Final Video Game Rhetorical Analysis Research Essay

ENG 2770

Professor Piero

**Length:** 8-10 full pages

# Points: 100

**Final Due Date: See Syllabus**

# Purpose

# This essay builds on the previous essay and writing/reflection/research throughout the course by extending close reading, analysis, and argumentation skills to the analysis of a video game of your choice. As an increasingly dominant cultural form, video games work rhetorically, which is to say that they persuade us (as we read in Ian Bogost’s work). In this paper, we want to do the following: 1) analyze video games as culturally important, influential, and persuasive texts, 2) analyze the rhetorics at play in a particular another game with which you choose to work, and 3) write an argumentative essay that analyzes the rhetoric of that game using a particular humanities method discussed/modeled in the course. *You will not be graded on how well you play the game but instead on the effectiveness of your argumentation and writing*.

# Audience

Your intended audience for this assignment will be the other members of the class and scholars in game studies. As always, you need to think about our needs as readers, whether you’re writing about the game we all played or you’re writing about another game.

# Assignment

You should write an essay of 8-10 pages based on the following prompt:

* Choose one video game (it can be one we read about/played in the course or one you choose), and compose a thesis-driven research essay that analyzes the game rhetorically through a particular socio-cultural methodology. Focus on one specific cultural issue (see the Week 8 Lesson folder for ideas) to guide your rhetorical argument. Support your analysis with direct analysis of the game, sound argumentation, and research. While some brief discussion of ethos, pathos, and logos is needed in this essay, your essay should focus on an argument that you make that takes up some cultural, rhetorical, sociological, or philosophical issue that you identify in the game-text as being important. You’ll need to use at least 8 peer-reviewed scholarly sources to support your claims (Bogost’s essay can be one of them, though it doesn’t have to be). You may use some of the sources we worked with in class, but you should also find your own research as well. See the "Research Resources" tab in Blackboard for more help with this.

**Research**

Please use the ENG 2770 Research Guide to find your peer-reviewed research. It's available here and is listed under the "Research Resources tab in Blackboard:

<https://libguides.tri-c.edu/gaming>

*Be sure to search Tri-C’s library as well as OhioLink for game studies books*. *We have a growing collection of game studies books at the Westshore Campus*. *I also have a bookshelf of game studies books in my office*. *If you’re taking a particular theoretical approach to a game, you can use peer-reviewed sources from a non-game studies field as long as it helps make your argument.*

**Elements of the Game to Observe**:

* Mechanics (reward system, controls, constraints, limitations, rules, auction house/economy, travel, money)
* Narratives (in quests, cut scenes, loading screens, etc.)
* Images and Iconography (architecture, city design, character appearance, NPCs, environment, etc.)
* Your own cognitive-affective responses to the game
* Communities of practice inside the game (guilds, dungeon groups, etc.) or outside the game (game forums).
* Game industry, marketing, announcements, and news

**A Starter List of Issues to Analyze as You Play** (there's more than these things--this is meant just to jumpstart your thinking):

* Race
* Gender
* Sexuality
* Sex
* LGBTQ+ issues
* Labor
* Consumerism
* Environmentalism
* Politics
* Religion
* Philosophy
* Psychology
* Gaming Cultures and Communities
* Monetization
* Body Image/Size
* Narrative
* Art
* History

**Evaluation Criteria**

* Appropriate response to the prompt
* 8-10 pages in length
* Clear thesis statement that is developed throughout the essay
* Some analysis of ethos, pathos, and logos
* A focused purpose in your writing – not too broad
* Strong support from the text
* Evidence of critical thinking and reflection
* Awareness of assigned audience
* Appropriate stylistic choices
* Proper use of MLA format, including in-text citations and works cited entries
* Research—at least **8 peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles/sources, and no more than 4 of those should be peer-reviewed readings assigned in class.** The peer-reviewed research does not have to be from game studies, though it can be.