

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROPOSAL: SCHOLRLY PROJECT  
SPRING 2009

Student: Cari Kreidinger. Advisor: Zach Whelan.

**IDIS 491: Psychoanalysis and Video Games**

As a capstone course for my Women's Studies major I am pursuing an individual study which is a psychoanalytical approach to video game studies. For my major I chose classes that allowed me to research different topics focused around video games in such disciplines as psychology, linguistics, and introductory women's studies. The University of Mary Washington does not offer a course that specifically critically analyzes video games. This individual study will allow me to directly and critically analyze video games from a women's studies approach.

The goal of this course is to learn about the psychoanalytic approach to game studies, how this approach is used in congruence with women's studies, and use to this approach to critically analyze a group of video games. This study will include theories that will build upon each other towards a final project.

The study will be divided into four main sections. First I will study the psychoanalytic approach through the texts of well known scholars, such as Jacques Lacan and Slavoj Žižek, with a focus on a feminist and gender approach to psychoanalysis. Next I will look at how psychoanalysis has been applied to feminist film studies, which is often used as a comparable method for analyzing video games. I will then look at games studies and psychoanalysis as an individual discipline from film studies. These will lead me into my final project which will be a research paper that will be built upon what I learn from these areas.

For each of my studies in psychoanalysis and film studies I will write a three to four page paper that will critically analyze what I have found, with an emphasis on how it is relevant to my individual study. For the third area of games studies I will write a three to four page paper based not only on what I have studied, but also use game studies theories which I will utilize to analyze a video game with a female protagonist. For this area I will use relevant and recent peer reviewed articles and not texts, which will be approved by Zachary Whalen. For my final project I will write a twenty to twenty-five page research paper which uses the psychoanalytic approach to video games studies to critically analyze a group of video games.

This is an appropriate study for me because my women's studies background has allowed me develop my gender critical analysis skills. I have taken ENGL 351: African American Literature and am currently taking LING 302: Sociological and Anthropological Linguistics. I have also taken several courses that are focused on issues of gender, such as PSYC 350: Psychology of Women, SOCG 315: Society and Gender, ANTH 312: Anthropology of Gender, and IDIS 202: Introduction to Women's Studies. For several of these classes I wrote research papers that were focused on the issues of women and video games.

This will be a unique individual study because it will be advanced and focused. It is relevant to my major because it is a critical analysis of video games from a women's studies approach. I will focus on studying the video avatars and characters, which is different from studying the people who play video games. This will allow me to research a new aspect of video games that I have not studied in my other classes and allow me to focus my major upon a specific area

Professor Zachary Whalen and I will meet once a week. We will discuss the readings I have completed. The focus will be on my own critical analysis of the material. My papers will be graded based on their quality, with the aim of the final paper to be as professional as possible.

### Reading Material and Schedule

Week 1 (1/12/09): Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, by Emily Grosz

Week 2 (1/20/09): Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture, by Slavoj Žižek

Week 3 (1/26/09): Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture, by Slavoj Žižek

Week 4 (2/2/09): Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English, by Jacques Lacan

Week 5 (2/9/09): Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English, by Jacques Lacan

Week 6 (2/16/09): Visual and Other Pleasures, by Laura Mulvey; Paper 1 Due

Week 7 (2/23/09): Visual and Other Pleasures, by Laura Mulvey

Week 8 (3/9/09): Film Studies (2 articles tba);

Week 9 (3/16/09): Game studies (2 articles tba) Paper 2 due; begin final paper

Week 10 (3/23/09): Games studies (2 articles tba)

Week 11 (3/30/09): Discussion of Clock Tower 3, video game to be analyzed for paper 3

Week 12 (4/6/09): Discuss thesis for final paper; Paper 3 due

Week 13 (4/13/09): Discuss video game choices for final paper

Week 14 (4/20/09): Discussion of research done with video game choices

Week 15 (4/27/09): Final paper due