Today

- Announcements
- Intro to games and fiction
- Intro to games and the “real” world
- Intro to games and rhetoric
International Education Office announcement
Spring Program Application Period!
April 20 – May 11

Apply for spring programs in:

Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, The UK.
Career Center announcement
Help with equipment check-out for a pair of exciting augmented reality narratives, our DANM MFA thesis projects. One or two hour daytime shifts between 4/30 and 5/8. Rewards: after-hours project access & eternal gratitude!

Email aareed@gmail.com
Games and fiction
Games can do what movies do
All right, you're gonna be fine.
Games can do what movies can’t do
C'mon Jeff, you can make it.
Did you carry him all the way from the temple?
What happened here?

- You start out with character ambivalence toward Jeff the cameraman, that is put aside to try to save him
- Difficult task that may require multiple tries. Finally player succeeds, which matches fictional success
- Player and character are both angered as a life and player's success are taken away
Another kind of fictional engagement
*** SHADE ***
A brief story by "Ampe R. Sand" (Andrew Plotkin)
First-time players should type "about".
Release 3 / Serial number 001127 / Inform v6.21 Library 6/10

Odd, how the light just makes your apartment gloomier. Pre-dawn darkness pools in the corners and around the tops of walls. Your desk lamp glares yellow, but the shadows only draw your eyes and deepen.

Not much of an apartment, no. One desk, paper-piled, with a dusty computer shoved to the side. Your futon. Second-hand stereo sitting on a cardboard crate. A kitchen nook one way and a bathroom nook the other, with a closet to the side. A broad mirror tries to make the place seem twice its size; it halfway works. One window, whose shade is down, and the front door firmly shut.

Your luggage is piled untidily by the door. A potted hyacinth sits beneath the window.

You are sprawled on the futon, staring up into that gloom. Your eyes feel gritty. But it’s too late - early - no time left for sleep, anyway. In a few hours your ride will arrive.

On the desk are your to-do list and a travel book.

>
What happened here?

• The game world is a mystery — both for the player and the player character
• We enact the character’s situation and receive clues
• The ending is the climax of the player’s quest for discovery and the player character’s mysterious situation
Maybe you don’t have to play one of the characters
rough. Then a tug, he hears Hersplici on his bones.

hair at the roots, untensing his mother, cutting his hair.

hair across his scalp, running across his scalp.

can't find these blankets, these blankets.

wood, wood, wood.

ma, ma, ma.

finge, finge, finge, finge.

cans, cans, cans, cans.
Games and fictions

• The activity of play should relate to the themes of the fiction

• This could be overcoming obstacles, discovering mysteries, or even holding memories in place

• Ideally, the system of the game also relates to the themes of the fiction...
More on games and fictions soon
Games and the real world
Pandemic
Twilight Struggle
Games and rhetoric
What does this mean?

*September 12th, newsgaming.com, 2003*
What do you notice?
September 12th

Not an animation, but an interaction...
September 12th

• Fictional world: Village of civilians and terrorists, bomb targeting

• Rules: People move continually, bombs take time to fall, dead civilians inspire mourning, mourning inspires terrorism
September 12th

• Gameplay:
  • Targetted bombing hits civilians, sprouts as many new terrorists as it kills
  • Indiscriminate bombing creates a wasteland w/ more terrorists than others
  • Procedural rhetoric: Bombing is a poor tool for addressing terrorism
Other Sept 11th games

- **New York Defender**: Is arcade-style play an argument?
- **9/11 Survivor**: Rhetoric of randomness or disturbingly affectless?
Procedural rhetoric
What does this mean?

- **NRA Gun Club**, Crave Entertainment, 2006
- Realistic operation — discharge to reload
Procedural Rhetoric

• “Procedurality refers to a way of creating, explaining, or understanding processes.”

• “Rhetoric refers to effective and persuasive expression.”

• “Procedural rhetoric, then, is a practice of using processes persuasively.... persuading through processes in general and computational processes in particular.”
Interpreting rhetoric

• “Just as verbal rhetoric is useful for both the orator and the audience, and just as written rhetoric is useful for both the writer and the reader, so procedural rhetoric is useful for both the programmer and the user, the game designer and the player.”

• We may find procedural rhetoric at work in a game beyond that consciously intended
Procedural

- “To write procedurally, one authors code that enforces rules
- to generate some kind of representation,
- rather than authoring the representation itself.”
Procedural

• For Bogost “procedural expression must entail symbol manipulation, the construction and interpretation of a symbolic system that governs human thought or action.”

• Computers “are particularly adept at representing real or imagined systems that themselves function in some particular way ... The computer magnifies the ability to create representations of processes.”
More on fictional worlds and rhetoric to come