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Can board games teach history? Is it possible to analyze them as historical interpretations? What would such analyses reveal about both history and the way it is represented in popular culture? Which game mechanics or approaches to design seem to be better able to promote historical arguments? What factors may impede the representation of the past in games? In exploring these questions, this course will also challenge us to think about the nature of history as a discipline. After all, if we are to judge whether games can be History, we need to understand what we mean by History.

We will examine six historical topics, and (usually) one game related to each. Topics will include the age of exploration and discovery, the American Revolution, frontier exploration, slavery and abolitionism, and the American Civil War. Assignments will consist of structured game analyses, a final project, and participation in weekly evening game labs. Prospective students should be familiar with modern tabletop games. Prerequisite: two completed history courses, or permission of instructor.

LEVEL: This course is an intermediate seminar, intended for those seeking higher-level work in History. We'll spend a good amount of time thinking not just about what happened in the past, but how scholars and others have interpreted those events. The unique nature of this course should not be mistaken for a lack of rigor; it is hoped instead that your interest in tabletop gaming will inspire you to engage the non-game course material all the more rigorously.

COURSE WEBSITE The material for this course may be found online through the Blackboard system. You will find a copy of this syllabus, as well as all the graded paper assignments. You may easily refer to the website for the most recent course assignments and requirements. You will also find my website <<http://academic.bowdoin.edu/faculty/Prael/>> useful. It links to guides on writing, plagiarism, and other matters crucial to your success in History courses.

You will also want to join (for free) and become familiar with [www.boardgamegeek.com](http://www.boardgamegeek.com), the single most important source of information on modern tabletop games.

#### LUDOGRAPHY

(The College will supply game sets, though you may wish to purchase any of these for yourself.)

- x [Colonial: Europe's Empires](#), des. Christophe Proulx ([GMT Games](#) 2011). ASIN B00C2BORCM, \$59.00 [BGG](#)>
- x [Liberty or Death: The American Insurrection](#), des. Harold Buchanan ([GMT Games](#) 2016). ASIN B01BMOJTHW, \$82.00 [BGG](#)>
- x [Founding Fathers: The Game of Strategy and Skill](#), des. Christian Leonhard and Jason Matthews ([Jolly Roger Games](#) 2010). ASIN 098157655-9, \$65.00 [BGG](#)>
- x [Discoveries: The Journals of Lewis and Clark](#), des. Cedrick Chaboussier ([Aislinn](#) 2015). ASIN B00Z62YCPQ, \$39.99 [BGG](#)>

- x [Lewis and Clark: The Expedition](#) by Cédric Chaboussier (2013). ASIN B00IGOAB7Y, \$49.99, [BGG](#)>
- x [Freedom: The Underground Railroad](#) by Brian Mayer (2012). ASIN B00HCHRGNI, \$70.00, [BGG](#)>
- x [Divided Republic](#) by Alex Bagosy (2012). ASIN B007USA500, \$49.99, [BGG](#)>

#### COURSE CONTRACT

- x Students are responsible for missed class material due to absences, including especially assignments due. If you must be absent, rely on friends in class for notes.
- x Do not leave the room during the class session.
- x Do not bring food to regular class. Food in labs, so long as it does not interrupt the lab, or violate any College or library rules.
- x Notepads and laptops are not permitted in regular meetings. Mobile phones should be turned off and kept away.
- x Print out any electronically assigned readings in advance to class. You should be highlighting your reading, writing notes in the margins, etc.

personal opinions. By continuing with this course, you are agreeing to be held academically accountable for all required materials in the syllabus regardless of your own personal reactions to it. The academic enterprise invites vibrant class discussion, which involves critical thinking with mutual respect. Students are expected to take responsibility for their experience in this course by examining their own reactions to material they consider offensive. At all times, our priority will be intellectual engagement with scholarly material. Students uncomfortable with this approach are encouraged to drop this course at their discretion.

**CLASS MEETINGS SCHEDULE** All readings and assignments should be completed before class. Readings are listed in their preferred reading order.

W Aug. 29	<p><b><u>WHAT THIS GAME IS ABOUT</u></b> Introduction to the course</p>
F Aug. 31	<p><b><u>COMPONENTS AND SETUP</u></b> Principles of tabletop game design</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED READING:</u></b> You may find these backgrounders on modern board games useful.</p> <p>Dave Shapiro, "A Brief History of Gaming," <i>The Games Journal: A Magazine About Boardgames</i> (March 2004). <a href="#">web</a>&gt;</p> <p>Lewis Pulsipher, "The Essence of Euro-style Games: Another Attempt at a Definition," <i>The Games Journal: A Magazine About Boardgames</i> (2006). <a href="#">web</a>&gt;</p> <p>Stewart Woods, <i>Eurogames: The Design, Culture and Mind of Modern European Board Games</i> (Jefferson, NC: McFarland &amp; Co., 2012), selections &lt;Blackboard&gt;.</p>
W Sept. 5	<p><b><u>TURN 1: THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE</u></b> Lecture/discussion on topic Rules prep for Tuesday lab Read the <a href="#">Colonial game rulebook</a> which is worth loading on your tablet and bringing to lab. Watch <a href="#">this video tutorial</a> carefully.</p> <p><b><u>READING:</u></b> Paul Kennedy, "Explaining the European Miracle," <i>Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500-2000</i> (New York: Random House, 1997), 3-30. &lt;Blackboard&gt; Jonathan Rey Lee, "Capitalism and Fairness in Catan: Oil Springs," <i>Analog Game Studies</i> (March 20, 2017) <a href="#">web</a>&gt;.</p>
Th Sept. 6	<p>Game lab Colonial: Europe's Empires Oversea</p>



<p>F Sept. 20</p>	<p>Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (historical)</p> <p><u>READING:</u> Alan Taylor, <i>American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1763-1804</i> (Norton, 2016), ch. 6 "Loyalties" &lt;Blackboard&gt;. Wayne E. Lee, "Early American War: A New Reconnaissance, 1600-1815," <i>Historical Journal</i> 44, no. 1 (March 2001): 269-89. &lt;<a href="#">Blackboard</a>&gt;</p>
<p>W Sept. 26</p>	<p>Discussion of readings (game studies)</p> <p><u>READING:</u> Patrick Rael, "Seriously — boardgames? Yes, seriously," <i>Black Perspectives</i> 27, 2015 &lt;<a href="#">web</a>&gt;. "Brenda Romero: Gaming for Understanding," <i>YouTube</i> (July 15, 2015) &lt;<a href="#">web</a>&gt;. Will Robinson, "Orientalism and Abstraction in Eurogames," <i>Analog Game Studies</i> on Trammell, Evan Torner, and Emma Leigh Walters. (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon ETC Press, 2016): 55-63. &lt;Blackboard&gt;</p> <p>Question prompts due on <a href="#">coursetag</a> (by the start of class)</p>
<p>Th Sept. 27</p>	<p>Game lab <i>Liberty or Death: The American Revolution</i> Prompt: It's clear that the game reinforces arguments by Shy and Breen about the nature of the Revolution. In what ways might it depart from their interpretation, and with what effect on the</p>

Lab session de-brief  
Discussion of readings (historical)

F Oct. 5

READING:

David B. Robertson, "Madison's Opponents and Constitutional Design," *American Political Science Review* 99 (May 2005): 225-43 [stor>](#).  
Federalist Papers, nos. 6, 9 (Hamilton) [ike>](#).

W Oct. 31	<p>Discussion of readings (game studies)</p> <p><u>READING:</u>          Jeremie Clyde, Howard Hopkins and Glenn Wilkinson, "Beyond the 'Historical' Simulation: Using Theories of History to Inform Scholarly Game Designing..." The Journal of Canadian Game Studies Association 9 (2012): 3-16 <a href="#">web</a>.          Jeremy Antley, "Going Beyond the Textual in History," Journal of Digital Humanities. 2 (Spring 2012) <a href="#">web</a>.</p> <p>Question prompts due on <del>couleg</del> (by the start of class)</p>
Th Nov. 1	<p>Game lab Discoveries: The Journals of Lewis and Clark and Lewis and Clark: The Expedition          Prompt: Here we have two <del>ones</del> on the same topic from the same designer. The boardgame community is split on which best engages history. Time for you to weigh in on the matter.</p>
F Nov. 2	<p>Lab session de-brief          Discussion of readings (history/historiography)</p> <p><u>READING:</u>          TBA</p> <p>Papers due by Friday @ 5pm</p>

**TURN 5: FUGITIVE SLAVERY**

Lecture/discussion on topic  
 Rules prep for Tuesday lab

READING:

Levi Coffin, Reminiscences of Levi Coffin (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co., 1880):

W Nov. 7

<p>W Nov. 14</p>	<p>Discussion of readings (game studies)</p> <p><u>READING:</u>  Jeremiah McCall, "Simulation Games and the Study of the Past: Classroom Guidelines," in <i>Gaming the Past: Using Video Games to Teach Secondary History</i> (New York: Routledge, 2011), ch. 11.  &lt;Blackboard&gt;  Jeremiah McCall, "Navigating the Problem Space: The Medium of Simulation Games in the Teaching of History," <i>History Teacher</i> 46, no.1 (November 2012), 9-28 <a href="#">link</a></p> <p>Question prompts due on couglog (by the start of class)</p>
<p>Th Nov. 15</p>	<p>Game lab Freedom: The Underground Railroad  Prompt: This game engages a body of scholarship. Find a place where the game makes points or takes stands over which there is scholarly controversy.</p>
<p>F Nov. 16</p>	<p>Lab session de-brief  Discussion of readings (history/historiography)</p> <p><u>READING:</u>  Benjamin Quarles, "Sources of Abolitionist Income," <i>Mississippi Valley Historical Review</i> 32, no. 1 (June 1945): 63-76 <a href="#">link</a>.</p>



Discussion of readings (game studies)

READING:

W Dec. 5