History of Games

Robin Burke
GAM 206
Outline

- Structure of the class
- An example
Me

- Not a historian
- Not an expert on every kind of game
- But
  - I think games are an important medium
  - No other course teaches this material
Contacting me

- Email is best
  - rburke@cs.depaul.edu
  - I am not on campus every day
  - When I am on campus, I am not always in my office

- Office hours
  - Office: 453
  - 10:30 – 12:00 pm Tue
  - 2:00 – 3:30 pm Wed
  - alternate hours possible – just ask!
Introductions

- Name
- Last non-computer game you played
This class

- Using games to explore history
  - What does a game teach us about the people who played it?
- Using history to explore games
  - What have games meant to different people over time?
- Method
  - Case study
Our cases

- **Four games**
  - Senet
  - Chess
  - Faro
  - Pokemon Trading Card Game

- **Four historical places / times**
  - Egypt, Middle Kingdom
  - Medieval Iberia
  - Frontier America
  - Late 20th century Japan
A Caution
Assignments

- Research paper
  - biggest component of the grade
  - pick a particular pre-1900 game
  - play it
  - study it
  - write about it

- Unit leader
  - lead your group in the material of one unit
  - teach the game to them
  - lead discussions of sources

- Quizzes
  - every day (except gameplay days)
  - a short quiz on the day's reading
Unit Leader

- Must be present for gameplay and discussion
- Senet
  - Play: 9/24
  - Discussion 9/26
- Medieval Chess
  - Play: 10/8
  - Discussion 10/10
- Faro
  - Play: 10/22
  - Discussion: 10/24
- Pokemon Trading Card Game
  - Play: 11/5
  - Discussion: 11/7
- Sign up to get your first choice
Research and write about a historical game
- cannot be one that we're using in class
- must have been created and played before 1900

Uniqueness
- only one paper per game

Milestones
- 9/17: Pick your game
  - ASAP to be sure to get it!
  - Ask me for ideas if necessary
  - If you haven’t picked, I’ll assign a game.
- 10/1: Preliminary bibliography
- 10/10: Game analysis
- 10/22: Annotated bibliography
- 10/29: Thesis statement
- 11/18: Final paper
Resources

- Game library
  - 9th floor PC Game lab
  - also has a large collection of board and card games
  - check out with student ID
- Course On-Line
- Course web page
  - Coming soon
Example 1

- "Checkered Game of Life" (1860)
- spinner 1-6
  1. One square up or down
  2. One square right or left
  3. One square diagonally in either direction
  4. One or two squares up or down
  5. One or two squares right or left
  6. One or two squares diagonally

- picture squares send you back to start
- game ends when someone reaches "Happy Old Age"
Example 2

- Game of Life from 1960
Example 3

- Game of Life from 1990
Compare

- What is the same?
- What is different?
- What is “Life” about?
Monday

- Online reading
  - Salen and Zimmerman (library website)
  - Parlett (COL)