Hist2624 Historical simulations Prof. Patrick Rael, Bowdoin College, Fall 2018

Meets: Class WF 1:15 - 2:40pm (Telepresence Room); Lab Th 6:30 – 9:30pm (Media Commons) Office hours: T1-4, F3-5, by apt. (211C Hubbard) Sign up for office hours here: <u>https://calendly.com/prael</u>

an 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 will need to understand what we mean by History.

We will examine six historical topics, and (usually) play 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 three 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 the 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 WEBSITES: 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 reading and paper assignments. You may easily refer to the website for the most recent course assignments and requirements. You will also find my website useful">http://academic.bowdoin.edu/faculty/P/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, the single most important source of information on modern tabletop games.

LUDOGRAPHY

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

- <u>Colonial: Europe's Empires Overseas</u>, des. Christophe Pont (<u>GMT Games</u>, 2011). ASIN B00C2BORCM, \$59.00, <<u>BGG</u>>
- Liberty or Death: The American Insurrection, des. Harold Buchanan (GMT Games, 2016). ASIN B01BMOJTHW, \$82.00, <BGG>
- Founding Fathers: The Game of Strategy and Statesmanship, des. Christian Leonhard and Jason Matthews (Jolly Roger Games, 2010). ASIN 098157655-9, \$65.00, <<u>BGG</u>>
- <u>Discoveries: The Journals of Lewis and Clark</u>, des. Cédrick Chaboussit (<u>Asmodee</u>, 2015). ASIN B00Z62YCPQ, \$39.99, <<u>BGG</u>>

- Lewis and Clark: The Expedition, des. Cédrick Chaboussit (Asmodee, 2013). ASIN B00IGOAB7Y, \$49.99, <<u>BGG</u>>
- <u>Freedom: The Underground Railroad</u>, des. Brian Mayer (<u>Academy Games</u>, 2012). ASIN B00HCHRGNI, \$70.00, <<u>BGG</u>>
- Divided Republic, des. Alex Bagosy (Numbskull Games, 2012). ASIN B007USA500, \$49.99, <BGG>

COURSE CONTRACT

- Students are responsible for any missed class material due to absences, including especially assignments due. If you must be absent, rely on friends in class for notes.
- Do not leave the room during the class session.
- Do not bring food to regular class. Food in labs is ok, so long as it does not interrupt the lab, or violate any College or library rules.
- Notepads and laptops are not permitted in regular class meetings. Mobile phones should be turned off and kept away.
- Print out any electronically assigned readings and bring them to class. You should be highlighting your reading, writing notes in the margins, etc.
- For labs, I encourage you to bring the game's rules and player aids, either printed out or on a digital device such as a tablet.
- We will "knock" at the end of class, to acknowledge our mutual effort.

Assignments:

- 1 game essay @ 5 and 2 more @ 10 each (25): Each paper will analyze a game we play in light of the scholarship we read and discuss. Papers should be in the range of 1,000-1,500 words (4-6 pp).
- 6 paper prompts @ 3 each (18): A paragraph question posted to the course blog, which could be the prompt for a fuller analysis of the game in question.
- 6 game confessionals @ 2 each (12): Once for each game, we will record an in-game testimonial of your play experience for our collective use.
- 1 game leader @ 5: You will be responsible for running one game session, which will require you to explain rules and keep the game on track.
- Final paper @ 30: A lengthy (2,000-3,000 word / 8-10 pp) analysis of a historical issue explored by at least one game we've played. Your analysis must also discuss at least one game we have not played. Your paper will need to make a strong argument about the ways tabletop games treat a historical concern.
- Class participation @ 10: Your participation in class discussions.
- There is no way to make up missed prompts, confessionals, or game leads.
- All papers are due at the start of class, and all papers must be completed in order to pass this course.
- I am not obligated to accept any late work.

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC HONESTY: Each author owns his or her own ideas, words, and research. You must give appropriate credit — generally in the form of quotations and proper citations — when using the work of another scholar. Be familiar with Bowdoin's <u>honor code</u>, Bowdoin's <u>general guidelines</u> for proper citation and attribution of sources, and any guidelines provided specifically for this course. Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is a serious violation of academic standards and Bowdoin's honor code.

OFFENSIVE MATERIALS DISCLAIMER: Higher education sometimes requires us to encounter material we find offensive and objectionable. Views expressed in the material we will cover do not necessarily reflect my own

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 balances 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 critical 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	WHAT THIS GAME IS ABOUT Introduction to the course
F Aug. 31	COMPONENTS AND SETUP Principles of tabletop game design RECOMMENDED READING: You may find these backgrounders on modern board games useful. Dave Shapiro, "A Brief History of Gaming," The Games Journal: A Magazine About Boardgames (March 2004). <web> Lewis Pulsipher, "The Essence of Euro-style Games: Another Attempt at a Definition," The Games Journal: A Magazine About Boardgames (February 2006). <web> Stewart Woods, Eurogrames: The Design, Culture and Play of Modern European Board Games (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2012), selections <blackboard>.</blackboard></web></web>
W Sept. 5	TURN 1: THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE Lecture/discussion on topic Rules prep for Tuesday lab Read the Colonial game rulebook, which is worth loading on your tablet and bringing to lab. Watch this video tutorial carefully. READING: Paul Kennedy, "Explaining the European Miracle," in Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500-2000 (New York: Random House, 1997), 3-30. <blackboard> Jonathan Rey Lee, "Capitalism and Unfairness in Catan: Oil Springs," Analog Game Studies (March 20, 2017) <web>>.</web></blackboard>
Th Sept. 6	Game lab: Colonial: Europe's Empires Overseas Prompt: Pick an aspect of the game's mechanics (avoid slavery for now, if possible) and analyze it on the spectrum of playability to historical accuracy. These prompts are simply suggestions to help you think about possible paper topics. You are not obligated to address them at all.
F Sept. 7	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (historical) <u>READING</u> : Douglass C. North, "Institutions, Transaction Costs, and the Rise of the Merchant Empires," in James D. Tracy, <i>The Political Economy of the Merchant Empires</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ch. 1 <blackboard>.</blackboard>

	Geoffrey Parker, "Europe and the Wider World, 1500-1750: The Military Balance," in James D. Tracy, <i>The Political Economy of the Merchant Empires</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ch. 4 <blackboard>.</blackboard>
	Discussion of readings (game studies)
W Sept. 12	<u>READING</u> :J. Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture (1944; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), ch. 1, "Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Pheneomenon," 1-27. <blackboard> Bernard Suits, The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), through ch. 3. <blackboard> Peter Gray, "Definitions of Play," Scholarpedia 8, no. 7 (2013), online. <u>RECOMMENDED</u>: Janet H. Murray, Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), ch. 5, "Agency," 126-53. <blackboard></blackboard></blackboard></blackboard>
	Question prompts due on course blog (by the start of class)
Th Sept. 13	Game lab: <i>Colonial: Europe's Empires Overseas</i> Prompt: How does the game represent the long history of slavery and its aftermath? Is there another aspect of the game's representation of European expansion that the scholarship confirms or undermines?
	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (history/historiography)
F Sept. 14	<u>READING</u> : Patrick Rael, "Introduction," in <i>Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States,</i> <i>1777-1865</i> (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015) <blackboard>. Anthony Kaye, "The Second Slavery: Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century South and the Atlantic World," <i>Journal of Southern History</i> 75, no.3 (August 2009), 627-50 <<u>Istor</u>>.</blackboard>
	Papers due by Friday @ 5pm
	<u>TURN 2: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION</u> Lecture/discussion on topic Rules prep for Tuesday lab
W Sept. 18	<u>READING</u> : Ronald L. Boucher, "The Colonial Militia As a Social Institution: Salem, Massachusetts 1764- 1775," <i>Military Affairs</i> 37, no. 4 (December 1973): 125-30. < <u>Istor</u> > John Shy, "The American Revolution: The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War," in <i>Essays on the American Revolution</i> , Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 121-56. <blackboard></blackboard>
	Rulebook for Liberty or Death < <u>pdf</u> >. Here's a long video tutorial < <u>YouTube</u> >.
Th Sept. 19	Game lab: <i>Liberty or Death: The American Revolution</i> Prompt: This game portrays a history we think we know well. In what ways does the game's architecture (the player positions, in particular) challenge traditional understandings of the American Revolution?

F Sept. 20	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (historical) <u>READING</u> : Alan Taylor, <i>American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804</i> (New York: Norton, 2016), ch. 6 "Loyalties" <blackboard>. Wayne E. Lee, "Early American Ways of War: A New Reconnaissance, 1600-1815," <i>The Historical Journal</i> 44, no. 1 (March 2001): 269-89. <<u>Istor</u>></blackboard>
W Sept. 26	Discussion of readings (game studies) <u>READING</u> : Patrick Rael, "Seriously — boardgames? Yes, seriously," <i>Black Perspectives</i> (June 27, 2015) < <u>web</u> >. "Brenda Romero: Gaming for Understanding," <i>YouTube</i> (July 15, 2015) < <u>web</u> >. Will Robinson, "Orientalism and Abstraction in Eurogames," <i>Analog Game Studies</i> , Aaron Trammell, Evan Torner, and Emma Leigh Waldron, eds. (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon ETC Press, 2016): 55-63. <blackboard> Question prompts due on course blog (by the start of class)</blackboard>
Th Sept. 27	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 game's interpretation of history?
F Sept. 28	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (history/historiography) <u>READING</u> : Holger Hoock, <i>Scars of Independence: America's Violent Birth</i> (New York: Crown, 2017), ch. 9 "Town-Destroyer" <blackboard>. Colin G. Calloway, <i>The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ch. 3 "Stockbridge: The New England Patriots" <blackboard>. Papers due by Friday @ 5pm</blackboard></blackboard>
W Oct. 3	TURN 3: THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION Lecture/discussion on topic Rules prep for Tuesday lab <u>READING</u> : "Shay's Rebellion" < <u>online</u> >. James Madison, "Vices of the American Political System" < <u>online</u> >. David C. Henrickson, Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003), chs. 1-4 <blackboard>. Rulebook for Founding Fathers <<u>BGG</u>>. Dice Tower Review <<u>BGG</u>>.</blackboard>
Th Oct. 4	Game lab: Founding Fathers: The Game of Strategy and Statesmanship Prompt: Founding Fathers is a game steeped in its historical subject. Explore the multiple ways the game does this, from its components to its mechanics. Are some aspects of its historicity more successful than others? How or why?

F Oct. 5	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (historical)
	<u>READING</u> : David B. Robertson, "Madison's Opponents and Constitutional Design," <i>American Political Science</i> <i>Review</i> 99 (May 2005): 225-43 < <u>Istor</u> >. Federalist Papers, nos. 6, 9 (Hamilton) < <u>online</u> >. Federalist Papers, nos. 10 and 51 (Madison) < <u>online</u> >.
	Discussion of readings (game studies)
W Oct. 11	READING: Alexander R. Galloway, "Allegories of Control," in <i>Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), ch. 4 <blackboard>. Adam Chapman, "Is Sid Meier's Civilization History?" <i>Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and</i> <i>Practice</i> 17, no.3 (2013): 312-32 <<u>ASC</u>>. David R. Krathwohl, "A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview," Theory into Practice 41, no. 4 (Autumn 2002), <u>online</u>.</blackboard>
	Question prompts due on course blog (by the start of class)
Th Oct. 18	Game lab: <i>Founding Fathers: The Game of Strategy and Statesmanship</i> Prompt: How does the game do with representing the scholarship on the Constitutional Convention and its division? In particular, how does its system of "factions" fare?
	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (history/historiography)
F Oct. 19	<u>READING</u> : Paul Finkelman, "Slavery and the Constitutional Convention: Making a Covenant with Death," in <i>Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity</i> , Richard Beeman, et al, eds. (Chapel Hill: Omohundro/University of North Carolina Press, 1987): 188-225 <blackboard> <<u>online version</u>>.</blackboard>
	Papers due by Friday @ 5pm
W Oct. 24	<u>TURN 4: FRONTIER EXPLORATION</u> Lecture/discussion on topic Rules prep for Tuesday lab
	<u>READING</u> : TBA Rulebooks for <u>Discoveries</u> and <u>Lewis and Clark</u> .
Th Oct. 25	Game lab: <i>Discoveries: The Journals of Lewis and Clark</i> and <i>Lewis and Clark: The Expedition</i> Prompt: As fairly typical examples of Eurogames, these games seem steeped in theme but focused on mechanics. How should we understand the presence of History in them?
F Oct. 26	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (historical)
	<u>Reading</u> : TBA

W Oct. 31	 Discussion of readings (game studies) <u>READING</u>: Jerremie Clyde, Howard Hopkins, and Glenn Wilkinson, "Beyond the 'Historical' Simulation: Using Theories of History to Inform Scholarly Game Design," <i>Loading The Journal of Canadian</i> <i>Game Studies Association</i> 6, no. 9 (2012): 3-16 <<u>web</u>>. Jeremy Antley, "Going Beyond the Textual in History," <i>Journal of Digital Humanities</i> 1, no. 2 (Spring 2012) <<u>web</u>>. Question prompts due on course blog (by the start of class)
Th Nov. 1	Game lab: <i>Discoveries: The Journals of Lewis and Clark</i> and <i>Lewis and Clark: The Expedition</i> Prompt: Here we have two games 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.
F Nov. 2	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (history/historiography) <u>READING</u> : TBA Papers due by Friday @ 5pm
W Nov. 7	TURN 5: FUGITIVE SLAVERY Lecture/discussion on topic Rules prep for Tuesday lab <u>READING</u> : Levi Coffin, Reminiscences of Levi Coffin (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co., 1880), ch. 17 < web>. William Still, The Underground Rail Road (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872), selections <blackboard>. Henrietta Buckmaster, "The Underground Railroad," North American Review 246, no.1 (Autumn 1938): 142-49 < [stor>. Rulebook for Freedom: The Underground Railroad. < BGG> See also "Abolitionist's Quick Start Guide to Freedom: The Underground Railroad" < BGG>. For context, play Underground Railroad: Journey to Freedom < web>.</blackboard>
Th Nov. 8	Game lab: <i>Freedom: The Underground Railroad</i> Prompt: In this game assess the role of cards, which often function to lend games historicity. How much of the game's historical interpretation and how much simply on these cards?
F Nov. 9	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (historical) In-class (possible): <i>Slave Catchers, Slave Resisters</i> (A&E Television Networks, 2005), segments 16-34 < <u>video on demand</u> >. <u>READING</u> : Larry Gara, "The Underground Railroad: Legend or Reality?" <i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical</i> <i>Society</i> 105, no. 3 (June 1961): 334-39 < <u>Istor</u> >. Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, <i>Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the</i> <i>Underground Railroad</i> (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 1-13. <blackboard> Fergus M. Bordewich, "History's Tangled Threads," <i>New York Times</i> (February 2, 2007. <<u>web</u>></blackboard>

	Discussion of readings (game studies)
W Nov. 14	<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. <blackboard> 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. <<u>Jstor</u>></blackboard>
	Question prompts due on course blog (by the start of class)
Th Nov. 15	Game lab: <i>Freedom: The Underground Railroad</i> Prompt: This game engages a rich body of scholarship. Find and assess places where the game makes points or takes stands over which there is scholarly controversy.
F Nov. 16	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (history/historiography)
	<u>READING</u> : Benjamin Quarles, "Sources of Abolitionist Income," <i>Mississippi Valley Historical Review</i> 32, no. 1 (June 1945): 63-76 < <u>Istor</u> >. Armstead Robinson, "In the Shadow of Old John Brown: Insurrection Anxiety and Confederate Mobilization, 1861-1863," <i>Journal of Negro History</i> 65, no. 4 (Autumn 1980): 279-97 < <u>Istor</u> >.
	Papers due by Friday @ 5pm
W Nov. 21	Thanksgiving break
F Nov. 23	Thanksgiving break
W Nov. 28	TURN 6: THE SECTIONAL CRISIS Lecture/discussion on topic Rules prep for Tuesday lab <u>READING</u> : Gary J. Kornblith, "Rethinking the Coming of the Civil War: A Counterfactual Exercise," Journal of American History 90, no. 1 (June 2003): 76-105 < <u>Istor</u> >. Historical newspapers from 1860, selections <blackboard>. Game rulebook (Numbskull website or BGG). Recommended: Designer Alex Bogosy's designer diary.</blackboard>
Th Nov. 29	Game lab: Divided Republic
F Nov. 30	Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (historical) <u>READING</u> : "Where Historians Disagree - The Causes of the Civil War," < <u>web</u> >. James G. Randall, "The Blundering Generation," <i>Mississippi Valley Historical Review</i> 27, no.1 (June 1940): 3-28 < <u>Istor</u> >.

Discussion of readings (game studies)
<u>READING</u> : Martin Bunzl, "Counterfactual History: A User's Guide," American Historical Review 109, no. 3 (June 2004): 845-58 < <u>Jstor</u> >. Naomi R. Lamoreaux, "Taking Counterfactual History Seriously," California History 89, no. 1, Railroaded (2001): 39-50, 70-71 < <u>Jstor</u> >.Question prompts due on course blog (by the start of class)
Game lab: Divided Republic
Lab session de-brief Discussion of readings (history/historiography) <u>READING</u> : Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Emergence of the One-party South – The Election of 1860," from <i>Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics</i> (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), 344-54 <blackboard>. Jeffery A. Jenkins and Irwin L. Morris, "Running to Lose? John C. Breckinridge and the Presidential Election of 1860," <i>Electoral Studies</i> 25 (2006), 306-28. <<u>Online</u>> Papers due by Friday @ 5pm</blackboard>
Final paper due (both electronically and in my box) by 4:30pm