)
FEB 5	WEEK 4	Ludic Activity, Paratext, Authenticity, & Validity (<i>Walking Dead</i>)
FEB 12	WEEK 5	Linear and Non-Linear Story Models [<i>Drawn from MofS I</i>]
FEB 19	WEEK 6	D1 DUE TRANSMEDIA PRESENTATIONS DAY
FEB 26	WEEK 7	D1 DUE TRANSMEDIA PRESENTATIONS DAY
MAR 5	WEEK 8	D1 & D2 DUE TRANSMEDIA PRESENTATIONS DAY
MAR 12	WEEK 9	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
MAR 19	WEEK 10	Interaction, Sequence, Choice (<i>Yogscast Survival Games</i>)
MAR 26	WEEK 11	Audience, Authorship, Agency (<i>James Potter & Star Wars Fanfics</i>)
APR 2	WEEK 12	Collaboration, Emergence, Self-Organization (<i>ARGS</i>)
APR 9	WEEK 13	Entertainment, Marketing, Reality (<i>ARGlikes and new-media</i>)
APR 16	WEEK 14	D3 DUE ADAPTATION PRESENTATION DAY
APR 23	WEEK 15	D3 DUE ADAPTATION PRESENTATION DAY
APR 30	WEEK 16	(D3, D4 & D5 DUE) ADAPTATION PRESENTATION DAY
MAY 7	WEEK 17	(NO EXAM)

Attendance and Grading Policy

Students are generally expected to attend ALL classes unless you have a special circumstance in which case, as a courtesy, please contact me in advance by phone or email. Late work will be dropped by one letter grade (10 points) for each week it is late without exception. If there is a conflict, please turn it in early. Participation Grade is calculated as an average of all class related activity and communication.

There are five deliverables for this class NOT including any weekly homework or small assignments (which count towards the daily participation grade). **This class will be graded on a standard 10 point grading scale for all deliverables.** Grade weights will be determined as follows:

<i>Weekly Class / Blog Participation</i>	-----	15% of total grade
<i>D1: Commercial IP Presentation & Bibliography</i>	-----	15% of total grade
<i>D2: Commercial IP Critical Analysis</i>	-----	20% of total grade
<i>D3: Original IP Adaptation Presentation</i>	-----	15% of total grade
<i>D4: Original IP Adaptation</i>	-----	25% of total grade
<i>D5: Post-Mortem of Creative Process</i>	-----	10% of total grade

This class relies heavily on discussion and class participation, and a high level of professionalism and good citizenship is expected. Attention should be given to the speaker at all times and respect shown as expected within the university classroom environment. Appropriate multi-tasking is permitted only so long as it does not interfere with the high expectations described above. **This DOES NOT include personal use of the lab computers, social media sites, games, etc** unless directly related to instruction at that moment. Any student who attends all classes, completes all coursework on time, and whose deliverables all meet the high standards expected of a UTD graduate student, will receive an A in this course.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information found at the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of course syllabi. Be aware that all information contained at this link are considered to be fully a part of this syllabus herein without exception as if it were printed below.

<http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>