

Art 380: Game Theory

Neal McDonald, M.S., M.F.A.
mcdo@umbc.edu

First Lecture

Introductions

- I am Neal McDonald
 - Production Experience: Lamb & Company
 - Game Industry: Half-Life total conversion, Greenhouse Software
 - Teaching Maya 5 years
 - mcd@umbc.edu, www.workly.com
- Please call me “Professor McDonald”
 - That’s what my boss wants.

Syllabus

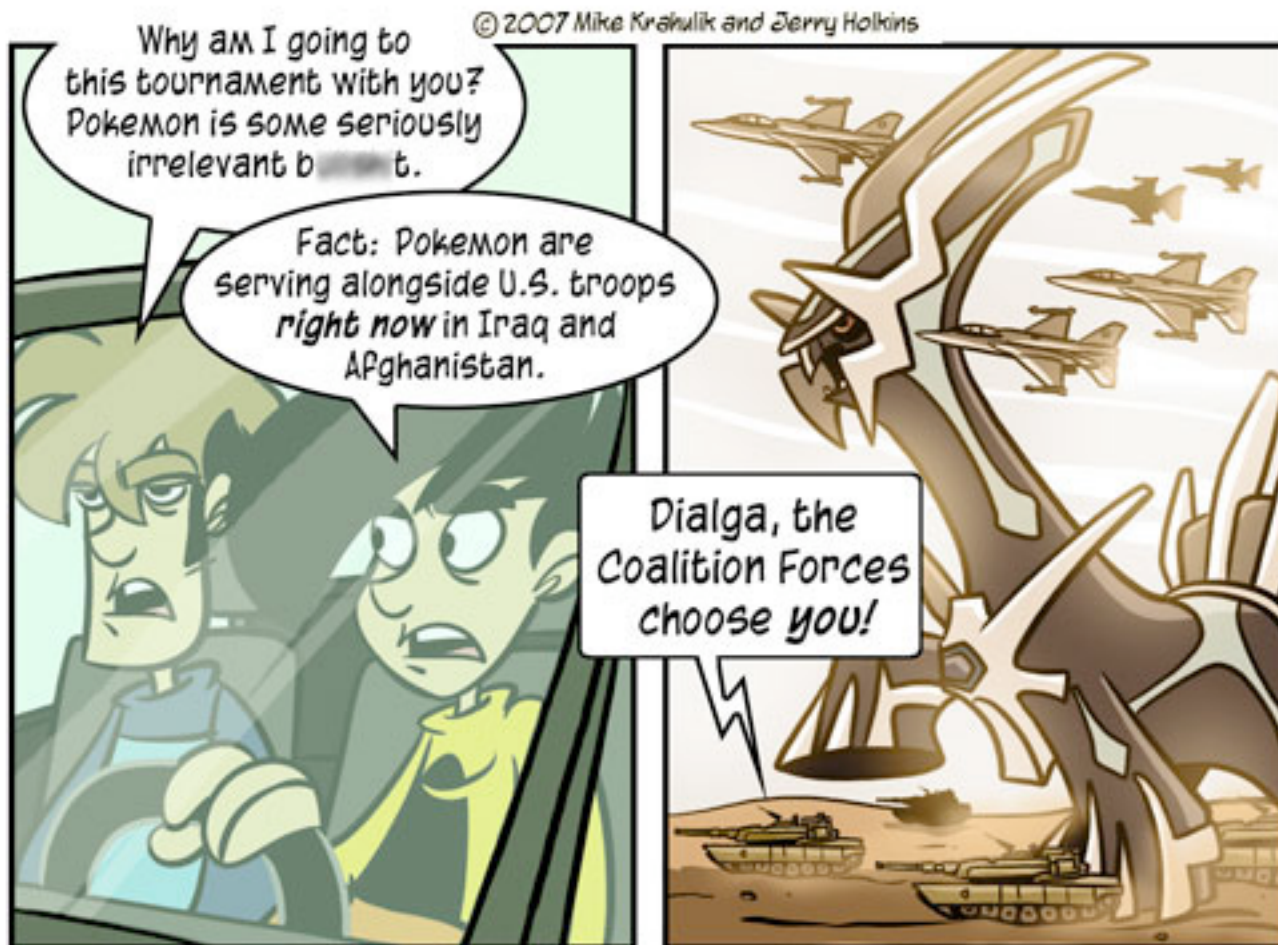
- All grades are weighted equally.
- My faculty web site has vital materials:
 - www.umbc.edu/~mcdo/380/
 - For instance: the syllabus
 - We'll use Blackboard, too. Soon.
- You don't need to know how to program

Class goals

- Help you become a game designer
 - Theories related to games
 - Vocabulary and its uses
 - Learn the canon
- Be educational
 - Not the history of Video Games!
 - Don't waste your time
- Self-Respect

Class Content

- This is not a class about the history of video games-- that would waste your time



Each lecture is in three parts:

1. Theory, readings, philosophy
2. Discussion of non-computer-assisted games
3. Discussion of computer-assisted games

Class Structure 1: Theory

- How to _____ games
 - analyze
 - critique (and therefore, improve)
 - write about (for a grade)
 - compare
- Cultural Analysis
- Psychology
- Philosophy

Class Structure, 2: NCA History

- History of Non-Computer-Assisted games
 - Board games, card/domino games, team games, children's games, puzzles, ... ??
- This is the canon of gaming.
- You will be tested on rules and strategy
 - "Is X a legal move?"
 - "What is the best move in this situation?"

Why learn about old games?

- Creativity is the ability to take unrelated things and put them together.
- Games are always made by refining other games
- Good games are hard to come by!
- "Casual games" market is not small.

Class Structure 3: Video Games

- Know the video games of the past.
 - You will play video games-- as homework
 - You'll hate my choices; lighten up
- Excel by ripping off success
- Know the business models of the industry
 - helps you enter and stay in
- Some industry trends, predictions