



Evolution of Ideas: *Play*

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Is your college education all work and no play?

Indeed, play is often seen as the immature antecedent to work. Over the years, many philosophers and psychologists have argued that play is the mere buffoonery of children, replete as they are with surplus energy and nonsense. However, play is an integral component of human development and adaption, allowing humans to succeed in our present environments and prepare for new ones.

In this course, students will explore the evolution of “play,” including playthings and games, as this concept changed over

time and across disciplines. Together, we will explore the importance of play to human culture, especially today.

Furthermore, we will discover how this remarkable, evolutionary tool can be used even in our adult lives to promote desirable habits and proficiencies.

The underlying mission of this course is to encourage students to “play with purpose” in their new, college environment. In this effort, students will be asked to design unique forms of play that enhances the college experience.

Along the way, students will hone their critical thinking, interdisciplinary research, and leadership skills.

Statement of Diversity & Inclusion

Each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute. Please take care to respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by students and faculty involved in this course. All are expected to support Purdue's commitment to diversity, and thus to respect individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, abilities, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, family statuses, sexual orientations, genders & gender identities, geographical locations, languages, political affiliations, races, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences.

General Course Information

Meeting Times and Locations

- Section 012: Class - M 11:30-12:20 in BRNG 1222 / Recitation 24 - W 11:30-12:20 in HIKS B853
- Section 017: Class - W 3:30-4:20 in REC 317 / Recitation 26 - F 3:30-4:20 in HIKS B853
- Section 028: Class - M 4:30-5:20 in BRNG 1230 / Recitation 23 - W 4:30-5:20 in HIKS B848

Course Texts

- All readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

Office Hours

- Location: Duhme Hall, Rm. 134
- Times: M, W, F 1pm - 3pm; *please establish meetings via email ahead of time.*

Submitting Projects

- All work should be submitted through Blackboard, unless otherwise indicated.
- Students should only submit Word or PDF files, and these documents should follow MLA formatting guidelines: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Email Etiquette

- All emails should include a greeting to the receiver, should make clear the email's purpose, and should include a closing signature. This is standard protocol in any professional or academic setting. To not follow this protocol can be seen as rude and /or can lead to emails being deleted.

Course Calendar

Week 1 – A Pedagogy of Play

- MW Class
 - * “Why?”
 - * Overview
- Recitation
 - * **Text & Response:** Stuart Brown, “Play is more than just fun,” *TED*. [26 min]
 - * Group Discussion:
 - Introductions
 - Takeaways from Brown?
 - What is the relationship between college and play?
 - Leadership Games?

Week 2 – Play & Culture

- MW Class
 - * **Text & Response:** Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 4-19, 46-47, 49-55, 63-67, 74-75 [30 pp., 1.25 hours]
 - * **Homeplay:** Monopoly Experiment [1.5 hours]
 - * No Class – post on discussion board
- Recitation
 - * Conclusions from Monopoly Experiment
 - * Prep for “Game Changer” activity



Week 3 – Play & Social Constructions

- MW Class
 - * **Texts & Response:** Soren Johnson, “Theme Is Not Meaning” [7 pp., 20 min]; Alan Johnson, “People, Systems, and the Game of Monopoly,” *Youtube*. [27 minutes].
 - * **Due:** Conclusions for Monopoly Experiment [1 hour]
 - * Discuss Monopoly Experiment
- Recitation
 - * The Game Changer Activity

Course Calendar

Week 4 - Real-Life Role Play

- MW Class
 - * **Text & Response:** Amy Cuddy, "Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are," *TED*. [21 min.].
 - * **Due:** Game Changer [1.5 hours]
 - * Discuss Real-Life Play-forms.
- Recitation
 - * RLRPG: identify target proficiency, begin game design, recruit gamers.

Week 5 - RLRPG

- MW Class
 - ***Homeplay:** RLRPG design , play [2 hours]
 - ***Text & Response:** Brown & Thomas, *A New Culture of Learning* (20 pp., 40 min).
 - *Gamer = Learning Agent within a Bounded Environment
- Recitation
 - * **Due:** Overview of game design and research methods for game play
 - * Initiate game.

Week 6 - RLRPG

- MW Class
 - ***Homeplay:** RLRPG play, [2 hours]
 - ***Text & Response:** Brown & Thomas, *A New Culture of Learning* [10 pp, 30 min]
 - *Discuss playing in everyday life
- Recitation
 - * RLRPG: review findings, assess gameplay

Week 7 - SpringFest Mini-Game

- MW Class
 - ***Homeplay:** RLRPG play, [2.5 hours]
 - *Discuss SpringFest & brainstorm game designs
- Recitation
 - * Design SpringFest Game
 - ***Homeplay:** Finish Springfest game [.5 hours]

Week 8 - RLRPG

- MW Class
 - ***Due:** Present SpringFest Game
- Recitation
 - * **Due in Recitation:** RLRPG Presentation & Reflection [2 hours]
 - ***Due Sunday, March 8th:** Follow the Leader [2 hours]

Major Projects

Individual Responses [10 points]

- *Overview:* Each student will respond to a prompt related to the reading for that week. The responses are graded for completion and for evidence that the student has done the assigned reading.
- *Deliverables:* The prompts will be posted on the discussion board for each section. Students should take no more than 10-15 minutes to respond to the prompt.

Leader Response [4 points, to be included in Individual Responses grade]

- *Overview:* Each week, a group member will assume team leadership for one week, beginning at the end of recitation and continuing on to the end of the subsequent recitation. In this way, each student will have a chance to try out their team leadership skills.
- *Deliverables:* Within 24 hours of their leadership shift ending, the leader should submit via blackboard a 200-word report on how the group performed. This should take no more than 20 minutes or so. Students should answer the following questions, as well as provide any additional information they feel is pertinent.
 - * How did the group do with the week's activities? Were they completed in a timely manner? Was the group adequately prepared to do the assigned work? Did everyone participate? Were there behaviors that promoted or hampered the team dynamic?

The Monopoly Experiment & Conclusions [10 points]

- *Overview:* For Week 2, groups will participate in an experiment in which Monopoly is played with slightly altered rules. Specific instructions for this experiment will be included with the board game, which can be picked up from the front desk of Shreve. All group members will need to be present. The experiment will be run for 1.5 hours and will cease as soon as that time is over.
- *Deliverables:* After participating in the experiment, each student will share their initial thoughts on the class discussion board. Over the next week, each group will write a 600-word reflection. This document is separate from the leader's report, and it should offer a collective summary of the game play as well as overall takeaways from the experience. Teams might also include individual

Major Projects

The Game Changer [5 points]

- *Overview:* As noted in the Soren Johnson article and in the Monopoly Experiment, changing the theme or mechanics of a game can significantly alter its meaning for the player. Building on these concepts, groups will take an existing board game (or deck game) and alter the mechanics and / or theme so that the game takes on a meaning that is more relevant to college life or the 21st century.
- *Deliverables:* First, students will give a 5-minute demonstration of their “Game Change” in class, showing the alterations to the game mechanics and the new meaning this conveys to gamers. Groups are encouraged to use Powerpoint for this demonstration. Second, the group should write up a 400 word reflection that provides a summary of the changes, their intended meanings, and how the group utilized concepts from the course.



Group Evaluations [10 points, 15 points]

- *Overview:* A key component of this course is that students are learning how to work productively as a team and how to take on leadership roles. Group evaluations, then, will perform a dual role: a.) they will hold all team members accountable; and b.) they will allow students to receive valuable feedback from their peers. Students will be evaluated on four areas: contribution of ideas, initiative to complete tasks, inclusion of others, and promotion of team culture. The evaluation rubric will be discussed in class to establish these four pillars for successful teamwork.
- *Deliverables:* Students will have the opportunity to evaluate their peers on two occasions: Week 4 and Week 8. Participation is mandatory, and failure to participate will result in a grade reduction.

Major Projects

Real-Life Role-Play Game [30 points]

- *Overview:* Each group will develop an RLRPG that allows college students to develop desired proficiencies. Many of the important skills that students learn in college are never taught (or even discussed) in the college classroom, such as personal autonomy, interpersonal skills, conflict management, developing professional skills, etc. Students will identify one learning outcome for the game and then develop a game that, A.) is sufficiently fun and challenging, and B.) helps players recognize and develop habits that will develop the desired proficiency.
- *Research Component:* The group will conduct research on two levels. First, the group will find research regarding their target proficiency, its development in college, and/or its value in the “real world.” This research will establish the value of the game but may also provide ideas for game design. Second, each group will conduct research on the efficacy of their game. This will require group members to play the game themselves as well as retain non-group participants (at least 5).
- *Deliverables:*
 - First, groups will present an initial overview of their game in Week 5, outlining how the game will be played, how game play will address target proficiencies, and how the effectiveness of gameplay will be researched. [5 points]
 - Second, groups will present the outcome of their game, using a symposium style poster, during Recitation in Week 8. The presentation should be 10 minutes long and should communicate the game mechanics, the intended outcomes and the research the group collected. [15 points]
 - Third, each group will reflect on their experience in making and playing their own game, and how it either supports the stated course goals or any other learning outcomes they have recognized. This reflection should be 900 words. [10 points]



Major Projects

SpringFest Mini-Game

- *Overview:* In April, the Honors College will host a tent at SpringFest, at which first-year students will present their projects to the Purdue community. A significant portion of the attendants will be children, so in addition to displaying their symposium poster, groups will design a kid-friendly game that relates to their project.
- *Game Parameters:* The main constraints for the game are space and time. The game should only take a few minutes to play, and it should be possible to play this game on or directly in front of a 4 foot by 1.5 foot table. The game should also draw attention to itself – by being visually appealing, for instance – in order to attract participants.
- *Deliverables:* The game will need to be completed during Week 7. Groups will present their mini-game in class in Week 8, and will submit a group schedule for SpringFest, indicating who will be at the tent on April 18-19, between 10am-4pm.



Follow the Leader

- *Overview:* The purpose of this diary is to encourage students to identify the behaviors of successful leaders and the behaviors that promote healthy teams. We will discuss team dynamics in class, but it is vital that students also take notes based on their own experience.
- *Deliverables:* Students will take down five, 100-word diary entries over the semester. In each entry, students will identify behaviors or traits of positive leader / good team-members. In a final, 500-word reflection, students should address their efforts to incorporate these behaviors into their team activities. In this final reflection, students can also add any other realizations they have made about what leads to a healthy and productive team.

Project Breakdown

Individual Responses	10
Monopoly Experiment & Conclusions	10
The Game Changer	5
Real-Life Role Playing Game	30
Group Evaluation #1	10
Group Evaluation #2	15
Springfest Mini-Game	5
Follow the Leader	15
TOTAL	100

Grade Breakdown

Grade Descriptions

- 100-90 (A) – You did what the assignment asked at a high quality level. Work in this range demonstrates that you took **extra steps** to be original or creative in developing content, a verbal / visual style, and solving problems.
- 89-80 (B) – You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs has a clear purpose, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows attention to style and/ or visual design.
- 79-70 (C) – You did the assignment asked of you, and the work is passable. Work in this range tends to have problems with organization, argumentation, and/or grammar & mechanics.
- 69-60 (D) – You did what the assignment asked at a low level of quality and/ or did not fulfill the assignment requirements. Work in this range has significant errors, the content is often incomplete, and the organization is poor
- 59.6 > (F) – For those who don't show up, don't do the work, or plagiarize.

Grade Scale

- A+ = 100 – 98; A = 100 – 92; A- = 91 – 90;
- B+ = 89 – 88; B = 87 – 82; B- = 81 – 80;
- C+ = 79 – 78; C = 77 – 72; C- = 71 – 70;
- D+ = 69. - 68; D = 67 – 62; D- = 61 – 60;
- F+ = 59 – 58; F = < 57

Course Policies

Attendance

As students have created their own schedules, it is assumed that they will be in class on time and ready to contribute. Students are allotted **2 absences**, which they can use however they see fit: sick days, family engagements/ emergencies, or any day where something else takes a priority over this class. After two absences, students will lose a letter grade for each additional absence. If a student is absent, they have a responsibility to their group to make up for any group work they have missed.

Special circumstances require a notice from the Dean of Students. See below for the University's Grief Absence Policy for Students. The link to the complete policy and implications can be found at <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/services/classabsence.htm>

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). [...] A student should contact the Office of the Dean of Students to request that a notice of his or her leave be sent to instructors. . . . Given proper documentation, the instructor will excuse the student from class and provide the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments.

Campus Emergencies

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages, are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control.

Academic Dishonesty

As per the Office of the Dean of Students, "Purdue prohibits 'dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty' (*Section B.2.a of the Student Regulations*). Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that 'the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of ghost-written papers, the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated.'" Offenders of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students and will be failed from the course regardless of the value of the assignment.

Statement about Disabilities

Students with disabilities must be registered with Adaptive Programs in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please schedule an appointment with me to discuss your needs.