Description
From "The Royal Game of Ur" (2500+ BCE) to "World of Warcraft" (2004) and beyond, games have been a constant in human history. The forms of games, their experiential qualities, and their cultural significance have varied enormously from era to era and place to place. This class will examine particular games and game genres in their historical context using a case study format. We will focus on "indoor" games, those of chance and skill, as opposed to physical games and sports. The examples will be chosen (i) to have global scope and historic diversity, (ii) to relate to games that students will find familiar, and (iii) to raise particular issues in historical interpretation, the use of primary sources and changing concepts of leisure activity.

Liberal Studies Credit
This course carries Liberal Studies credit in the Understanding the Past Learning Domain. It belongs to the geographical category of Intercontinental/Comparative. Students may not get U.P. credit for more than one course in any given category.

Prerequisites
None

Course Readings and Supplies
There is no textbook for the class. There will be a variety of readings made available on-line and handed out in class.

Students will be required to purchase a deck of Pokemon Trading Cards, which are available at many outlets such as Target. We will play the game at the end of the quarter but, before then, will set aside times in class for students to trade cards.

Resources
Students in the class will have access to the game library housed in the CTI Computer Game Lab, CS&T 920. Some assignments will require that students use specific games available from this library. Students performing assignments have priority for the use of the games. See http://defrag.depaul.edu/ for information on lab times. You will be required to provide your student ID when checking out games.

Web Site
The course web site will be an important resource for all aspects of the course:

http://josquin.cti.depaul.edu/~rburke/courses/f06/gam206

The schedule and other syllabus information may change during the quarter: the web site will contain the most up-to-date information.
Organization and Assessment
GAM 206 is divided into four units. In each unit, we will study a particular culture and a game associated with it. Each unit will consist of four classes: a lecture covering the era with an emphasis on cultural issues, an in-class game play session in which we play the chosen game, a game discussion session in which we discuss the game and its milieu, and a wrap-up session in which there is a quiz followed by an examination of contemporary games that are related to the historic one under discussion. There is no midterm or final exam.

Attendance at this class is extremely important. This is particularly true of the game play sessions. Students who do not attend the game play session will receive no credit for that unit. Please make every effort to attend class on these dates. I will take attendance at all class meetings. More than two unexcused absences will result in a 50% reduction in the participation grade. More than four will result in a failing grade in that area.

It is difficult to learn a new game without the guidance of someone who has played before. To make our gameplay sessions more efficient, the class will be divided into groups of four with a designated gameplay leader. All gameplay leaders are required to meet outside of class time and play the game among themselves at least once before the in-class gameplay session. On the class meeting after the gameplay session, we will discuss the game. Gameplay leaders will be expected to contribute discussion questions in advance, and to participate actively in these session.

Sign up for the game play leader dates will begin on the first day of class. You must be present at the leaders’ session, at the in-class gameplay session, and at the following discussion in order to receive credit for the gameplay leader component of the course.

Each student will be required to complete a research project on a historic game other than one we consider together in class. The game must date from before 1900. I encourage you to look for a game that has particular relevance to your cultural heritage: games your grandparents (or great-great grandparents) might have played. There will be intermediate milestones for this project due throughout the quarter. Full details are available on the assignment handout.

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

- Unit quizzes (best 3 of 4) – 30%
- Gameplay leader – 20%
- Participation – 15%
- Research project – 35%
  - Annotated Bibliography – 10%
  - Game analysis paper – 10%
  - Final paper – 15%

Tentative Schedule
(Note that Unit 2 comes before Unit 1. This is not a mis-print: our copies of Senet are backordered at the manufacturer and won’t be here in time for our first unit.)

Introduction

Unit 2: Royalty and Society in Medieval Europe
9/13: Context: Society and Culture in the Late Middle Ages.

9/18: Game Play: Medieval Chess.

9/20: Discussion: The Transformation of Chess.
Reading: Yalom, Chapter 11 “New Chess and Isabella of Castile,” and Chapter 12 “The Rise of ‘Queen's Chess.’ ”
Pokemon Trading Day #1

Unit 1: Death and Religion in Ancient Egypt
Reading: TBA

10/2: Game Play: Senet.

Reading: Piccione, Peter A. “In Search of the Meaning of Senet” (http://gamesmuseum.uwaterloo.ca/Archives/Piccione/)
Pokemon Trading Day #2

Quiz #1.

Unit 3: The Family Game in 19th Century America
Reading: TBA

10/16: Game Play: The Checkered Game of Life.

10/18: Discussion: Family and Social Games.
Pokemon Trading Day #3


Unit 4: Children’s Games as Global Mass Culture

10/30: Game Play: Pokemon Trading Card Game.

11/1: Discussion: Games and Meta-Games.
Reading: Allison, A. Chapter 7 “Pokemon: Getting Monsters and Communicating Capitalism” in Millennial Monsters.


Conclusion: Video Games and the Future of Play
11/8: Video Games. Continuity and discontinuity in the concept of game.

11/13: Game Play: Video Games. Class meets in the Console Gaming Lab (CTI 721).

11/22: Final paper due

Policies
Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in in-class exercises. Class will start promptly. Students are individually responsible for material they may have missed due to absence or tardiness.

All assignments will be submitted to the Course On-Line site. Do not submit assignments by email. All other assignments are due at midnight on the due date. Assignments will not be submitted late.

Assignments (except for designated group assignments) must represent a student's individual effort. While students are permitted to discuss assignments at the conceptual level, under no circumstances should students share specific answers (electronically or otherwise). Papers must conform to the course guidelines on references and documentation. Use of sources without attribution constitutes plagiarism, a serious violation of academic integrity. Consult the assignment handouts or the instructor if you have questions about how or what to document.

School Policies

Online Instructor Evaluation
Course and instructor evaluations are critical for maintaining and improving course quality. To make evaluations as meaningful as possible, we need 100% student participation. Therefore, participation in the School’s web-based academic administration initiative during the eighth and ninth week of this course is a requirement of this course. Failure to participate in this process will result in a grade of incomplete for the course. This incomplete will be automatically removed within seven weeks after the end of the course and replaced by the grade you would have received if you had fulfilled this requirement.

Email
Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at http://campusconnect.depaul.edu/ is correct.

Plagiarism:
The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course requirements, should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of
plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Incomplete:
An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the School of Computer Science, Telecommunications and Information Systems. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.