Audiovisual Ludonarrativity

- **Audio**
  - Sound Design, ie: score, voiceovers, combat noises, ambient noises, aural cues

- **Visual**
  - Art Direction, ie: Animation style, color and lighting, landscapes, HUD

- **Ludo**
  - **Gameplay**
    - What can be manipulated by the player (appearance, playstyle, etc)?
    - What the player can do
    - What the player is supposed to do.
    - Simple vs. complex controls
  - **Level Design**
    - The space in which the player must accomplish their quest.
    - This includes how the avatar moves through environments (gravity, vehicles, etc)
    - What creates difficulty, enemies, puzzles, the space, or something else?
  - How do these affect the way that you take in story? Are the quests complimenting the overall theme, or do they feel like silly errands?

- **Narrativity**
  - **Writing and Plot Flow**
    - How do you receive the story? Is there a narrator? What is their perspective? Are you expected to discover the story through reading? How much information are you being given?
    - Is there character dialogue? Does it give you story or does it function more for verisimilitude?
    - Read the description of every item you pick up. How do these deepen your understanding of the story or tone of the game?
    - Is there any player agency over the story? Are you being railroaded, or can you stray from the path, or even change it?
    - How are you being guided through the story?

**Critical Hits: Video Game Club—Behind the Scenes**

1. Play the game
2. Read game designer interviews to learn inspirations and intentions
3. Order and collect materials to encourage deep dives into aspects of the game design
4. Decide a theme for the following month
   a. Some are just for fun, like rogue-lites and survival games
   b. Some reflect an observance from the month that the meeting is held, eg: Women’s History Month-Female Protagonists, June-SRP theme
5. Email members one week prior to the meeting with a reminder of the meeting, the most pressing question I have for the group, links to any online articles that I used in my research, and the theme for the next month.
Critical Hits: Video Game Club Agenda – 2 Hours

15-30 minutes
- Introductions, meet new members
  - Name, favorite game or genre, what platform do you use to play games?
- Talk about video game news
  - Exciting developments, The Game Awards
- What have you been playing outside of the club game?

1 hour
- What did you think of the club game?
  - Vote: Critical Hit or Critical Miss
- Discuss important scenes, quests, characters, and feeling of the game
  - What worked well and not so well?
  - Did the designers lead you to where they intended?
- Were the elements of the game working together?
  - What assisted with your immersion?
  - What worked against your immersion?

15-30 minutes
- Teacher Time
  - Present research regarding designer’s intent and inspirations
    - Did they achieve their goal?
    - Did you notice any homage or allusions to other games/media
  - Present and discuss deeper insights
    - (ie) eastern story structure and tropes, correlation with other media, historic allusions, social commentaries
- Showcase library materials for check out
  - I bring 5-10 (on average) books and dvds, available for checkout and explain how they relate to the game of the month
    - Using my research, I order materials from around the state to give club members an opportunity to deep dive into anything we’ve discussed at the meeting
    - Examples of similar stories or storytelling structures
    - Nonfiction to learn more about real world events that are dramatized in-game or which inspired the fictional events
    - Nonfiction books about video game design, stories from the industry, or analysis of games

15-30 minutes
- Vote on next month’s game
  - Explain the theme and why I chose it
  - Based on the month’s theme, I present 2 or 3 games I believe will be good for the club and why
    - Members are encouraged to suggest games they want the club to play as long as it fits within the month’s theme
- Depending on the number of games, and passion for them, we either do traditional voting, or ranked voting
  - As the facilitator, I never vote
  - Highest number of votes wins
What have we played?

- Japanese Roleplaying Games
  - Octopath Traveler
- Horror
  - Bendy and the Ink Machine
- Co-Op Games
  - Borderlands 3
- Nostalgic Games
  - Fable: Anniversary
- Rogue-Lite
  - Hades
- Female Protagonists
  - Celeste
- Long-Form Games (More than 20 hours of gameplay)
  - Assassin’s Creed: Odyssey
- Oceans of Possibilities
  - Spiritfarer
- Puzzle Games
  - The Witness
- Metroidvania (Metroid + Castlevania Inspired)
  - Ori and the Blind Forest
- Second Chance, Female Protagonists
  - Hellblade Senua’s Sacrifice
- Spooky Horror
  - Doki Doki Literature Club
- Co-Op Games
  - Don’t Starve Together
- Short-Form Games (Less than 10 hours of gameplay)
  - Twelve Minutes
- Meta Games
  - Undertale
- Free-to-Play Games
  - Destiny 2
- Earth Day
  - A Short Hike
- Survival Games
  - This War of Mine

Recommended Reading

- Studies in Gaming: The Composition of Video Games
  - by Johansen Quijano
- Studies in gaming: Storytelling in video games – The Art of the digital narrative
  - by Amy M Green
- 20 Essential Games to Study
  - by Joshua Bycer
- The Ultimate History of Video Games
  - by Steven L Kent
- Game on!
  - by Dustin Hansen
- Blood, Sweat, and Pixels
  - by Jason Schreier
- Fun Inc.: Why Gaming Will Dominate the Twenty-First Century
  - by Tom Chatfield
- The Medium of the Video Game
  - by Mark J P Wolf
- What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy
  - by James Paul Gee
- Grand Theft Childhood
  - by Lawrence Kutner and Cheryl K Olson
- Significant Zero: Heroes, Villains, and the Fight for Art and Soul in Video Games
  - by Walt Williams
- Game Feel: A Game Designer's Guide to Virtual Sensation
  - by Steve Swink