

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

BLOOMSBURY, BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC and the Diana logo are
trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain 2022

Copyright © Tison Pugh and Lynn Ramey and contributors, 2022

Tison Pugh and Lynn Ramey and contributors have asserted their right under the Copyright,
Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work.

Cover design: Charlotte James
Cover image © itscatrameymedia

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying,
recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior
permission in writing from the publishers.

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc does not have any control over, or responsibility for,
any third-party websites referred to or in this book. All internet addresses given in
this book were correct at the time of going to press. The author and publisher
regret any inconvenience caused if addresses have changed or sites have ceased
to exist, but can accept no responsibility for any such changes.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-3502-6971-2
PB: 978-1-3502-6975-0
ePDF: 978-1-3502-6972-9
eBook: 978-1-3502-6973-6

Typeset by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.
Printed and bound in Great Britain

To find out more about our authors and books visit www.bloomsbury.com
and sign up for our newsletters.

CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPING AND TEACHING GAMES-FOCUSED ENGLISH COURSES: A TECHNOLOGICAL AND CURRICULAR WALKTHROUGH

Eric Detweiler

One of the first video games I remember playing is the 1990 adventure game *Conquests of Camelot: The Search for the Grail*. Released by Sierra On-Line and designed by Christy Marx, the game puts players in the role of King Arthur, solving puzzles and navigating action sequences as they traverse Camelot and the surrounding world. There are two major reasons the game has stayed with me. The first is that I never finished it. I successfully chatted up Camelot's inhabitants, defeated the Black Knight, and solved a series of riddles posed by a circle of mysterious stones. But soon thereafter, I found myself standing at the edge of a seemingly uncrossable frozen lake. For weeks, I wrinkled my preteen brain inputting every increasingly frustrated command I could imagine into the game's text parser: "look at lake," "cross lake," "walk on ice," "break ice," "PUNCH LAKE," "FIGHT ICE," "ASHKHDLASKJHFSAK." The second reason is its manual, which featured artificially weathered pages and a cover that read, in lettering reminiscent of an illuminated manuscript, "Liber Ex Doctrina" (Sierra). (I didn't know Latin, but that cover was cool.) In addition to instructional boilerplate, the manual included an introduction by Marx; an overview of Arthurian legends; game maps; and, tucked in the back, a short section titled "Walk-Through" that was preceded by an all-caps warning: "THE FOLLOWING SECTION INCLUDES HINTS THAT EXPERIENCED GAME PLAYERS MAY NOT WANT TO SEE. CONTINUE READING ONLY IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE GETTING STARTED PLAYING YOUR GAME." Because of its informational and aesthetic richness, I spent an inordinate amount of time poring over that manual. Unfortunately, the walkthrough only covered the game's first few scenes, so Arthur found himself doomed to eternity on the southern edge of a frozen lake, unaided by a player who lacked access to the more extensive walkthroughs of *QuestBusters: The Adventurer's Journal* and who was too shy to call the phone numbers listed in the manual's "NEED A HINT?" section (Sierra 24-5). I encountered a few more walkthroughs in the ensuing years, including my cherished copy of *Final Fantasy Tactics: The Official Strategy Guide* (Hollinger and Ratkos), which I used until it fell to literal pieces. But until recently, such guides often carried a patina of shame, marking the player as insufficiently independent. To consult a walkthrough was to admit defeat. Fortunately, signs indicate that this stigma is dissipating (Consalvo

95–8; “Whose Souls?”), helped along by recent games so brutally difficult that beating them without assistance is all but unthinkable.

In the spirit of that sea change, this chapter aims to assist its readers across the frozen lake. Or, to drop the aquatic metaphors, it is meant to serve as a broad walkthrough of the curricular and technological trials one can face when designing a games-focused course in English studies. One of my key assumptions is that developing such courses should involve picking one another’s brains and working collaboratively, not grinding in stubborn isolation. I have addressed video games in a number of pedagogical contexts,¹ but I focus here on a general-education course titled Video Games and/as Literature. I begin by providing some local institutional context for the course, then offer a brief overview of technological challenges and possibilities that attend such courses. This information is followed by a detailed look at the course’s structure, including some of the work necessary to adapt it into an online format. As with any walkthrough, readers are welcome to adopt, ignore, and exploit the following strategies as they see fit.

Institutional Context

Video Games and/as Literature (henceforth VGAAL) is an iteration of ENGL 2020: Themes in Literature and Culture, a general-education course offered by the Department of English at Middle Tennessee State University. It is currently one of three courses that students can take to fulfill a Humanities and/or Fine Arts requirement. Sections of ENGL 2020 cover a wide range of topics, including science fiction, African American literature, nature writing, romance novels, and disability literature. The course thus gives instructors the opportunity to address their areas of expertise in tandem with areas of potential interest to students. At the same time, all ENGL 2020 sections pursue six learning objectives. In general, the objectives emphasize analytic, critical, and contextually informed approaches to reading and writing about “texts”:

1. Students will improve their ability to read, think, and write critically and analytically about a wide variety of texts.
2. Students will be able to identify basic structural and/or technical elements and strategies and to discuss how those elements contribute to the overall effect of a literary work.
3. Students will gain a greater sense of the range and sorts of texts that are available to them as readers and, hopefully, of the sorts of texts that they most enjoy and wish to continue reading.
4. Students will gain a greater sense of the “conversations” between texts; that is, they will have a sense of the ways in which texts respond to earlier texts, develop ongoing cultural conversations about key issues, develop genres and style, etc.
5. Students will gain a greater sense of the ways in which texts function within culture(s), of the ways in which texts can be used to understand and gain insight

into cultures/historical movements, and of the ways in which cultural context shapes both the production and reading of texts.

6. Students will develop a sense of themselves as readers; they will gain greater independence in their interpretations and become more aware of their own approaches, assumptions, and interpretive strategies. Conversely, they will become aware of the range of possible reading strategies, encounter and test out new ways of working with texts, and increase their interpretive repertoire. (“ENGL 2020/2030”)

As is apparent, these learning objectives address a range of critical thinking skills relevant to many, if not most, courses in literary studies.

Proposals for new versions of ENGL 2020 are approved by a departmental committee. I submitted my proposal for VGAAL in 2017 and was approved to teach two sections of the course in Spring 2018. The description for the first iteration of the course, which was drafted for that proposal, states:

In recent years, gamers, critics, and scholars have started asking whether video games qualify as art and whether they merit serious study. In other words, video games are following in the footsteps of more established media—novels, movies, television—that were once dismissed as trashy entertainment but gave rise to respected works of art. Along the way, video games have started using complex literary and narrative techniques. In some cases, game designers have adapted written works like Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* and Douglas Adams’s *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*. In others, independent game designers have created games with interactive narratives that explore complicated questions about identity, death, and relationships—questions that have long been explored by other forms of literature and art.

In this course, students will draw on scholarly frameworks from English studies, game studies, and related fields to analyze video games as a narrative form. Students will explore how video games’ interactive multimedia narratives shift and affirm our assumptions about what stories can do and how they affect us. Along the way, students will read scholarship about literature and video games; read works of literature alongside video-game adaptations; and play video games that extend and challenge our notions of story-driven art.

While the proposal’s approval meant I could flesh out the course’s curricular particulars—what students would create, play, and read—it also raised a set of technological questions on which that curriculum would depend. To put it succinctly: What game-related technological resources could I safely assume students and I would have at our disposal, and what could I do to secure necessary and supplementary resources for students? Before turning to the course’s structure, let me spend a moment addressing these unavoidable complications.

Technovania

Around the same time I abandoned *Conquests of Camelot*, I played *Metroid II: Return of Samus* on the original Game Boy. Most parts of that game are not germane to this chapter, but one iconic aspect of its gameplay provides a useful analogy for what follows. In some ways, playing *Metroid II* is similar to playing an early *Super Mario Bros.* game: by manipulating the character in 2D profile, players navigate the world of the game, eliminating enemies and collecting items that grant new abilities. But unlike early Mario games, players do not just move left to right through a series of discrete, relatively linear levels. Instead, the game is essentially one big level: players might move left to right, down and back up and then left again, with the powers afforded by the items collected granting access to new parts of the game's map. This approach to level design and exploration has influenced so many games that it has arguably spawned a genre all its own: Metroidvania games, the label a portmanteau of *Metroid* and the also influential *Castlevania* franchise.

As I prepared to launch VGAAL, I found myself thinking like the designers of a Metroidvania game: What items could I assume students would have at their immediate disposal, and what possibilities and areas of inquiry would those items open to them? Which items did I need to provide students access to and which were optional, helpful for ancillary elements but not integral to the main quest? Which areas of the map did all students need to move through in an established order and which areas could they work around or navigate in a nonlinear fashion? For example, I knew I would be teaching in a computer classroom, so all students would have access to a computer for in-class playthroughs of certain browser-based games. I could assume some students who signed up for a class with “video games” in the title would have some sort of gaming machine, but that is by no means guaranteed at a regional comprehensive university serving many students from working-class backgrounds. I certainly couldn't assume students owned state-of-the-art consoles or gaming computers. Circa 2018, one student might have had a Chromebook and the latest PlayStation, another a smartphone and a three-year-old gaming laptop, and yet another a beloved Nintendo 3DS on its way to relative obsolescence.

With all that in mind, I came to three realizations:

1. I needed to select games that would be as accessible as possible for students. This required picking games available on a wide array of platforms that did not require cutting-edge hardware to run, and which were not cost-prohibitive.
2. If possible, I needed to provide students access to required games outside of class. This would ensure that students were not entirely left to their own devices.
3. As a final contingency, students experiencing financial hardship who could not afford required games, or whose computers crashed in the middle of the semester, or who commuted long distances to campus and thus had minimal access to on-campus technological resources outside of class time, necessitated supplementary options. Moreover, the course needed to be accessible for disabled

students who might not be able to play certain games but who should not be inadvertently barred from participating and succeeding in the course.²

Those realizations prompted a flurry of emails and phone calls as I prepared to teach the course. I contacted our IT department to see if there were any campus computer labs students could use for playing assigned games; I reached out to a console-equipped game room in our student union as well. For different reasons, neither proved feasible, although I did receive permission for students to reserve one computer associated with our library's makerspace for out-of-class gameplay.

Fortunately, I applied for and received a competitive internal grant through my university's Faculty Instructional Technology Center that funded the purchase of a PlayStation 4 Slim, two gaming laptops, and accessories (e.g., HDMI cables, controllers, mice, game-capture cards) for dedicated use in my sections of ENGL 2020. This allowed students, for instance, to collaborate on in-class playthroughs of higher-end games that the classroom computers could not run. I also scheduled my Spring 2018 office hours in our classroom so students could use the equipment to play required games outside of class time.

I could easily spend the rest of this chapter discussing technological challenges faced and solutions pursued. However, in addition to the institutional particularities of many of those challenges and solutions, even the relatively generalizable issues change rapidly. As hardware, software, copyright law, and university policies fluctuate, last year's solutions can become next year's problems, and that is why I end this section as I began it: by drawing a comparison to Metroidvania games. It is immensely difficult to design a video-game course that will unfold in exactly the same way for all students, especially over time. Instructors cannot—or at least, I would suggest, should not—assume students will move like Mario, travelling reliably left to right toward a single end point with only minor deviations along the way.³ Both synchronically and diachronically, I would conceptualize such courses as unfolding across larger, more modular, and less linear paths. Which items are essential for all students to have in their inventories? Which chambers are indispensable and which can be bypassed? Might three different people move through the same challenges in three radically different ways rather than all taking the exact same path? Which parts of the map can be walled off or added in future iterations? As will become clear in the following section, many aspects of VGAAL are meant to be modular and adjustable. But beyond that, I would tentatively present a “technovania” approach as a useful heuristic for thinking about the relations between institutions, technologies, students, and the design of such courses.

Course Walkthrough

In this section, I draw most of my descriptions and examples from more recent iterations of VGAAL. Over three years, I have taught six sections of it—three face-to-face, two asynchronous online courses offered in the summer, and one synchronous

online course—and I make changes every time. For instance, when I began teaching VGAAL, I used Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Jonas Heide Smith, and Susana Pajares Tosca's *Understanding Video Games* as the required textbook and found it effective in that role. However, in the interest of defraying students' costs, I have since turned entirely to readings accessible online, through our university's library, or as fair-use PDFs provided via our learning management system.

In its current form, the course is organized into three interrelated units: (1) Historicizing Games, (2) Analyzing Games, and (3) Arguing with Games. Each unit corresponds to one of three major projects. In addition to the major projects, coursework includes three key components:

- **Gaming Journal:** Students keep a journal (analog or digital) documenting their gameplay experiences. They must cover required games and average two pages of journaling per week. Students are encouraged to journal about extracurricular games they play and incorporate diagrams and illustrations as they see fit. I collect the journals at midterm and finals, reading them and assigning a completion grade before returning them to students.
- **Reading Notes:** On days with assigned readings, I check students' notes. They are asked to take notes on printed or digital copies of readings, with markup and marginalia on each page, or in a notebook or digital document, with roughly one line of notes per page of reading. Students submit their notes—as photographs, videos, or documents—to online dropboxes. I always allow students to miss at least a couple sets of notes without penalty.
- **Reading Responses:** Students also post responses to course readings in online forums. Students are typically responsible for completing eight to ten 200-word responses throughout the course. Responses are due a few hours before class so I can incorporate students' questions, interests, and concerns into that day's class. When I teach VGAAL asynchronously online, students complete half their responses by responding to other students' posts, thus bolstering student interaction despite the lack of real-time class meetings.

Throughout the course, students play a number of games during and outside of class. Many of the in-class games are tied to particular units. The games students play outside of class are the required ones, which they are expected to either complete or dedicate a certain number of hours to. In each section of the course that I have taught, I have assigned two or three of the following:

- *Celeste*: A Metroidvania platformer. Players climb a mountain while navigating physical manifestations of the protagonist's anxiety.⁴
- *Kentucky Route Zero*: A narrative-heavy adventure game infused with magical realism. Players assume the role of a delivery driver roaming the roads and caves of Central Kentucky.
- *Night in the Woods*: Another narrative-heavy adventure game. Players assume the role of an anthropomorphic cat who drops out of college, returns to her

Rust Belt hometown, reconnects with friends and family, and investigates local mysteries.

- *Papers, Please*: A puzzle game in which players assume the role of an immigration officer in a fictional Eastern Bloc country, processing paperwork presented by those attempting to enter the country.
- *Secret of Monkey Island*: An influential adventure game from 1990. Satirizes the conventions of swashbuckling pirate stories.
- *Undertale*: A retro indie role-playing game that subverts the genre's conventions, with the player slowly realizing the "monsters" populating the game's world are sympathetic beings with complex emotional lives.

I have swapped games in and out for a variety of reasons. For example, *Night in the Woods* is one of my favorites to teach, but many students' laptops (as well as my own) were not powerful enough to run it without overheating. I still include *Papers, Please* as an in-class playthrough but no longer require students to purchase it because, while a full playthrough adds depth to the game's narrative and ludological arguments, the brevity of the game's core loop lends itself to collaborative playthrough and discussion across one or two class meetings. In recent sections, I have required three games: during the Historicizing Games unit, *Secret of Monkey Island* (with students expected to put in seven hours); during the Analyzing Games unit, *Celeste* (eight hours); and during the Arguing with Games unit, either *Kentucky Route Zero* or *Undertale* (seven hours). I provide a choice in the last case so students can pick the game that suits their interests and because some of *Undertale*'s challenges present substantial accessibility issues.

With the preceding overview in place, I turn now to the three main course units. The first unit, Historicizing Games, introduces students to the history of video games and how that background has shaped the medium and its reception. We read about the nineteenth-century moral panic over pulp fiction (Adler) to contextualize moral panics over video games (Kocurek, "Night Trap"; Williams) as part of an established historical pattern. This allows us to shift from tired questions (e.g., "Do video games cause violence?") to more nuanced historical questions (e.g., "How do 1990s debates about violence in video games reflect the decade's cultural anxieties?"). We also read about the ways technology has shaped and been shaped by video games (Kocurek, *Save*). This extends from the historical ties between video games and military research (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 67) to the history of genres and programs (Laskow; Montfort). Students also do brief in-class playthroughs, sometimes individually and sometimes collaboratively, of "historical" games from *Spacewar!* to *Colossal Cave Adventure* to *Maniac Mansion*.⁵ As the unit's required game, *Secret of Monkey Island* provides us with a shared, ongoing object of discussion and analysis as well as an option for students to write about for the unit's major project. That project, titled Video Game History, requires students to pick a video game released before 2000, research its history, and write the story of its development, reception, and/or legacy.⁶ In some cases, students find a game's reception is the most noteworthy part of its history; in other cases, it is the

game's development or influence on later games. For potential primary sources, I direct students to online repositories of game magazines ("Games"; *Retromags*). Students write two drafts of this 1,500-word paper and workshop the first draft with classmates.

In the second unit, Analyzing Games, students examine more contemporary games. Given the course's learning objectives and curricular *raison d'être*, I begin by covering more conventional approaches to literary analysis. An excerpt from Joanna Wolfe and Laura Wilder's *Digging into Literature* introduces students to the difference between evaluative claims (as are common in reviews of games and other media) and interpretive claims (13–28). Students practice interpretation by reading and discussing short stories. I typically assign stories in genres like science fiction and fantasy (e.g., Jemisin; Sparks), pointing out the tropes and conventions such genres share with many video games to help students think about narrative analysis across media. We also discuss ludology and narratology, although I am careful to present the two as complementary lenses for thinking about games rather than as a binary opposition (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 222–4). While I appreciate the risk of overemphasizing narrative when analyzing games, given the framework of ENGL 2020, my goal is to introduce and direct students to games that merit narrative analysis while keeping games' indispensable nonnarrative elements in the analytical mix. That means many notable games, from *Tetris* to *Mario Kart* to *Among Us*, are not a good fit for this unit. As with short stories, a game does not need an expansive narrative to be worth analyzing, but it does need a story about which one can make complex interpretive claims. As students play *Celeste* outside of class, we undertake one-day in-class playthroughs of games like *Braid*, *Donut County*, *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)*, and *What Remains of Edith Finch*. These playthroughs typically involve one or two students playing while others watch, offering live analysis based on course readings. For example, students typically play *Never Alone* in tandem with a discussion of video game aesthetics. Before class, I draw a large two-column table on a classroom whiteboard and populate the left column with key aesthetic terms: rules, perspective, space, music, etc. (see Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., Chapter 5). During class, students take turns playing through the game's early stages on a large screen while their classmates comment on how the various aesthetic elements listed in the table contribute to the game's ludological, narratological, and rhetorical effects. As they do so, I record and summarize their comments in the table's right column. After the playthrough concludes, we discuss how students might synthesize the comments recorded in the table into a sustained scholarly argument about the game.

The more I have taught this unit, the more I have shifted from traditional game-centered journal articles to shorter readings that, while still representing substantial scholarly work, more closely model the scope of the analyses expected from students (see deWinter; Salter; Wolf). In addition to applying these readings to in-class and required games, we analyze the readings themselves, discussing how students can make similar moves in their writing.

The unit culminates with the Narrative Analysis, the second major project. In 2,000 words, students analyze the narrative of a twenty-first-century game, drawing on the game's narrative and nonnarrative components as well as secondary sources to make

an interpretive argument. Students are allowed to write about required games, but they frequently write about other games of their own choosing. Students have chosen, and written effectively about, everything from independent titles like *The Stanley Parable* and *Darkest Dungeon* to blockbuster games in the *Fallout* and *Red Dead Redemption* franchises. Like the Video Game History project, the Narrative Analysis goes through two drafts and a peer workshop.

I want students to finish the course with a sense of video games not just as objects of analysis, but as a medium that can itself do analytic, critical work. I do not want students just to write *about* games; I want them to write *with* games. In the final unit, Arguing with Games, we turn to the ways games make arguments, and students make text-based games of their own. In the case of this unit, the final project, titled Game Scholarship, asks students to use Twine, "an open-source tool for telling interactive, nonlinear stories" (*Twine*), to create a game that makes an argument about games.

We spend the final weeks of the course playing and discussing games that make arguments about games. For example, *Undertale* offers a performative critique of systems that have long been staples of role-playing games. We also read about and discuss the conceptual and practical work involved in developing a game (Anthropy 143–58). But more than anything, I give students time to experiment with Twine. They work through tutorials (Hammond), play and read about noteworthy Twine games (Kopas), explore the Twine Wiki, and look at the back end of games by past students. While there are other free game-development tools students could use, Twine is a strong fit for VGAAL: it resonates with the course's textual emphasis, builds on adventure games students have examined throughout the course (Laskow; Montfort; Salter), and takes a relatively small amount of time and programming knowhow to learn.

In the in-person course, this is a collaborative project that students pursue in groups of three or four. Our computer classroom becomes a workshop space where students swap Twine tips, beta test each other's games, and flesh out their own games. Because of the difficulty of remote collaboration, it is typically an individual project when I teach it online, although I allow collaboration if classmates express a mutual interest in working together. Because I cannot ensure online students access to the resources of a computer classroom, I also provide an alternative final assignment: a Video Game Keyword essay in which students select a key term or phrase relevant to gaming (e.g., "behavior," "aesthetics") and write a piece of cultural criticism focused on that term.⁷ However, I have found that most students choose the Game Scholarship option, and in both in-person and online courses, it has generated some of the most memorable student projects I have ever received. Students have created Twine games that make arguments about the gaming industry's profit models, games' representation of women and queer people, power-fantasy narratives, win-states, and exaggerated links between video games and violent behavior.

Bearing such projects in mind, my hope is that students emerge from VGAAL not only with a sense of the historical, textual, technological, and cultural factors that shape narrative games, not only with a sense of how to apply and extend English studies' conventional methods to such games, but also prepared to apply such factors and

methods to the creation of games and related interactive media, using narrative analysis as a means of invention at least as much as a means of critique (see Brown). In other words, I hope not only that they are prepared to cross that frozen lake and analyze its narrative significance but also that they can go further than I ever could, collaboratively imagining a sea of analytical and ludonarratological possibilities that stretch beyond English studies' and game studies' current horizons.

Notes

1. Materials from other courses can be found at <http://Rheteric.org/teaching>.
2. For some of the resources I consulted on this last point, see "AbleGamers"; Beaton; "Video Gaming Accessibility"
3. Warp pipes, shortcuts, and speedrunning exploits notwithstanding.
4. When introducing students to the game, which can be extremely difficult, I discuss and encourage them to use the game's "assist mode" as needed (see Frank).
5. In most cases, I direct students to versions of historical games redesigned for or ported to contemporary browsers, such as versions currently hosted on the Internet Archive.
6. While this is admittedly a somewhat arbitrary historical marker, it corresponds to a meaningful moment in video-game history: the arrival of the sixth generation of consoles.
7. For models of this approach to writing about video games (which students read some of in the class), see Payne and Huntemann.

Works Cited

- "AbleGamers Blog." *The AbleGamers Charity*, 2018, <https://ablegamers.org/category/ablegamers-blog/>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Adler, Rachel. "The 19th Century Moral Panic over ... Paper Technology." *Slate*, Aug. 4, 2017, <https://slate.com/technology/2017/08/the-19th-century-moral-panic-over-paper-technology.html>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Anthropy, Anna. *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters: How Freaks, Normals, Amateurs, Artists, Dreamers, Dropouts, Queers, Housewives, and People Like You Are Taking Back an Art Form*. Seven Stories P, 2012.
- Beaton, Catherine. "Access and Accessibility Links: Games." *Catherine Beaton*, Rochester Institute of Technology, https://www.ist.rit.edu/~ciiics/a-a_games.php. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Brown, James J., Jr. "Crossing State Lines: Rhetoric and Software Studies." *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*, edited by Jim Ridolfo and William Hart-Davidson, U of Chicago P, 2015, pp. 20–32.
- Conquests of Camelot: The Search for the Grail*. Sierra On-Line, 1990.
- Consalvo, Mia. *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames*. MIT P, 2007.
- deWinter, Jennifer. "Miyamoto/Kojima: Authorship." Payne and Huntemann, pp. 177–84.
- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon, Jonas Heide Smith, and Susana Pajares Tosca. *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2016.
- "ENGL 2020/2030 Learning Objectives." *Gen Ed English*, Middle Tennessee State University, May 19, 2019, https://www.mtsu.edu/genedenglish/ENGL2020_2030Objectives.php. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.

- Frank, Allegra. "Celeste Is Hard, but Its Creators Are Smart about Difficulty." *Polygon*, Jan. 26, 2018, <https://www.polygon.com/2018/1/26/16935964/celeste-difficulty-assist-mode>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- "Games and Gamer Magazines." *Internet Archive*, 2014, <https://archive.org/details/gamemagazines>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Hammond, Adam. "A Total Beginner's Guide to Twine 2.1." *Adam Hammond*, <http://www.adamhammond.com/twineguide/>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Hollinger, Elizabeth, and James Ratkos. *Final Fantasy Tactics: The Official Strategy Guide*. Prima Publishing, 2001.
- Jemisin, N. K. "On the Banks of the River Lex." *How Long 'til Black Future Month*. Hachette, 2018, pp. 280–95.
- Kocurek, Carly A. "Night Trap: Moral Panic." Payne and Huntemann, pp. 309–15.
- Kocurek, Carly A. *Save Point*. Kickstarter, 2020, <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/carlykocurek/save-point>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Kopas, Merritt. *Videogames for Humans*. In Star Books, 2015.
- Laskow, Sarah. "Welcome to Interactive Fiction: You're a Wizard-Sniffing Pig." *Atlas Obscura*, Dec. 1, 2017, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/welcome-to-interactive-fiction-wizard-sniffing-pig-controversy-video-games>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Montfort, Nick. "Adventure." *Debugging Game History: A Critical Lexicon*, edited by Henry Lowood and Raiford Guins, MIT P, 2016, pp. 13–19.
- Payne, Matthew Thomas, and Nina B. Huntemann, editors. *How to Play Video Games*. New York UP, 2019.
- Retromags*. <https://www.retromags.com/>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Salter, Anastasia. "King's Quest: Narrative." Payne and Huntemann, pp. 29–35.
- Sierra On-Line. *Liber ex Doctrina*, 1990, http://www.sierrahelp.com/Documents/Manuals/Conquests_of_Camelot_-_The_Search_for_the_Grail_-_Manual.pdf. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- Sparks, Amber. "Take Your Daughter to the Slaughter." *The Unfinished World: And Other Stories*. Liveright, 2016, pp. 81–4.
- Twine. Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation, <https://twinery.org/>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- "Twine Wiki." *Twine*, <https://twinery.org/wiki/start>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- "Video Gaming Accessibility." *Library of Congress*, <https://www.loc.gov/nls/resources/general-resources-on-disabilities/video-gaming-accessibility/>. Accessed Dec. 11, 2020.
- "Whose Souls? Demon Souls!" *The Besties*, Nov. 27, 2020, <https://the-besties.simplecast.com/episodes/whose-souls-demons-souls>. Accessed May 17, 2021.
- Williams, Dmitri. "The Video Game Lightning Rod." *Information, Communication & Society*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2003, pp. 523–50.
- Wolf, Mark J. P. "BioShock Infinite: World-Building." Payne and Huntemann, pp. 75–81.
- Wolfe, Joanna, and Laura Wilder. *Digging into Literature: Strategies for Reading, Analysis, and Writing*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015.