Games in College Classrooms
A Three-Day Institute
June 10-12, 2019 at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine

FMI: www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center/events/games.html

Games are coming to college classrooms.

They’re ubiquitous in American culture, of course. The videogame industry is more profitable than Hollywood films; nearly every student carries with them a game-playing phone. It’s not all digital, either. Board games are undergoing a golden age, with thousands of new titles are expanding the subjects of games – from animal evolution to Jane Austen novels to the history of slavery. Not only are we seeing more games than ever, we’re learning more about what games can do. An interdisciplinary field of academic study, New Media Studies, has emerged to provide the vocabulary and methods to take these important new forms of representation seriously.

Games offer new potential for transformative teaching. Video games, board games, escape rooms – all are being brought in to higher education. Consider Reacting to the Past (RTTP), a set of deeply developed classroom role-playing games that engages disciplines such as History, Classics, Religion, Literature, Government, and Economics. Students in Reacting classes may become Framers of the Constitution, critics of Galileo, adherents of Gandhi, proponents of democracy in ancient Greece, or characters in dozens of other games. Working from a common set of documents, they prepare public addresses, deliver their oratory in class, and seek to advance the interest of their character or faction. Since they were first developed in the 1990s, Reacting games have been used in hundreds of colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad. The system has received awards for pedagogical innovation, and
developmental support from a range of institutions, including the National Science Foundation and Teagle Foundation. New Reacting games are being developed for use in STEM classrooms.

This three-day workshop is meant to introduce college-level instructors to the possibilities offered by games in the classroom. We will introduce instructors to RTTP though a day-long Reacting game, examine the use of other role-immersion games and other classroom models, and even take a crack at designing our own simple games. We’ll also examine some important literature on games, and leave plenty of time for opening gaming. Be sure to share with us your particular interest in games and teaching, so we can help tailor the workshop to your needs.

Contacts and information
Cost and accommodations: A small registration fee of $25 is expected on the first day of conference for those not employed by Bowdoin College. This includes all materials, as well as morning coffee and lunch. Participants arrange their own accommodations and dinners. Brunswick is a lovely coastal destination with excellent shops and restaurants.

Application deadline: May 15, 2019
Website: www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center/events/games.html

More for information, contact

  Kathryn Byrnes, Center for Learning and Teaching, kbyrnes@bowdoin.edu
  Patrick Rael, Department of History, Bowdoin College, prael@bowdoin.edu
Schedule:
Our days will run from 9:00am to 5:00pm, with morning and afternoon breaks, and of course lunch.

Monday, June 10
After a brief introduction, we’ll spend the first day encountering Reacting to the Past (RTTP) with Professor Charlotte Carrington-Farmer, a RTTP facilitator from Roger Williams University, who will moderate a day-long play session of Reacting with a game entitled *The Trial of Anne Hutchinson: Liberty, Law, and Intolerance in Puritan New England*. Participants will take on roles of the followers and allies of John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and those of Anne Hutchinson, a strong-willed and brilliant religious dissenter.

Lunch: Catered

Evening session: Open gaming

Tuesday, June 11:
We’ll spend Tuesday reflecting on issues raised by RTTP, and start thinking about other ways games can enter college classrooms.

Morning session I: Board games in classrooms (Salem 1692) [Rael]

Morning session II: Diversity and accessibility in classroom games [Golovkova]

Lunch: Dining Hall

Afternoon session: Role-immersion models [Nerdahl]

Evening session: Afternoon drinks at Frontier, then open gaming

Wednesday, June 12:
Morning session I: Reflections and readings discussion [Rael]

Morning session II: Game design lab

Working lunch: Catered

Afternoon session I: Game design lab

Afternoon session II: Reporting out and concluding reflections