



CMST 27840 1, MAAD 25630 1 - Videogames and Genre Storytelling - Instructor(s) Ian Jones

Project Title: **College Course Evaluation - Spring 2020**

Number Enrolled: **22**

Number of Responses: **13**

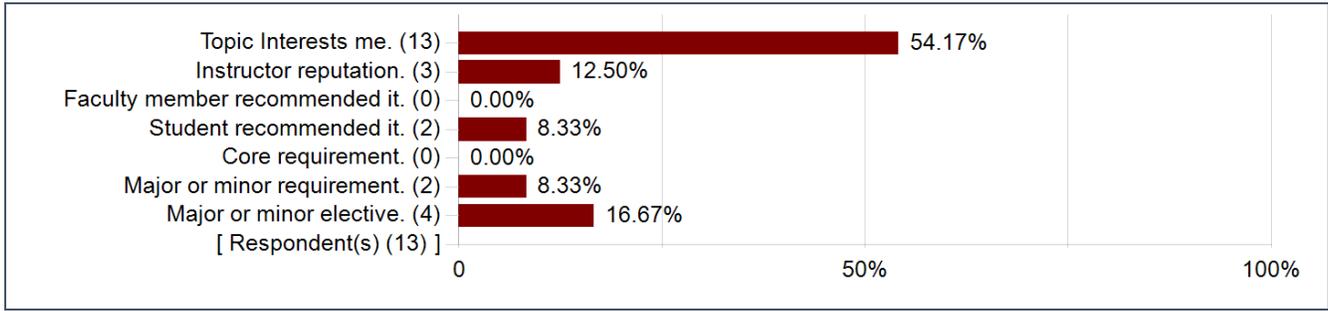
Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

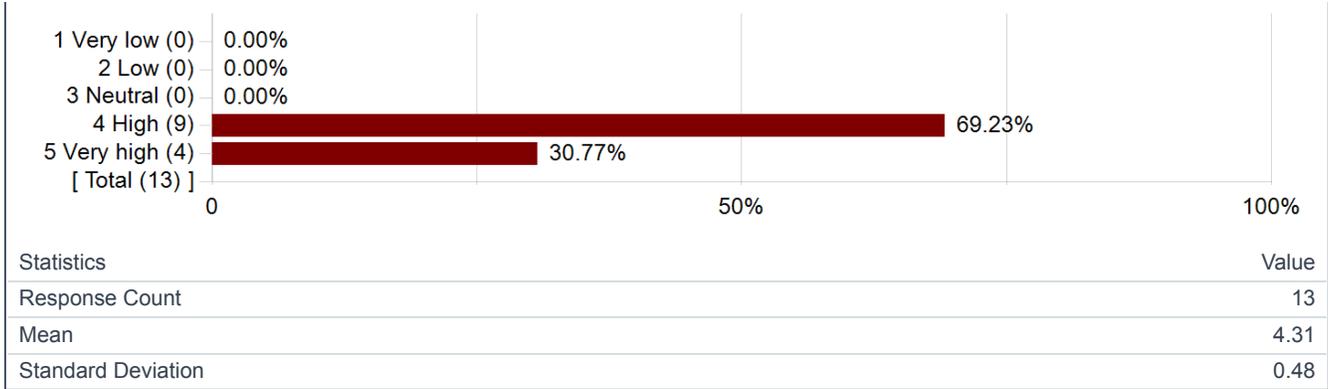
Creation Date: **Tuesday, July 21, 2020**



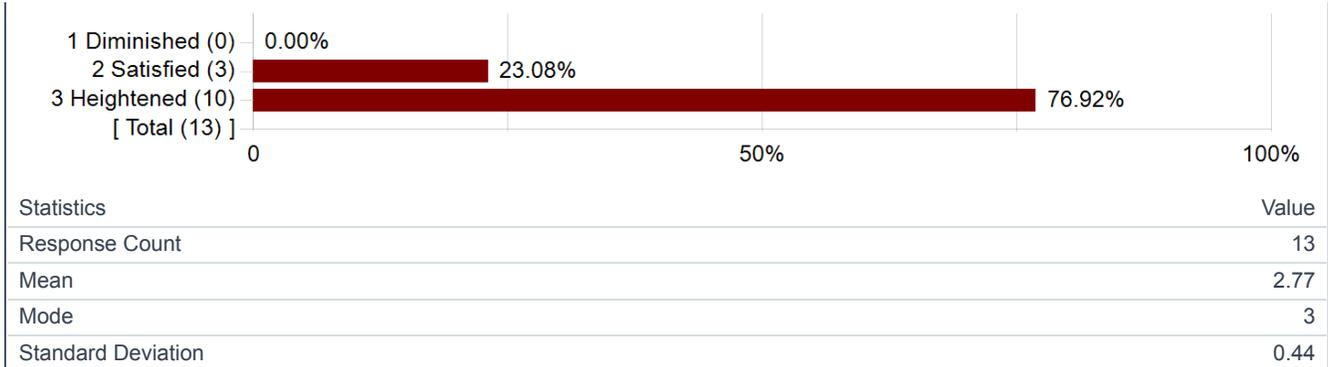
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



Now that this class is over, your interest is?



What are the most important things that you learned in this course? Please reflect on the knowledge and skills you gained.

| Comments |
|---|
| I learned about some really cool video games. |
| I learned about genre in video games and cinema |
| That videogames follow the genres of other works of art, and that you can analyze them using the framework of other genres. |
| I loved learning about detective fiction and stories. |
| We learned a great deal about non video games and how they influenced games in unique and interesting ways. |
| I learned a lot about how genre can be a framework to analyze the decisions of authors/directions/game designers, as well as how they influence consumers' experiences of those media. |
| I learned about different tropes and conventions that constitute certain genres (romance, horror, comedy, etc), and how the expression of these genres varies across different mediums (video games, as well as film, novels, etc.) |
| How to talk about video games in an academic setting, the role that genre plays in everything from the story to the programming of a game. |

Describe how aspects of this course (lectures, discussions, labs, assignments, etc.) contributed to your learning.

Comments

There was a mix of pre-recorded sometimes and live lectures. Each week, there was about one day of group presentations. Every meeting had readings, movies, or game assignments.

Lectures and student presentations were both very effective at describing how different games and genres operate.

I loved the presentation aspects, and the slack where we can chat more casually or engage at varied levels. The lecture-presentations were also well-made!

I loved the group presentations because many people gave varying takes on games that I loved and the discussion was always fantastic.

Slack and chat allowed us to get closer and talk about the topics both in and outside the group. The freedom with the final project let us pick something we wanted to work on, so it was fun and we were happy to spend a long time on it.

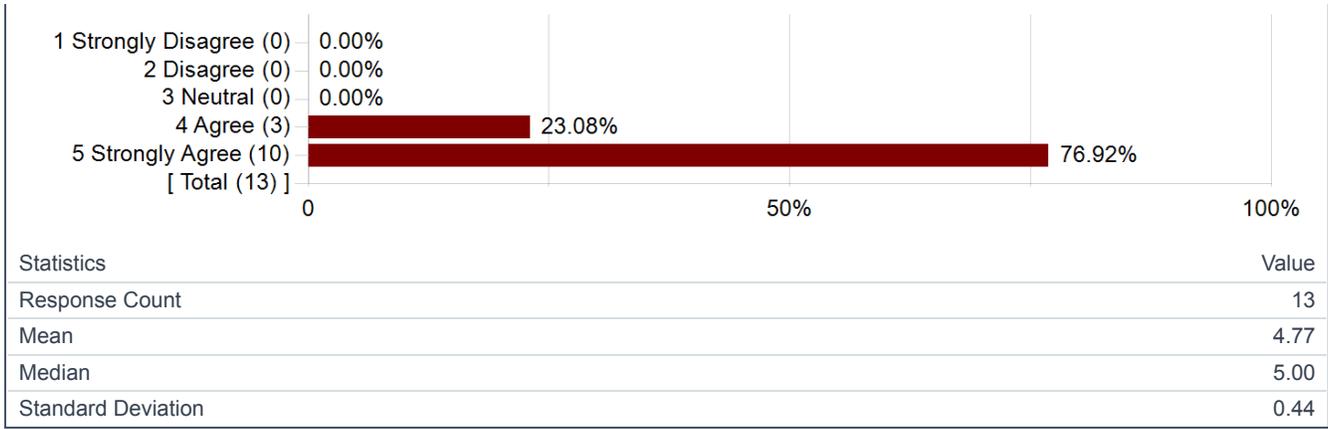
Lectures gave concise background info that parsed out the readings, discussions let us all really engage with the ideas and materials, and the group work encouraged us to get to know other classmates.

Each week we generally had a few brief theoretical readings on the genre, and then an example game, film, etc of the genre. One meeting each week is Ian giving a lecture and discussion. The other meeting is devoted to group presentations.

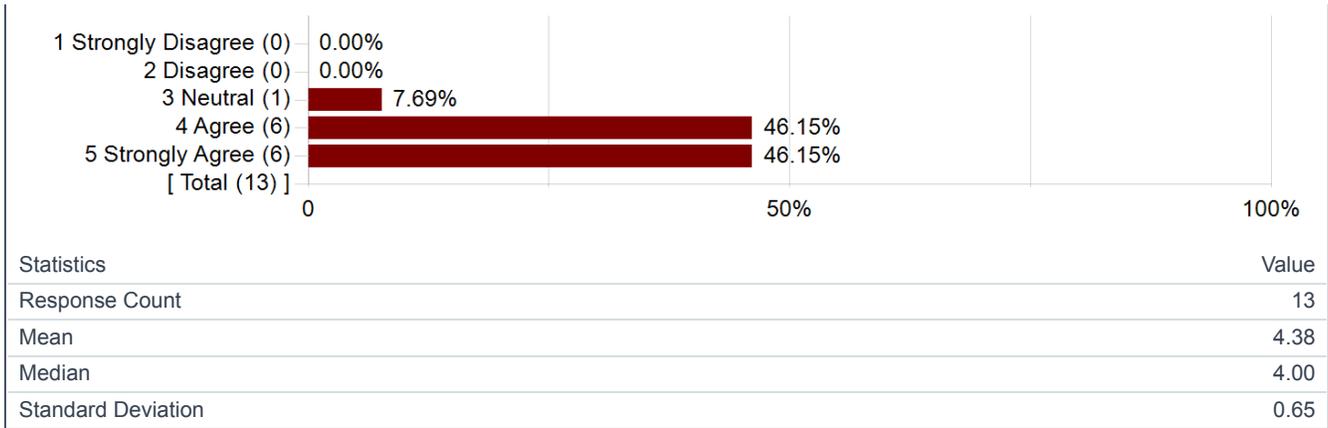
Discussions and lectures were both very informative, and even group assignments (which have been difficult to do remotely) have gone very smoothly and been very enjoyable.

The Instructor(s) . . .

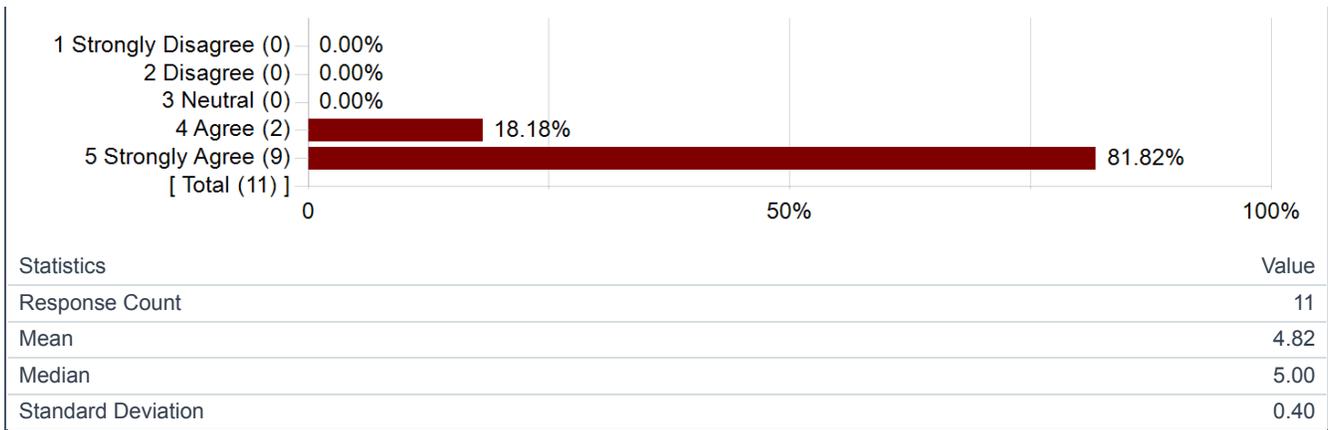
1. Provided a syllabus that allowed you to plan your learning and study time effectively.



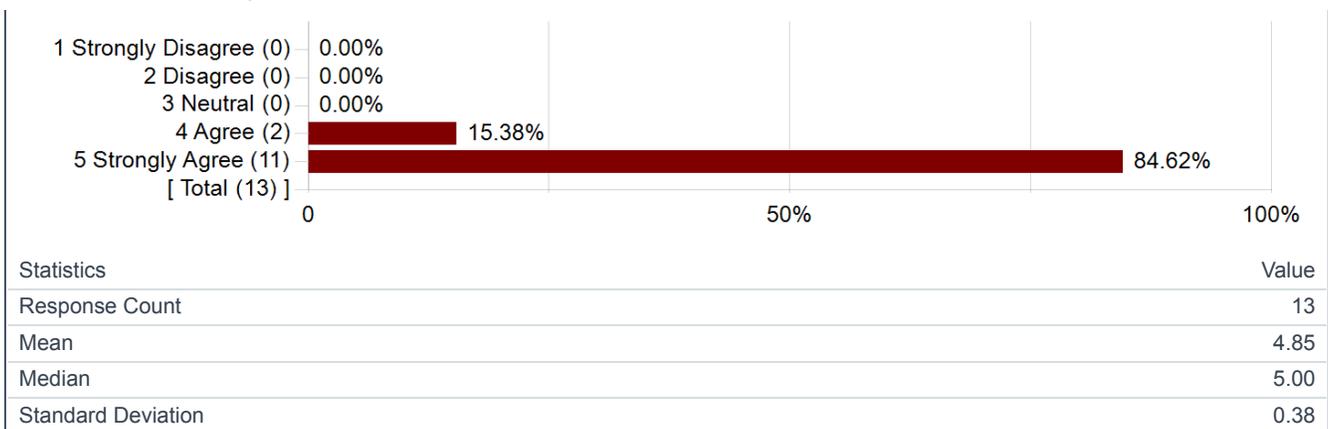
2. Explained clearly the course objectives and expectations.



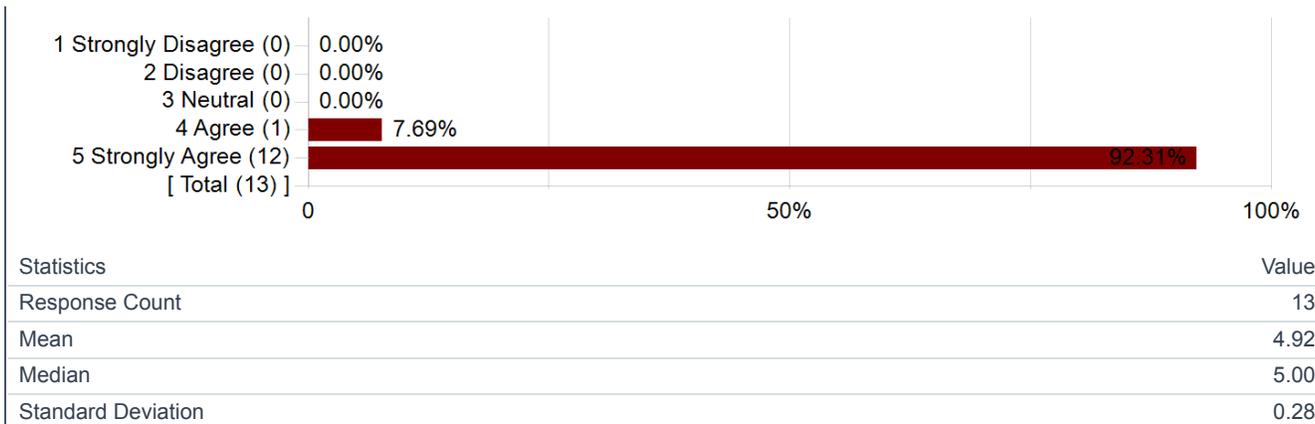
3. Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.



4. Was available and helpful outside of class.



5. Overall, the instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.



What aspect of the instructor's teaching contributed most to your learning?

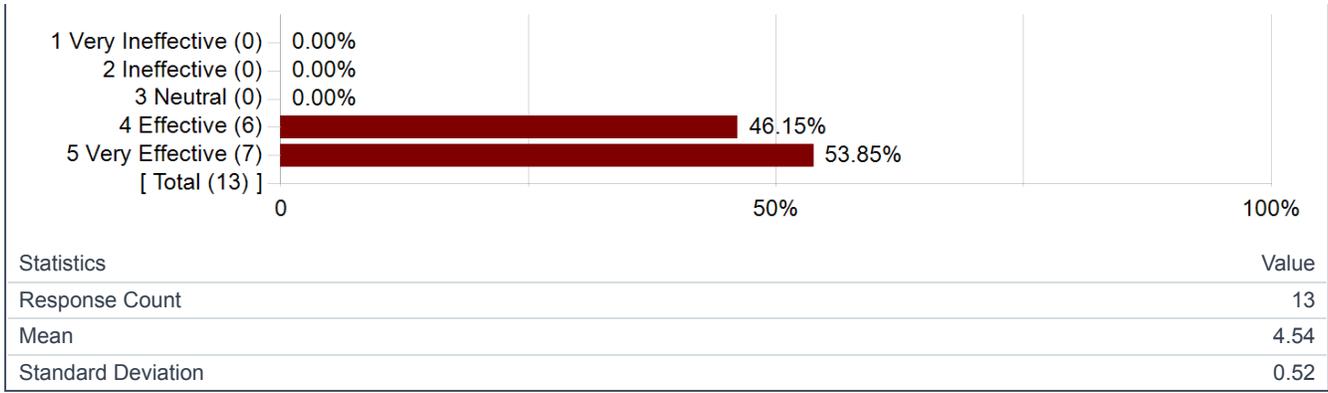
| Comments |
|---|
| Ian's very nice and good at managing conversations. |
| Ian was a wonderful instructor and was great at leading discussion of the course topics as well as other relevant topics |
| very knowledgeable and a great lecturer/discusser |
| Ian was kind and encouraged a variety of conversation. He pushed us to explore our study topics deeper, and also encouraged us to talk about issues that we were interested in – for example, one of the movies we watched sparked a discussion on Asian–American identity in the genre of rom–com, which many (4+) class members enjoyed, and he allowed us to talk about that while keeping the conversation relevant to the topic, rom–coms. |
| I liked that he facilitated discussion very easily. |
| Casual environment. |
| Ian helped facilitate an open environment for discussion, and our conversations really felt casual despite engaging with interesting ideas. |
| Ian was very helpful and gave good lectures/contributions to the discussion. I also had personal struggles this quarter, and he was very accomodating. |
| He was very available to talk outside of class and very accommodating towards everyone in class. He would regularly ask us how we were doing before beginning discussions, and cultivated a very free class atmosphere while also encouraging us to work hard on learning the material. |

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

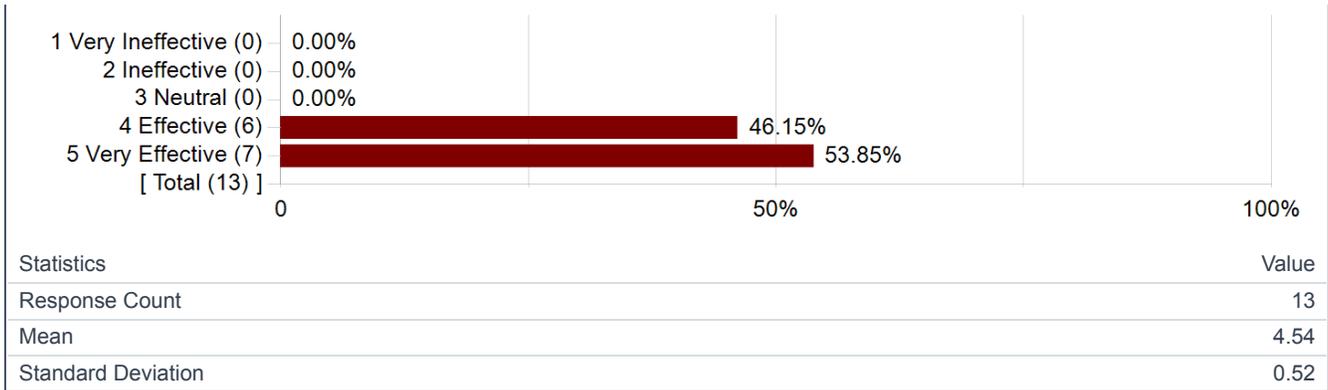
| Comments |
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| Group projects are terrible. There was no way to monitor how well everyone was contributing. People sometimes just did not help or anything. Would have been nice for accountability. Lastly, maybe a bit more details about final project beyond "substantial" would have been helpful. |
| I wish he would push people to have deeper discussions when the discussions are shallow, and be harder on people! For example, one student presentation given about Minecraft had a large part that just asked its presentation members to discuss their favorite parts of the game. I wish he had called them out and told them it wasn't relevant. |
| N/A |
| It was very stressful to have all of our grade be participation in projects with no rubric for when you weren't the group leader to prove you did work if you were too nervous to talk during the presentation. |
| Group projects were good, but sometimes detracted from time that could've been spent in discussion or lecture. |
| I felt that the instructor could've responded more during the group presentations, though time would be an issue in this case (More on this later). |

How effective were the different modes of remote teaching in this course?

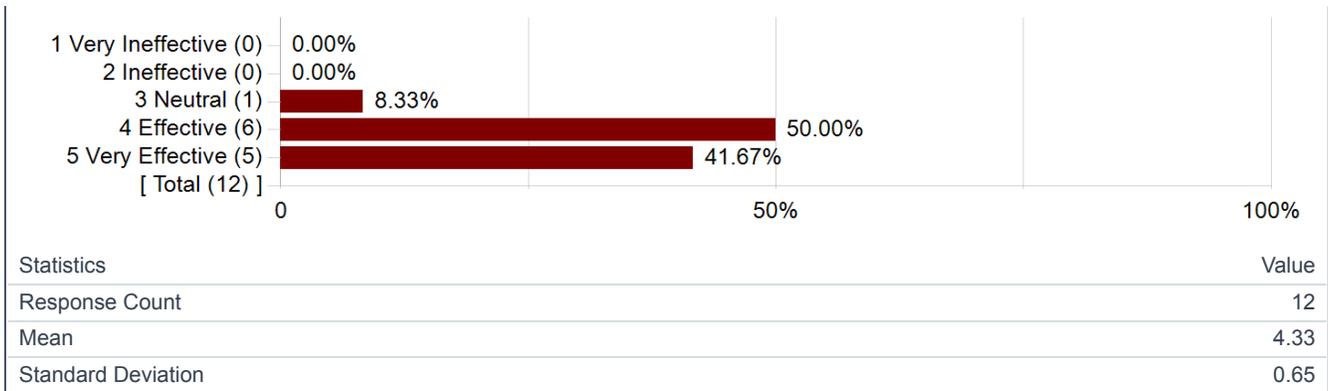
1. Synchronous Lectures



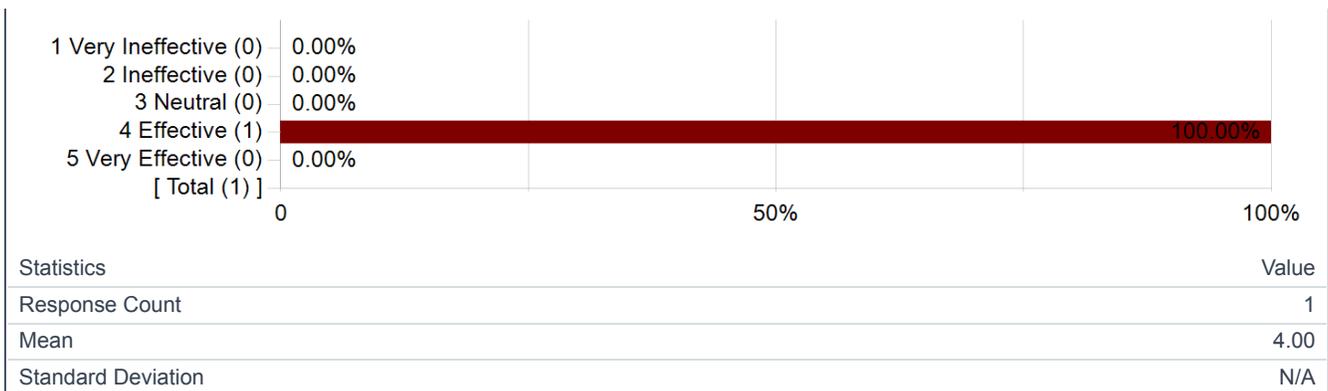
2. Asynchronous (prerecorded) Lectures



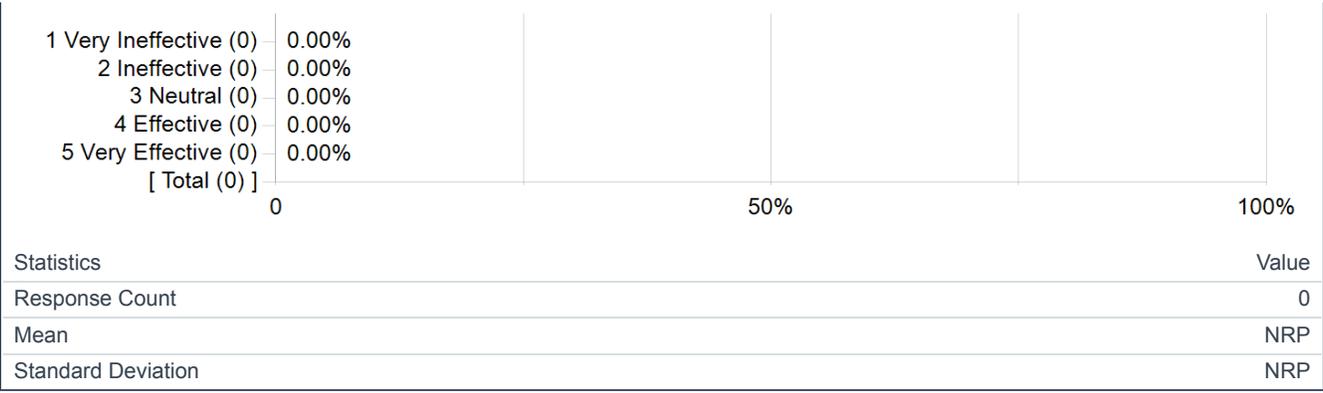
3. Large Discussions (everyone in the class)



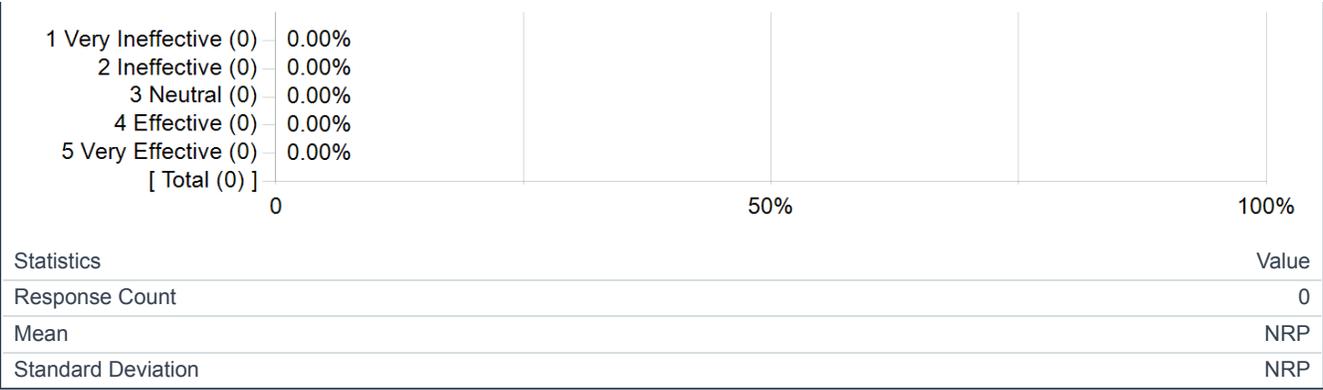
4. Small Discussions (zoom breakout rooms)



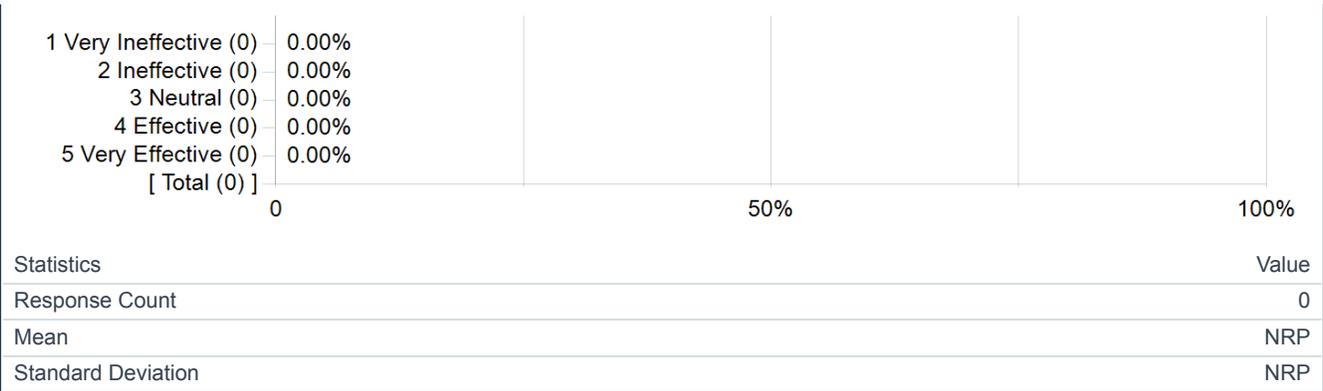
5. Short Quizzes



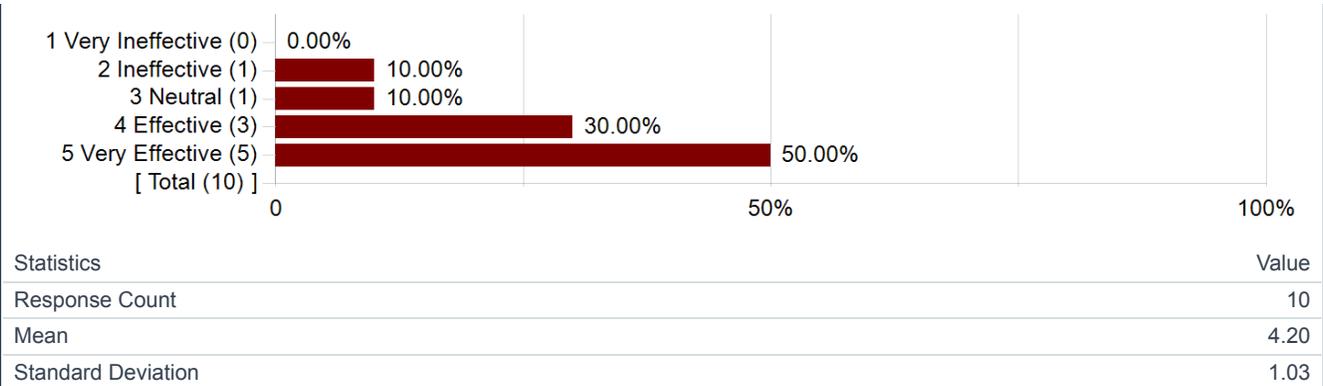
6. Laboratories



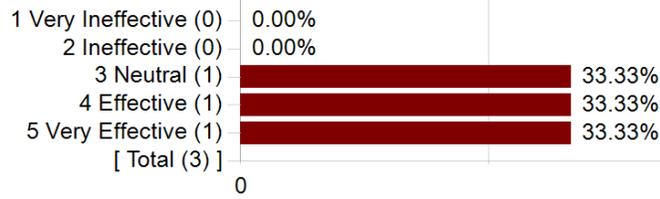
7. Timed Exams



8. Written Work (take home exams, papers, problem sets, etc.)



9. Scheduled Faculty Office Hours



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 3 |
| Mean | 4.00 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.00 |

How effective were the different modes of remote teaching in this course? (continued)

10. Scheduled TA Office Hours

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|---|-----|------|-------|
| 1 Very Ineffective (0) | 0.00% | | | | |
| 2 Ineffective (0) | 0.00% | | | | |
| 3 Neutral (0) | 0.00% | | | | |
| 4 Effective (0) | 0.00% | | | | |
| 5 Very Effective (0) | 0.00% | | | | |
| [Total (0)] | | 0 | 50% | 100% | |
| Statistics | | | | | Value |
| Response Count | | | | | 0 |
| Mean | | | | | NRP |
| Standard Deviation | | | | | NRP |

Please elaborate on the above.

| |
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| Comments |
| Loved that we got to play games outside of class. Once COVID is over, hope students would get tplay games in class. |
| I liked the videos that he prepared for class a lot. |
| The occasional supplement videos were a great addition, and I liked that we also did synchronous lectures as they kept me attentive and were interesting to hear what other classmates had to say. |
| Lectures and the like were very useful. Slightly more guidance on the final project and presentations would have been helpful. I think the idea was to give people freedom, but the uncertainty during COVID-19 made things difficult. While not listed above, the presentations were frustrating since not everybody played the same game or focused on the same thing, and it was hard to focus during a Zoom call without being able to contribute. |

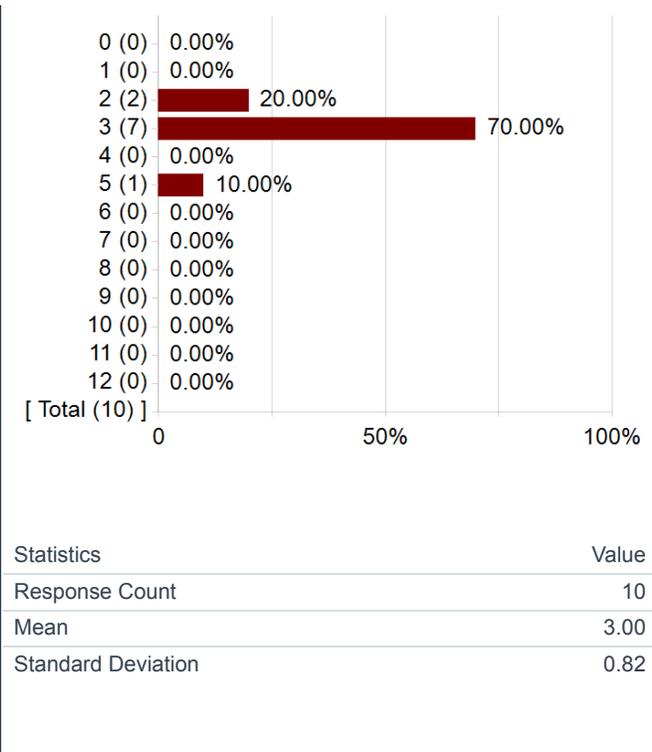
Did the instructor make adjustments to the course mid-quarter? If so, please comment on the effectiveness of those adjustments.

| |
|---|
| Comments |
| Yes, originally we thought we had more time in the quarter and we were able to talk through senior grades etc. and adjust nicely. |
| Yes, I believe we re-scheduled the last week. |
| n/a |
| He was flexible with requirements which was helpful and appreciated. |
| Nope, he had already made a lot of adjustments so the course was running smoothly. |
| He added short prerecorded lectures so that some meetings would be focused on discussion, which was helpful. |

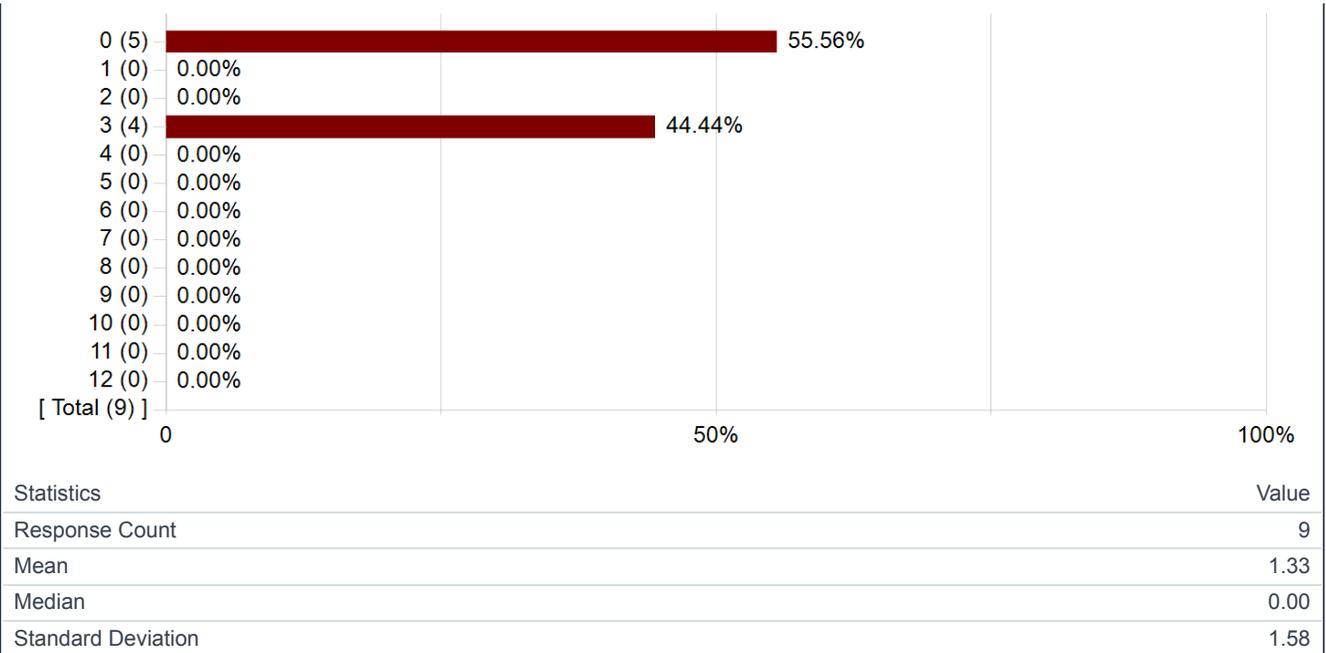
Please describe any element of this course, including specific actions by the instructor, that improved your remote learning experience.

| |
|---|
| Comments |
| Ian was really flexible and that was super helpful. |
| I liked having a casual slack! |
| The video lectures were great. |
| Slack/chat helped us get closer and therefore we talked more about the material and related items, enhancing the class. |
| Ian introduced material very well in his short lectures which made it much easier to engage in discussions. |
| Things generally went well. There was also a Slack channel but it wasn't super active. |
| Speaking to students frankly in a smaller class like this really helps create an atmosphere of mutual support that helps me to stay invested in the class. I never wanted to slack off in this class. |

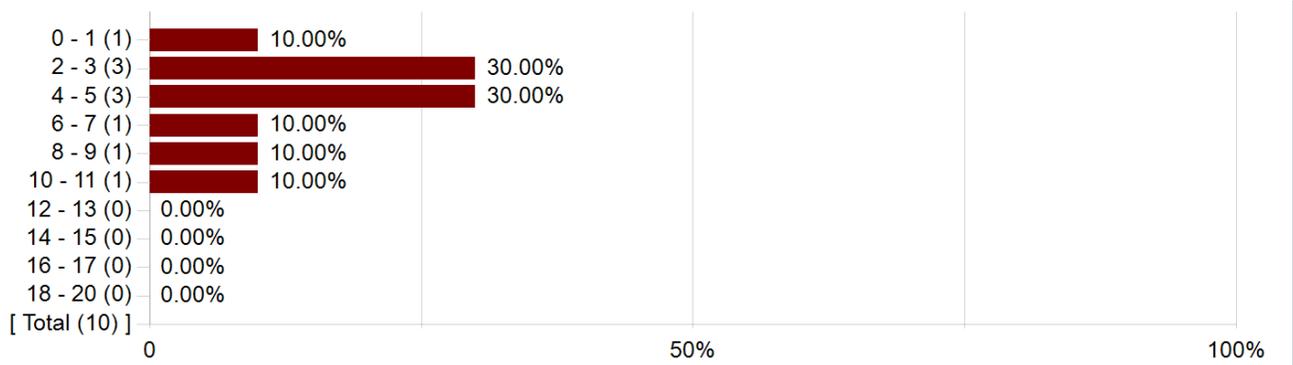
How many hours per week did you spend in lectures for this course (synchronous or asynchronous)?



How many hours per week did you spend in other scheduled activities for this course (labs, discussions, etc.)?

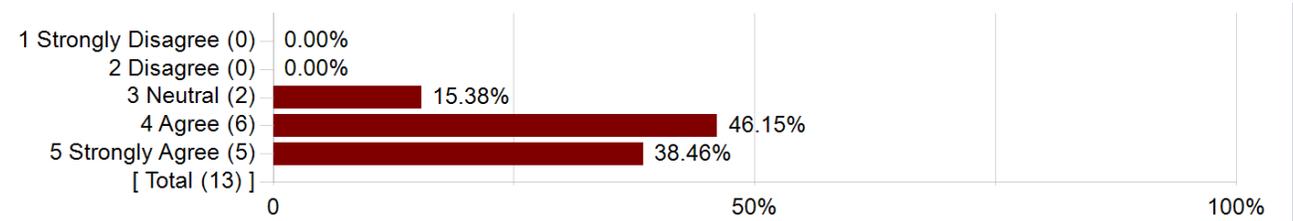


How many additional hours per week did you spend on this course (reading, problem sets, writing, etc.)?



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 10 |
| Mean | 4.60 |
| Median | 4.50 |
| Standard Deviation | 2.99 |

The overall workload of the course was appropriate.



| Statistics | Value |
|--------------------|-------|
| Response Count | 13 |
| Mean | 4.23 |
| Standard Deviation | 0.73 |

When it came to the course's group work, did the division of labor between "group participant" and "group leader" make sense? The intent was to give people an outlet to discuss games together, particularly if only a small sub-set of the class was playing a particular game. Was the result too messy? Would fully individual presentations (with no group attached) have been preferable? Or are there other changes the format would have benefitted from?

Comments

It was nice to talk about the game with others who played it. But sometimes, people just ghosted. They didn't say anything or help. That's super frustrating as a group leader to have. I don't think fully individual presentations would be preferable but I think there needs to be some form of accountability.

I liked the group setting! I got a chance to contribute to other peoples' projects, and I felt more engaged in the course as a whole.

I think if it was more clear what the role of group participants was supposed to be, then it would have been less messy. Also, I think as we neared the end of the quarter, people just stopped working together which is a consequence of zoom exhaustion

Having groups talk before was super helpful. It opened up the ability to talk about different parts of non-linear narratives and alternate affective experiences from games. It concentrated on the presenter to make the presentation, but there was always some help which made it easier.

Fully individual presentations would have been appreciated since everyone has a different take on group participant and group leader roles. I had a group which only a few people responded and have also been in groups where leaders preferred to work it out on their own. It was hard to keep up with the group participation.

Initially, everyone in a group felt that they should've contributed to each presentation, with 1 person taking each slide. Eventually, group leaders wrote most of the presentations and would ask members for comments, most of whom did not give any; of those who did, they would usually type a sentence or two. There was not much of a "group feeling" towards the end. Having other people playing the same game whose assignment it was to discuss the game with you was very helpful to gain other perspectives; however, sometimes it felt better to do the presentation yourself to have more control over it. Maybe still have groups but indicate that there will be credit given to people who talk when they are not group leaders.

I think the group participant idea was a bit muddy as there were no clear rules to follow, but the discussion that followed was always nice. I think having a group just to discuss ideas was very helpful.

I love the groups! They were fun as a participant and very helpful as a leader. Interesting all together. However, it was stressful at the beginning of the year because when you weren't a group leader, there was no way to prove you did work or added to the presentation if you didn't talk in class because of nerves or the leader doing all the talking. No individual though!

I think it generally became that some people participated in the group and some people didn't depending on their time. So the informal "participant" was a good system for letting the leader get more opinions in preparing the presentation. I think if it's clear that the leader is doing the presentation and the write-up, and that participants can be as engaged as they have time for, that is a fine system. I never felt like my group members weren't doing enough because I didn't expect them to, necessarily.

It was a bit messy since it was difficult communicating and coordinating with group members. In my experience, most group presentations were the leader essentially doing a solo presentation with some occasional input from participants. Indeed, since presentations were on Thursdays, there was little turnaround time. I feel like more individual work might be preferable. Presentations might take too long, but maybe shorter blog posts would work (though I think students generally dread these).

Yes, it definitely worked out in the cases that I've been a part of. The group leader will usually create the Slack channel, invite everyone, and get a general feel for the group's thoughts before making the presentation and blog post. While it was a little messy, it usually worked out well.

I felt that the division of labor mainly came down to how much the leaders wanted to let their members to contribute. Some leaders encouraged participation while others made the slideshow alone. Maybe it would be productive to put them into individual breakout rooms for ten minutes before presentations to assure that the groups are at least discussing their game.

The loss of a dedicated weekly play session for the course was used as an opportunity to create more conversations about more games than the initial draft of the syllabus included. Was the amount of material covered in the class appropriate? When signing up ahead of time for game-based groups in weeks 2, 5, 8, or 9, did you feel like you had enough information to make informed decisions? Or was the amount of choice and self-direction overwhelming?

| Comments |
|--|
| I think I had enough information. I appreciated the financial info and the general idea about them. You could look up the game if you wanted to. |
| Was appropriate |
| I think the amount of material was appropriate and I researched games to see which would interest me more ahead of time. I liked the choice and didn't mind being directed either to make equal numbered groups |
| The amount of choice for those directions were nice, but it could be a bit much for more obscure games. |
| The pacing of the readings & games was perfect. However, when signing up for games-based groups ahead of time, I did not know enough about the games to know whether I was interested in playing them. What helped was the small number of choices per week: having 2-3 was enough not to overwhelm me. The only other thing that might help could be links to steam pages of what the game is about, but that is probably better if students investigate in their own time. |
| I think the amount of material covered in class was perfect. |
| It was a little overwhelming, but the games were fun and the readings interesting, so I'm glad it happened. |
| I think the initial few weeks were rough, but once we had more time to think about the games and the groups it all fell into place. |
| I essentially signed up randomly based off the games with fewer people already signed up. The play sessions would have helped tremendously, but alas, we made due. The amount of material seemed appropriate given the circumstances, but again, the added difficulty of focusing over Zoom made focusing on presentations of games I didn't play a challenge. |
| I do think that the weekly play session would add a lot to the course. It was a bit harder to listen to games that I knew little about that other groups were presenting on, so having everyone in the same physical space playing these games together would be amazing, though not possible at the moment. |
| I felt like there was enough information to make informed decisions and the amount of materia covered was appropriate. |

How was the proportion of written fiction in the course? Would you have liked there to be more of it? Less of it? (In terms of either raw page length, or how it was distributed across the various weeks.)

| Comments |
|--|
| There wasn't much? I don't think I minded. |
| There were some weeks where they was a bit too much reading and we would have gotten the same gist of the literature by reading less genre written fiction enough to compare to the other mediums |
| I thinking having more consistent fiction at the same reading length would be nice. |
| I liked it! It provided a great theoretical background for looking at the games. The length and comprehension level were also terrific to keep me engaged. |
| I think the proportion of written fiction was fine. I did not really think it was too much or too little. |
| I liked the amount. |
| I think the written fiction was a weaker part of the generic studies, so a little less in length would have been fine. |
| I thought it was interesting how genres were considered across media and didn't expect to be reading short stories/watching films/listening to podcasts. I am not sure if there needs to be more or less written fiction specifically, but I would welcome the same amount of other mediums represented. |
| I liked it! The movies and literature included definitely helped give a platform for discussion on the various genres that they employed in conversation with games. |
| I wish there would have been less written fiction in terms of length. |