

Proposed Teaching Project Description:

Title: Gamifying Thrones: Transforming a Humanities Course into an Immersive Game Experience

Project Goal: To create an immersive role playing game (RPG) environment in an online Integrative Studies (IS) in the Arts and Humanities (IAH) course to improve student motivation and the learning dimension identified by the AAC&U as “[Integrative and Applied Learning](#).”

Approaches to assess attainment of goal: Students’ integration and application of learning will be assessed through formative and summative assignments (performance in the game environment itself and reflective assignments) and student feedback (SIRS, surveys, reflective essays on the course experience). Motivation will be assessed using research-validated tools designed for measuring affect in STEM, but adapted for a humanities course, such as Attitudes Toward Mathematics Inventory (ATMI).

Rationale: Student motivation for, integration of and reflection about university mandated IS courses is notoriously low; discovering and testing a method for improving student engagement can lead to greater impact in IS courses. While using games in the classroom is not a new idea, recent SOTL scholarship is demonstrating just how effective gamification and role playing can be in increasing integrative and applied learning outcomes.ⁱ This means that students in a gamified environment are more likely to see connections between course content and “real life,” to transport course skills to their other courses, and to find value and meaning in course assignments.

Instructional Context: IAH 241c: The Cultural and Artistic Traditions of Europe: King Arthur through the Ages. 50 students, non-majors, online.

Project Methodology: I will “gamify” this course in accordance with the university’s undergraduate learning goals through high-impact pedagogical strategies: backward design, constructivism, inquiry/problem-based learning, and reflective practice. This will be done in active consultation with my mentor, [Stephen Thomas](#), whose online course won the [AT&T award for Instructional Technology](#), the Lilly fellows, [Kyle White](#) (Timnick Chair in the Humanities, who has gamified courses and written about gamification in an NSF grant project)ⁱⁱ, game builders, and instructional designers.

Significance: When students experience increased motivation towards, integration and application of IAH course content, it does more than improve their achievement in that course; it promotes continued liberal learning and helps students develop sustained engagement with IS, the arts and humanities and the various disciplines at work in the course. The successful implementation of a complete gamified program of learning in a course with a medievalist focus will be of interest to medievalists and humanists beyond MSU. Presenting this project in my department, to IAH instructors, at the AAN spring conference, and at the two major international medieval studies congresses (at Kalamazoo and Leeds), will allow me to serve as a change-agent in both the MSU community and my scholarly field.

ⁱ See, for example, Campbell, diss. “Gamification in higher education: Not a trivial pursuit” St. Thomas U. (2016), Niman, *The Gamification of Higher Education* (Palgrave McMillan, 2015); Caton and Greenfield, “Rewards and Penalties: A Gamification Approach to Increasing Attendance and Engagement in an Undergraduate Computing Module” *International Journal of Game-Based*

Learning 4.3 (2014); Kapp, K. M. *The Gamification of Learning and Instruction: Game-based Methods and Strategies for Training and Education* (Wiley, 2012).

ⁱⁱ Sadowski, J., Seager, T.P., Selinger, E. et al. *Science & Engineering Ethics* 19:1323 (2013).