LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY

BA (Hons) Creative Writing/English and Creative Writing

AME_5_IFC

Interactive Fiction

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

Academic Year 2015/16

Table of Contents

1.   MODULE DETAILS

Module Title:	Interactive Fiction
Level:	5
Module Reference Number:	AME-5-IFC
Credit Value:	20
Student Study Hours:	300
Contact Hours:	36
Private Study Hours:	264
Pre-requisite Learning:	Pass Level 1
Co-requisite Modules:	None
Course:	Creative Writing/English and Creative Writing
Year and Semester:	Year 2, Semester 1
Module Co-ordinator:	Dave Miller
UC Contact Details:	Email: millerd9@lsbu.ac.uk
Assessment Method:	• An original piece of interactive fiction, its form to be agreed with the supervising tutor and delivered either as a paper-version or utilizing an appropriate piece of software (75% of the marks for this unit) • 2,000 word Reflective Essay exploring the origin, development and success of the project (25% of the marks for this unit) Both elements are due on **4 January 2016**

2.   SHORT DESCRIPTION

Digital technologies have opened up manifold opportunities for creative writers. This extends from the writing of projects – using word processors to construct and edit stories or scripts, using the Internet to conduct research – and increasingly to the ways in which we can actually *tell* stories. From web poetry to hypertext novels, from video games to interactive comics, from mobile 'phone stories to participatory movies, the possibilities are multiple and constantly evolving.

Key to such possibilities is the role played by interactivity. The ability to intervene in stories – whether it be to affect the plot, to change the perspective from which events are witnessed, or to otherwise participate in the diegesis of the story – throws up all sorts of questions for both the author and the consumer, as well as

returning us to age-old debates about the relationship between writer and audience. In fact, as we'll see, narrative experimentation (particularly but not exclusively in terms of non-sequentiality) is far from a new phenomenon, and examples from literature, drama and cinema can teach us a great deal about newer participatory forms of storytelling.

In this twelve-week module we'll introduce key concepts and approaches to the construction of fiction-scripts for interactive media. We'll examine the potential and limitations of interactivity in relation to a variety of examples drawn from the fields of the hypertext novel, video game media and other forms of online fiction and participatory storytelling. Particular emphasis is given to the types of interactive fiction structure and the specific ways in which they use interactivity. You'll be assessed on the basis of a small-scale fiction project which exploits interactivity in some form.

3.   AIMS OF THE MODULE

- To introduce and explore further examine definitions of narrative
- To explore ideas of structure
- To introduce and explore ideas of participation/interactivity, non-linearity and non-sequentiality, storytelling and its relationship to playing
- To examine the codes and conventions involved in the production of proposals, storylines and scripts for video games
- To examine historical precedents experimenting with ideas of non-linearity, non-sequentiality and interactivity within a fictional framework
- To introduce ideas of transmedial storytelling
- To explore the relationship between theory and practice

4.   LEARNING OUTCOMES
4.1   Learning and Understanding

By the end of this module you will be able to demonstrate:

- An understanding of principles of Classical narrative construction and an understanding of how participatory storytelling forms subvert or reinforce such an approach
- Further awareness of ideas of representation
- Knowledge of industry structures, industry codes and conventions and awareness of the ways in which video games are constructed and consumed
- An ability to construct a participatory story working in conjunction with the supervising tutor

4.2   Intellectual Skills

- An understanding of the interrelationship of narrative and play
- Awareness of interactive fiction concepts, codes and conventions insofar as they exist
- A self-reflexive approach to your work
- An awareness of the role played by theory in the production of participatory stories

4.3   Practical Skills

- An ability to plot IF artefacts
- An awareness of the codes and conventions involved in the construction of video game proposals, overview documents and scripts
- An awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of participatory storytelling structures

Transferable Skills

You'll have the opportunity to develop:

- Interactive groups skills through workshop activities
- Oral communication through seminar discussion
- Written communication skills through writing exercises

5.   ASSESSMENT OF THE MODULE

The coursework will test both the Learning Outcomes of this module and will relate to broader generic criteria appropriate to this level.

Assessment 1: SUMMATIVE
- An interactive story. It could be one of the following, although it could be another form not mentioned here but discussed and agreed with the supervising tutor.

1. A short story featuring hypertext links intended for the web, DVD or mobile telephone
2. A poem featuring hypertext links intended for the web, DVD or mobile telephone
3. A short interactive film
4. A video game
5. A short interactive radio play
6. A short piece of participatory theatre
7. An Alternative Reality Game (ARG)

Alternatively, it could be a combination of these approaches. Your story can include any combination of visuals (e.g. video, photographs, animations) and any combination of audio (e.g. sound effects, speech, music, silence). However, it *must* be **interactive** in some way.

- You'll be assessed on the following criteria:
    1. Your use of participatory/interactive techniques. Think about the effect on your audience of what you're doing.
    2. Your ability to construct a story from which the participatory elements naturally emerge.
    3. Your use of character, dialogue and storytelling techniques as appropriate. If appropriate, your use of prose or poetic language.
    4. The quality of how you present your submission. You can present it as a script in combination with a flowchart; as a storyboard; as a step outline together with script extracts (for video games only); or even, if you have the technical skills, as a DVD produced using software such as Flash or Storyspace. Alternatively, you can submit a combination of formats. The key thing is what works best for your particular idea.
- Weighting: 75%
- Due in 4 January 2016

Assessment 2: SUMMATIVE
- A Reflective Essay outlining the following:
    1. The origin of the idea.
    2. The development of the idea, including influences, referenced according to Harvard standards.
    3. The development of your own skills.
    4. The interrelationship of form and content. Did form influence content or vice versa?
    5. The strengths and weaknesses of the finished artifact.

As with the creative writing element of the submission, the Essay should be word processed and contain references to the theoretical concerns covered in this module and elsewhere on the course.

- Ancillary material as appropriate in a supporting Appendix, referenced within the body of the Essay
- Weighting: 25%
- Due in 4 January 2016

Successful completion of this module is heavily dependent upon full attendance and punctuality. Students who do not regularly attend or who are consistently late are liable to fail this module and may endanger their chances of progressing beyond this point of the degree.

6.   FEEDBACK

Feedback will normally be given to students 20 working days after the submission of an assignment.

7.   INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE MODULE

The module will explore approaches to the theorization and construction of narrative rooted in a comparative media perspective, with particular emphasis on 'Classical' narrative. It will examine the codes and conventions associated with the design and implementation of narrative elements for a wide range of participatory media, including (but not necessarily limited to) hypertext novels, web poetry, downloadable content for mobile 'phones, interactive films, interactive television, participatory performance, video game media and transmedial enterprise more widely.

7.1   Overview of the Main Content

- History of interactive fiction and its relationship to non-linearity and other kinds of narrative experimentation, both in terms of digital technology and with regards to other media such the novel, theatre and interactive cinema
- Spatial stories
- Hypertext novels
- Web poetry
- Video game media
- Interactive television
- Structures used in interactive fiction: the concept of the rhizome, branching/forking narrative, the 'Violence Hub', parallel perspectives
- The relationship of play and story
- Industry perspectives
- Causality in interactive fiction

7.2   Overview of Types of Classes

- Contextual sessions
- Group-based writing exercises
- Developmental workshops
- Student-led discussions
- Guest lecture from industry professional
- Individual tutorials

7.3   Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

As with every practice-Module on the BA (Hons) Creative Writing/English and Creative Writing course, you are expected to work independently outside of class hours on every aspect of the project.

7.4   Employability

The emphasis of this module prepares students for the challenges of working in professional environments where interactivity is central, such as Web-based media, interactive television, DVD authoring and the video game industry. Students grapple with the complexities of non-linear, interactive narrative structures in a practical fashion which is also critically-informed. The media industries operate in an increasingly transmedial way, and this module supplies a set of valuable skills for negotiating these complex interactions.

8.   THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Block One Wks 1-6	Block Two Wks 7-12
Overview of Interactive Fiction; classical versus other structures; discussion of interactivity and participation, authorship/co-authorship, non-linearity versus non-sequentiality; overview of key structures: branching, parallel perspectives, rhizome and video game. Choose your own adventure books (Nathan Penlington). Interactive Fictions (with Emily Short, IF legend). Digital poetry, featuring Mez Breeze. How to make interactive stories (Kim Plowright, interactive story producer).	Electronic literature and legendary storyteller Tim Wright explains his projects. Future of the book. Digital journalism, fan fictions. Transmedia (Robert Pratten covers the business of Transmedia production). Games-development (Trevor Klein of BBC and Doctor Who interactive), e-lit and game overlaps, emergence in games, news games, interactive comics. Greatest games ever. Cross media storytelling (Claudio Pires Franco).

Week 1 **Narrative experimentation & revisiting forgotten cultural forms**
In the first week of Interactive Fiction, we will discuss: • Forgotten cultural forms. Historical precedents. • Creative writing tools, cut-ups, participatory narratives • Some useful definitions of narrative • The evolution of narrative, storytelling, printing, books • Challenging the conventions of narrative • Janet Murray's multi form stories • Non-linear films, books, parallel perspectives, serial narratives • Involving the audience, multiple authorship • Role playing, fan culture, Otaku • Electronic literature examples

Week 2 **Concepts of Interactive storytelling (Nathan Penlington)**
• Evolution of stories and narrative • Narrative structures & definitions, Aristotle, Freytag • Plot and Time • The crisis of narrative • Symbology, linguistic signs, semiotic signs • Non-linear films • The two endings of Blade Runner

- Writing non-linear stories - exercise
- Setups and payoffs, McKee
- Narrative causality, Stam
- Objective correlation
- Binary choices in stories
- Plot versus interactivity
- Problems of fusing interaction with narrative
- Choose your own adventure books- game books

- Reading without end - Coover & hypertext
- Discussing & analysing Ryman's interactive novel 253
- AR workshop - Aurasma

Week 3
Electronic literature part 1 – concepts and practice of narration in digital media (Emily Short)

- Concepts/ practice of narration in digital media
- Ludology versus narratology argument
- Storyworlds
- Genres of Digital Literature
- how represent it? diagrams/ flowcharts
- Playing and analysing Zork –
- how the game functions as narrative (to the extent that it does)
- how player interaction is (or isn't) integrated with the narrative
- What elements work with and against a narrative interpretation?

- Structures - commonly used in interactive fiction: the concept of the rhizome, branching/forking narrative, the 'Violence Hub', parallel perspectives etc
- Making an interactive story - exercises using tools
    - Creating an interactive story - exercise - half an hour
    - Inkle Writer (or similar) - exercise - half hour

- Writing machines & telling stories with machines
- All writing is technology – Janet Murray "Technotexts" and "Writing Machines"
- Poetry generators (this leads into Mez Breeze)

Week 4
Electronic literature part 2 – collaborative/ participatory stories (Mez Breeze)

Digital literature
- overview of genres
- pioneers
- show examples
- some history
- hypertext

Database narratives
Judy Malloy - Uncle Roger - interview - "narrabases"
http://www.theliteraryplatform.com/2014/04/digital-literature-pioneers-judy-malloy-on-narrabases-80s-silicon-valley-and-e-literature-today/

Electronic poetry and code work
Oulipo (again)
Perl poetry

Mez Breeze
http://runme.org/feature/read/+londonpl/+34/

London.pl by Graham Harwood:
http://runme.org/feature/read/+londonpl/+34/
Grandma: http://baseinfinity.blogspot.com.au/2014/05/grandma.html.

http://lhartikk.github.io/ArnoldC/
Arnold Schwartenegger programming language

South America examples of e-poetry, e-narratives. Tradition of experimental poetry.
Belen Gache http://belengache.net/

Paul Thayer's "microcodes":
http://pallthayer.dyndns.org/microcodes/index.php

Many examples at http://collection.eliterature.org

Karlien Van der Beukel - digital poems

Participatory narratives
- Show the participatory aspects of interactive stories and that collaborative writing is not new. Talk about who controls the text, and the idea that the writer becomes an architect.

- Participatory collaborative emerging from semiotics/ situationism/ avantgarde practices.
- Collaborative stories – Haiku, Renku
- Exquisite Corpse
- Contribute to the world's first collaborative sentence
- Oulipo exercises
- Examples of collaborative participatory electronic literature
- Death of the Author (Barthes)
- Anti author, anti tradition tendency
- Co-authorship/ collaborative writing exercises
- Quilting
- Mail Art

- Performance & participatory theatre
- Blast Theory
- Interactive Theatre, performance practice: Boal 'Spect-actor'
- Punch drunk
- Dial tones symphony

- Interactive theatre
- Annette Mees http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-07/29/creative-fellow-annette-mees
- David Verala https://davidvarela.wordpress.com/

- The politics of participatory narrative - Sticker Fictions - distributed narratives

- News games
- digital journalism
- interactive comics

- Up to date e-lit, examples

- Naomi Alderman
- http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-03/06/the-sun-stands-still & Run Zombies Run

- Remix the book: http://www.remixthebook.com

Week 5
How to make interactive stories (Kim Plowright)

Two parts to this class:

(1) Kim Plowright - how to design/ structure/ plan interactive story projects
Structuring - flowcharts - designing - planning – organizing - breaking down your project into chunks

(2) Tools - hands on - for students to use in their projects
To get students started - build simple things. I will offer very simple demos with technology - how to make interactive stories - quickly and easily and accessible to students with little to no tech knowledge
I want to show them some simple technology they can use to make interactive stories - using tech they are familiar with.

We look in more detail at some of the technologies you might like to use for your project.
- Discuss possible tools and technology (for project)
(powerpoint, Aurasma, Layar, pdfs, youtube, Inklewriter, Inform, html, Moodle wiki, Twine, blogger/ blogs/ Instagram)
- Lesson on prototyping - what is it? How do i do it?

TES - interactive ppt - school age resources
http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Interactive-choose-your-own-adventure-stories-6332177/event/22/

Portal Entertainment development guides - talk through these
http://www.portalentertainment.co.uk/development
development guides covering the 5 major elements we're looking for in immersive entertainment: World, Characters, Multi-stranded Plot, Audience, Memories.

1. Storyworld - Logline, Timeline, Dramatic Pressures, Genre
2. Character - Protagonists, Antagonists, Communities, Points of View
3. Multi-stranded plot - Dramatic Questions, Events, Thresholds and Inversions
4. Audience - User Journeys. Paths of how an audience could enter your world - highly involved and reluectant users
5. Memories, Rituals and Emotional States - what memories will the audience take away from the storyworld and how will it make them feel?

Week 6
Tutorial
- Tutorials - discuss your idea for your Interactive story project.   - Students need to book ahead for slots (google docs)   - Development of initial ideas and prototyping

Week 7
Electronic literature part 3 (Tim Wright)
Class split into 2 hour chunks. (1) Tim to talk about his work and talk about elect lit (2 hours) (2) Go through the Electronic Literature collections: http://collection.eliterature.org - there are two editions from - October 2006 and February 2011 - take material from these - Online Caroline, Oldton, Inamimate Alice, Flight Paths) It's becoming a broader subject - there are more genres and examples to cover and they deserve more time and analysis.

Week 8
Future of the Book
- The novel/ codex – how novel is it, and why used as a reference. The end of the book?   - Transmedia, Mobile storytelling, Digital writing, Fandoms/ fan worlds, Otaku culture, Fan fictions, Slash fiction   - Talk about the future of publishing and how to thrive in this new media world.   - Self publishing, e-books, Kindle, Kindle worlds, royalties, Wiki novels, Blogs   - Interdisciplinarity   - Intermediality   - Adaptation   - Fluxus   - Transmedia   - Mobile storytelling   - Story apps   - Digital writing   - Fandoms/ fan worlds   - Otaku culture   - Fan fictions   - Slash fiction

- Self publishing
- e-books
- Kindle
- Kindle worlds
- Royalties
- Wiki novels
- Blogs

Week 9
Transmedia (Robert Pratten)

Split the lesson:
(1) Robert - his experience in industry & Transmedia storytelling
Maybe activity such as Sherlock Holmes transmedia exercise?
For 2 hours
(2) Then 2 hours of tutorials (project assistance and practice with tools and feedback session)
- Tutorials - discuss your idea for your Interactive story project.
- Students need to book ahead for slots (google docs)
- talk about development of ideas and prototyping

Week 10
Games development (Trevor Klein)

(1) Trevor talks about game writing and his experience in industry - for 2 hours
- The process of producing a video game storyline and script

(2) I follow with covering:
- e-literature and games overlaps
- Explore arguments concerning whether video games can really be viewed as participatory narratives or whether they're something else entirely
- Compare LA Noire, Hard Rain and independent game Masq with Film Noir and 1940s detective fiction, screen documentary Thumb Candy

Stories in games, importance of story…
How emergence places control of the story in the hands of the reader.

e-lit/Games overlaps
- News games
- interactive comics

Naomi Alderman's list of greatest games ever!

Week 11 **Tutorials and Cross-media (Claudio Pires Franco)**
Split the lesson into 2 parts: **(**1) Guest speaker: Claudio Pires Franco - talking about transmedia/ cross media storytelling/ fan fictions/ adaptations (2) Tutorials: In this session you will receive feedback on your project, as well as discussing approaches to the reflective essay. We will discuss your project in terms of theory. This is a taught session so you are expected to attend. - Tutorials - discuss your idea for your Interactive story project. - talk about development of ideas and prototyping Plus additional tutorial sessions - at extra times over the next few weeks

Week 12 **Feedback Tutorials**
In this session the supervising tutor will offer advice/ help on your assignment. - Students need to book ahead for slots (google docs) - talk about development of their projects Plus additional tutorial sessions - at extra times over the next few weeks

Deadline: 4 January 2016

9.   Student Evaluation

This module's student evaluation will occur towards the conclusion of the module and will be an opportunity for you to provide feedback about the module in a formal way. We encourage students, however, to provide feedback regarding teaching and learning on an ongoing basis throughout the semester.

If you have suggestions, questions or concerns about the module please discuss them with your module lecturers or tutors. If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns

about the Course in general please contact your Course Director, Dr. Karlien van den Beukel.

10.   LEARNING RESOURCES
10.1   Academic and Applied Reading

Aarseth, Espen (1997) *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. New York: John Hopkins University Press

Aristotle (1996) *Poetics*. London: Penguin Classics

de Certeau, Michel (1988) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. London: University of California Press

Caillois, Roger (2001) *Man, Play and Games*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix (2003) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Continuum

Freeman, David (2003) *Creating Emotion in Games*. London: New Riders

Friedman, Ted (1999) *Civilization and Its Discontents: Simulation, Subjectivity, and Space* in Smith, Greg M. (1999) *On a Silver Platter: CD Roms and the Promises of a New Technology*. London: New York University Press

Fuller, Matthew (2005) *Media Ecologies: Materialist Energies in Art and Technoculture*. Massachusetts: MIT Press

Hilliard, Robert L. (1999) *Writing for Television, Radio and New Media*. London: Wadsworth

Huizinga, Johan (1970) *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. London: Beacon Press

Jenkins, Henry (2004) *Game Design as Narrative Architecture* in Wardrip-Fruin, Noah and Harrigan, Pat (eds) (2004) *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, Game*. Massachusetts: MIT Press

Jenkins, Henry (2008) *Convergence Culture*. Massachusetts: MIT Press

Murray, Janet H. (1999) *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*. Massachusetts: MIT Press

Sutton-Smith, Brian (2001) *The Ambiguity of Play*. London: Harvard University Press

Woolgar, Steve (1991) *Configuring the User: the Case of Usability Trials* in Law, John (ed) (1991) *A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*. London: Routledge

Websites discussing participatory new media narrative and video games:

Game Studies, the International Journal of Video Games Research at
www.gamestudies.org

ludology org video game theory
www.ludology.org

The Interactive Fiction Competition
http://www.ifcomp.org/

Eastgate Systems
http://www.eastgate.com/

Novels:

Amis, Martin (1992) *Time's Arrow*. London: Penguin

Borges, Jorges Luis (2000) *Labyrinths*. London: Penguin

Newman, Kim (1999) *Life's Lottery*. London: Simon and Schuster

Sterne, Laurence [1759] (1996) *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. London: Wordsworth

Vonnegut, Kurt (1998) *Slaughterhouse Five*. London: Bantam

Theatre:

Beckett, Samuel (1984) *Collected Shorter Plays*. London: Faber and Faber

Beckett, Samuel (2006) *Waiting for Godot*. London: Faber and Faber

Maxwell, Douglas (2002) *Helmet*. London: Oberon

Stoppard, Tom (1993) *Arcadia*. London: Faber and Faber

Film:

Blade Runner	Ridley Scott	1982	US
Blade Runner: Director's Cut	Ridley Scott	1992	US

Groundhog Day	Harold Ramis	1993	US
Memento	Christopher Nolan	2000	US
Pulp Fiction	Quentin Tarantino	1994	US
Rashomon	Akira Kurosawa	1951	Japan
Run Lola Run	Tom Tykwer	1998	Germany
Sliding Doors	Peter Howitt	1998	UK
Timecode	Mike Figgis	2000	US
The Untouchables	Brian De Palma	1987	US

Television:

Boys From the Blackstuff	BBC	Tx 1982
The Singing Detective	BBC	Tx 1986
Thumb Candy	Channel 4	Tx 2000

Video Games:

Bungie: *Halo*. 2001

Electronic Arts: *Medal of Honour: Frontline.* 2002

Frontier: *Dog's Life*. 2003

Irrational: *Bioshock*. 2007

Sony: *The Getaway*. 2002

Hypertext Novels:

Afternoon: A Story.	Michael Joyce.	1987
Victory Garden.	Stuart Moulthrop	1992
253.	Geoff Ryman	1996