No Game Natives

Jesper Juul
New York University Game Center

GDC EDUCATION SUMMIT

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE 2012
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
MARCH 5-9, 2012
EXPO DATES: MARCH 7-9

~~Kids~~ Students know all about games!

- 97% of 12-17 year olds play games!
- Digital Natives!
- So easy to teach!

No. ~~Game Natives~~

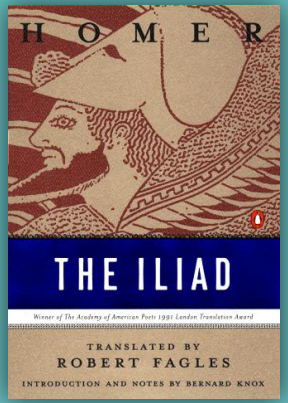
- Majority of students play digital games.

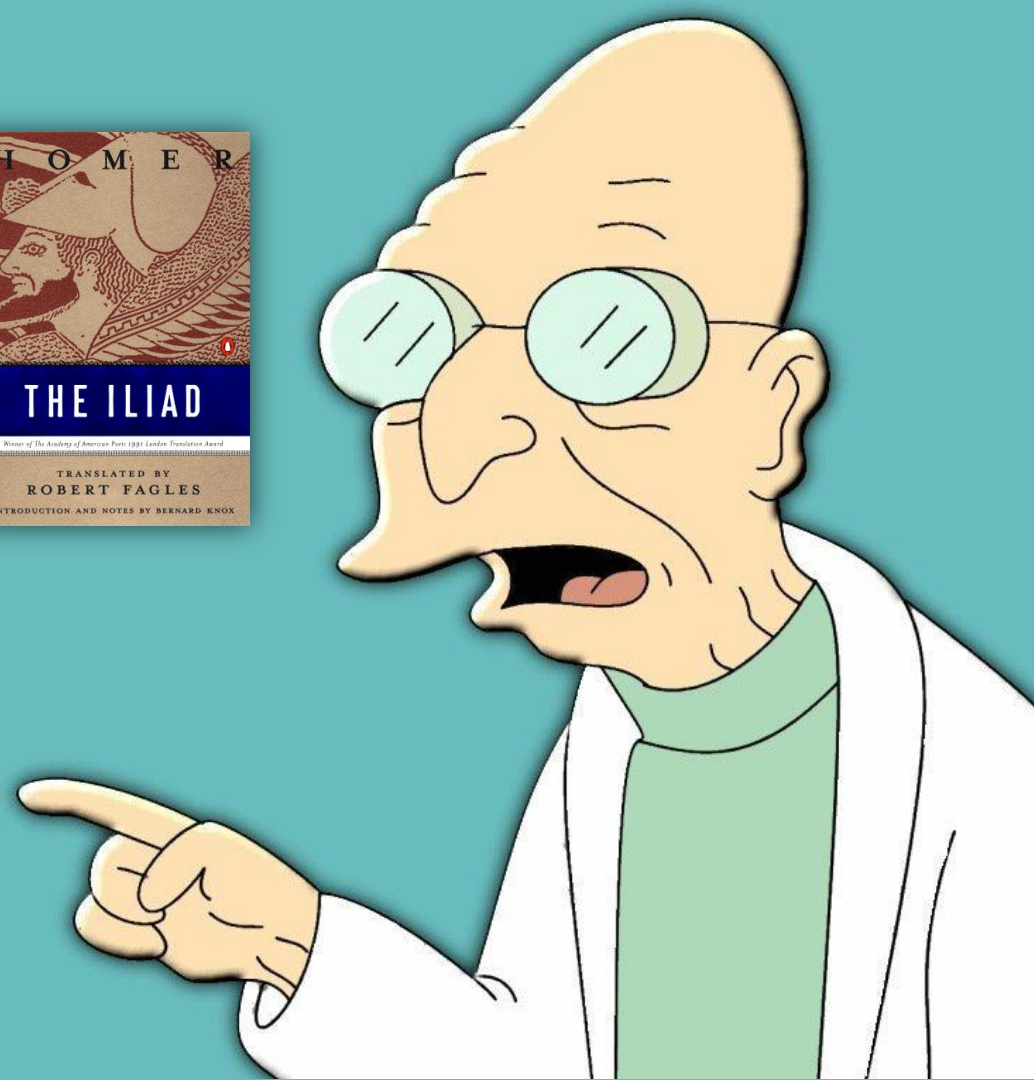
- But: Their game knowledge is local, particular to their time and interests.

The students have never even tried to read *The Iliad*!

And if they did, they found it "boring".

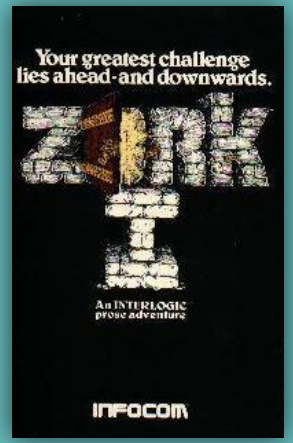
What is the world coming to?!?!





The students have never even tried to play *Zork*!
And if they did, they found it "boring".

What is the world coming to?!?!



Teach.

Game.

History.

Problem summary

- **Clara**: More than One Game History
- **Noah**: Understand Games in Context
- **Jesper**: Students not ~~digital~~ Game Natives

Case study: Games 101 Class

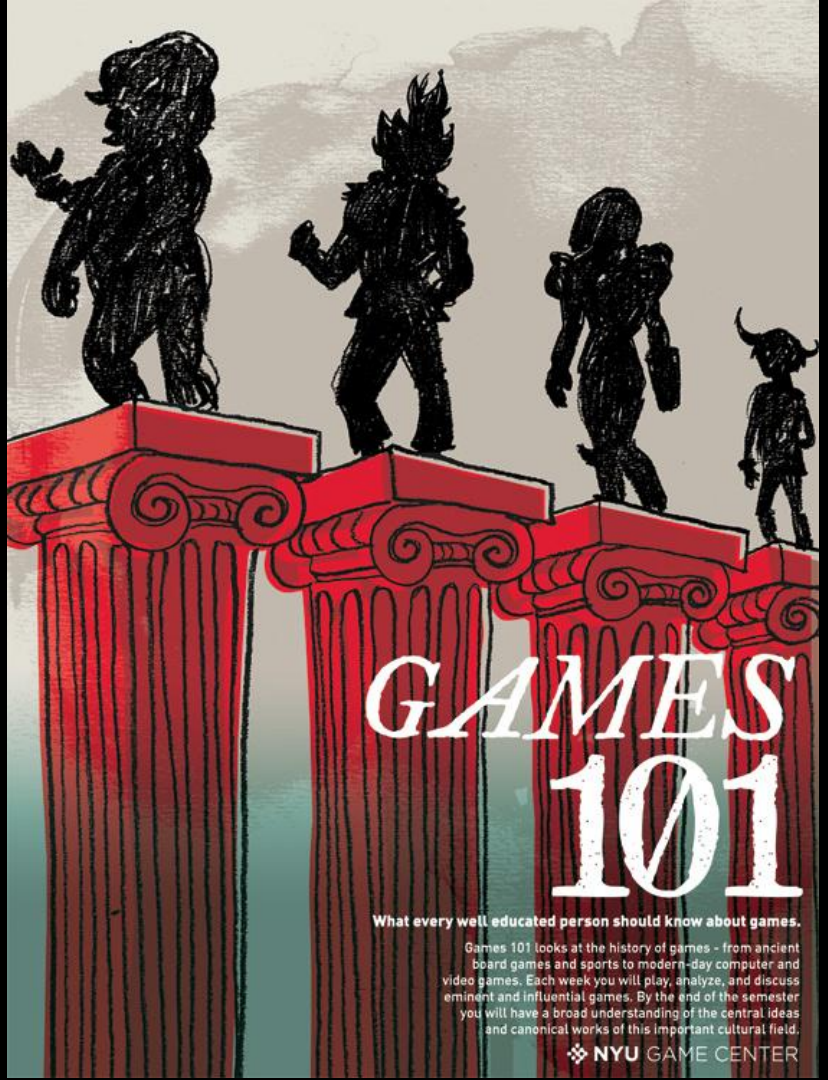
NYU Game Center

- Situated in Tisch School of the Arts, New York University
- Games as a cultural form and game design as creative practice.
- Undergraduate minor with students from across NYU and NYU-Poly.
- 2-year MFA program launching fall 2012.

NYU GAME CENTER

Problems when Teaching

- Historical Game Studies discussions refer to historical games.
- Game Design relies on a palette of solutions in earlier games.
- Studio classes & experimental design challenging with little knowledge of past experiments & roads not taken.


GAMES
101
What every well educated person should know about games.
Games 101 looks at the history of games - from ancient board games and sports to modern-day computer and video games. Each week you will play, analyze, and discuss eminent and influential games. By the end of the semester you will have a broad understanding of the central ideas and canonical works of this important cultural field.
NYU GAME CENTER

The Games 101 course

- 60 students
- Co-taught by game center faculty and adjuncts
- Weekly quiz
  - Years, dates!
- Weekly 500-word report on one of three games
  - Must play game at least three hours. (Ties into grading.)

Selection

Not a *canon*, but canonical themes.

Roots	Chess, Go, Backgammon, Mancala
Sports	Football (Soccer), Tennis, Basketball
Adventure	Adventure (Atari 2600), Zork, The Secret of Monkey Island
Action & Platformers	Space Invaders, Super Mario Bros, Gears of War
Modern Board & Card Games	Scrabble, Poker, Settlers of Catan
Fighting	Street Fighter II, Virtua Fighter 4, Super Smash Bros. Melee
Action-Adventure	Grand Theft Auto IV (any platform), Metal Gear Solid 4, Uncharted 2
RPGs and Midterm	Dungeons and Dragons, Dragon Quest V, World of Warcraft
CCGs & Simulations	Magic: The Gathering, Sim City, NetHack
FPS	Doom, Half-Life, CounterStrike, Halo
Strategy	Advance Wars, Civilization V, Starcraft 2, DOTA
Casual/Social	Bejeweled, Wii Sports, Farmville
Indie/Experimental	Seiklus, Minecraft, Passage

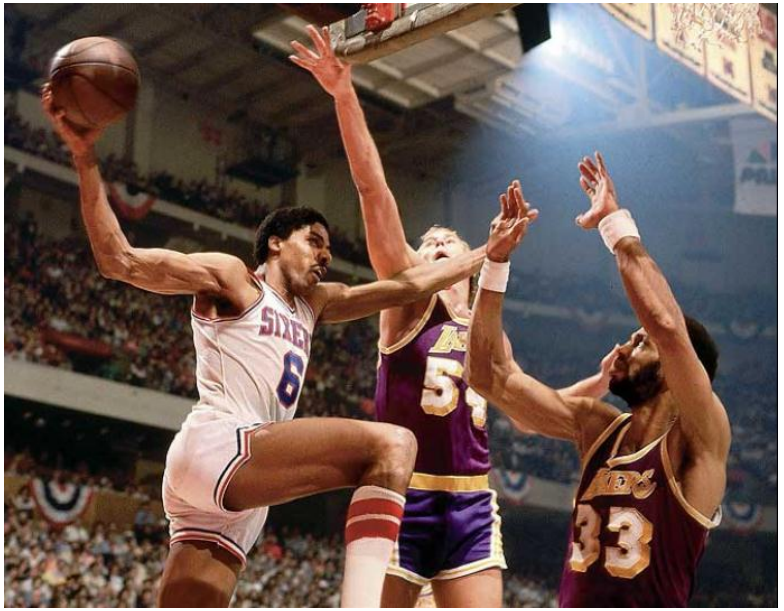
Game Library

- Open to NYU students Mon-Fri 2-8PM.
- 14 systems, 1000 games.
- Coordination between classes and librarians.
- Priority to students taking classes.

Take the quiz!

Who among the following is a key person in the development of this game:

- Yoichi Yamada
- Walter Camp
- James Naismith
- Rinus Michel



Take the quiz!

What year was this game released?

- 1988
- 1994
- 1998
- 2001

http://gamecenter.nyu.edu/2012/02/games-101-practice-exam

Critical Play Reports

Critical Play Report - Week 2
Choose **one** of the following topics for your paper. Keep the paper to 500 words (plus or minus 10 words.)

Topics:

Adventure: Complete levels 1, 2, and 3 of Adventure for the Atari 2600. How does the game structure change from level to level? What aspects of the space, game logic, or placement of elements changed from level to level? How did these changes contribute to the experience of the game for you?

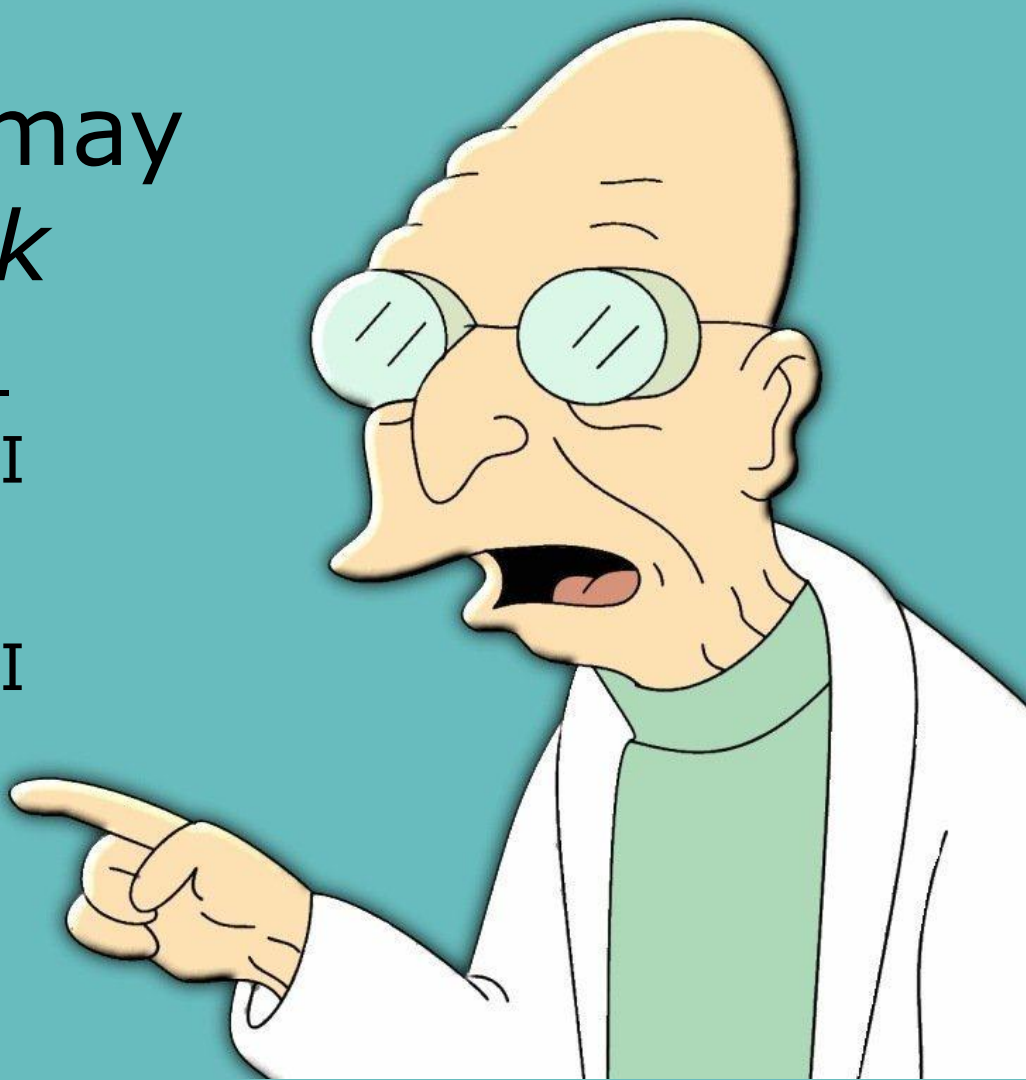
MYST: Analyze a complex puzzle in Myst and focus on one or more of the following questions. How exactly is the puzzle constructed to maximize challenge and player enjoyment? Is the puzzle dynamic in any way, or is it completely predetermined? What kind of problem-solving skills were required to solve the puzzle? How did the puzzle relate to or contribute to the narrative of the game?

Zork: Play Zork for an extended period of time without the assistance of walkthroughs or any kind of online help. Did you feel a sense of engagement and immersion into the game, as related by some of the players in the film we watched during the lecture? Were you immersed in the game narrative, in the game space, or just in the game structure of problem-solving? What aspects of Zork contributed to your engagement and which aspects contributed to your disengagement?

Warning: They may still not like *Zork*

"*Zork* was the first text-based adventure game I have ever played and probably the last text-based adventure game I will ever play. "

-Actual student report



Takeaway

- A student should know 100s of games.
- Dedicated class required.
- We can now refer to *Zork*.
- Significant boon to other classes taught.
- Co-teaching brings faculty on same page.

Gamecenter.nyu.edu / www.jesperjuul.net