



agenda

- motivations
- course overview
- service learning
- student work
- post-mortem

questions

- Where do we go from here to address political influence in design of artifacts?
- Is there a reason other than economics that we can't replace artifacts of oppression?
- Are there examples of artifacts with "good" politics?
- Should political nature affect our perception of technology or the way that people use them?
- How does this extend to art + media?
- Can artifacts have politics unrelated to gender, race, + socioeconomic status?
- Are there artifacts w/ multiple political influences / changing political influences over time?
- After they are build, can we change negative consequences to positive ones?
- Does politics create technology, or technology create politics?
- By destroying/altering artifacts, are we attempting to erase history?

three-word insight

- authority needs ethics
- technology reflects society
- bias warps design
- it's a slippery slope
- proceed with thought
- technology affects (the) marginalized
- operation implies influence
- are games democratizing?

course goals



making a difference

- engagement with community-based change
- teaching in a time of global turmoil



intersection of games with social justice

- reflecting social values
- providing a medium for expression
- applied and serious games



reading list



Values and Design

- Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum, **Values at Play in Digital Games**. MIT Press, 2014.
- Langdon Winner. **Do Artifacts Have Politics?** Daedalus 109(1), 1980.
- Jonathan Belman, Mary Flanagan. **Designing Games to Foster Empathy**. Cognitive Technology 14(2), 2010.

Procedural Rhetoric

- Amanda Phillips, Gillian Smith, Michael Cook, Tanya Short. **Feminism and Procedural Content Generation: Toward a Collaborative Politics of Computational Creativity.** Digital Creativity 27 (1), 2016.
- Claudia Lo. **How RimWorld's Code Defines Strict Gender Roles.** Rock Paper Shotgun, November 2 2016.



Representation and Play

- Emma Westecott. **Playing with Gender: Promoting Representational Diversity with Dress-Up, Cross-Dressing, and Drag in Games.** *Diversifying Barbie and Mortal Combat* (Kafai, Richard, Tynes eds.), ETC Press 2016. [DBMC]
- Betsy DiSalvo. **Gaming Masculinity: Constructing Masculinity with Video Games.** DMBC.
- Anna Anthropy. **dys4ia.** 2012.
- Anna Everett, S. Craig Watkins. **The Power of Play: The Portrayal and Performance of Race in Video Games.** *The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning* (Salen, ed.) MIT Press, 2008.
- Elisabeth LaPensée. **Invaders.** 2015.
- Heidi McDonald. **Are Gamers Ready for Gay Love? Improving Romance in Games.** DBMC.



Subversion and Empowerment

- Alison Harvey. **Twine's Revolution: Democratization, Depoliticization, and the Queering of Game Design.** Game Journal, Issue 3, 2014.
- Janine Fron, Tracy Fullerton, Jacquelyn Ford Morie, Celia Pearce. **The Hegemony of Play.** Proceedings of DiGRA: Situated Play. Tokyo, September 2007.
- Squinky. **I'm Really Sorry About That Thing I Said When I Was Tired and/or Hungry.** (<http://games.squinky.me/sorry/>)
- Mary Flanagan. **Critical Play.** MIT Press, 2009. [pp8-13, 47-62 on subversive play]
- Robin Burkinshaw. **Alice and Kev: The Story of Being Homeless in The Sims 3.** 2009.



culminate in individual project

- Two options, required to do early work on each
 - Paper addressing values in existing games
 - Game that uses mechanics to communicate about social issue
- One of these options is revised for final project



service learning

“

...a form of experiential learning for students and a teaching tool for faculty that purposefully integrates academics and service to meet classroom and community goals...

Northeastern Center for Community Service

project: service learning

- semester-long group project
- milestones
 - initial pitches
 - prototype
 - iterated prototype
- deliverables
 - client: final game and supporting material
 - class: written reflection on integration of service





why service learning for games?

- introduces new and unexpected audiences
- constrains the design process
- shows broader applications and potential for games
- highlights importance of designing with and for a community



incorporating service-learning

- different community partners for each group
- discussion time in class to reflect on different experiences
- require time outside of class to be spent with organization
- require writing on service learning experience in reading reflections



student work

Constraints:

- ★ No materials
- ★ Playable in a classroom

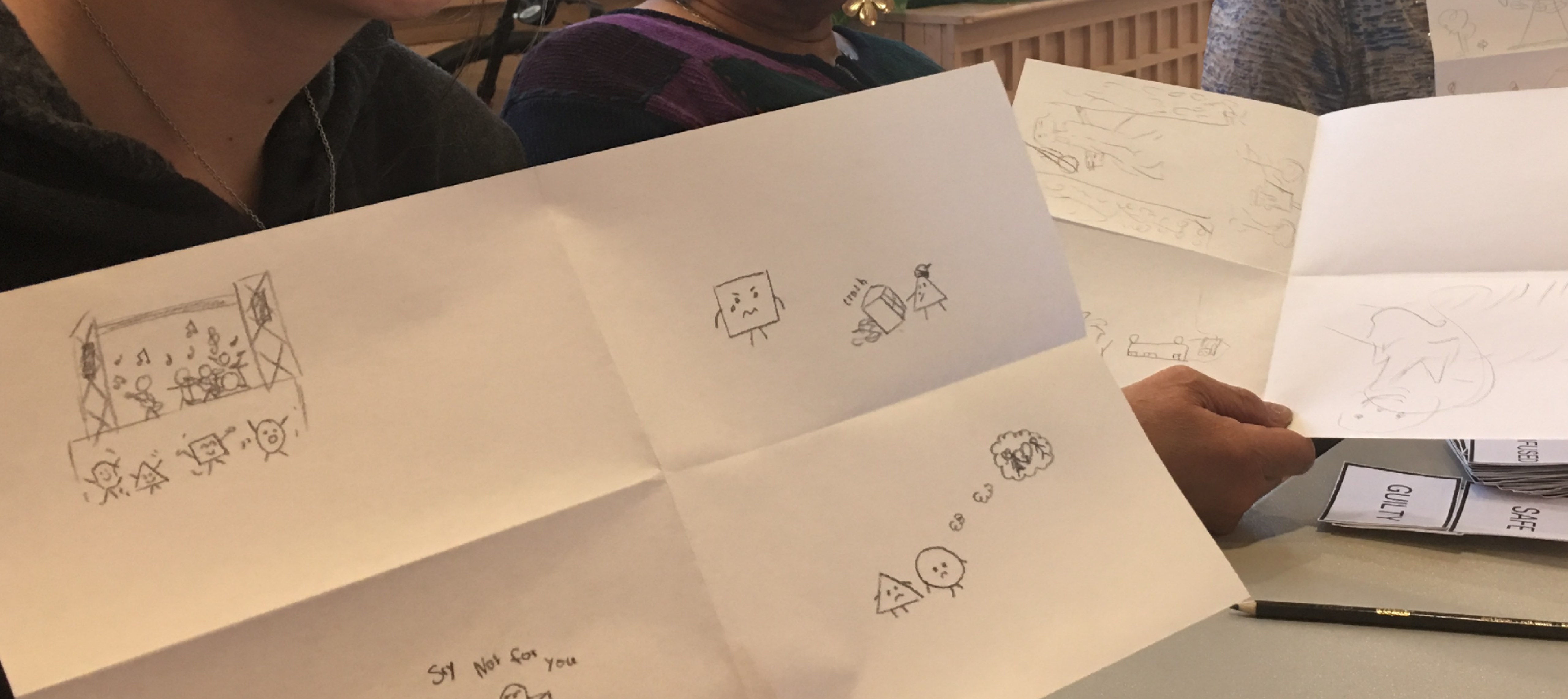
Rules:

- ★ Player is selected as “the animal” and stands far away with their back towards the other players
- ★ Animal selects what animal they would like to be
- ★ The other players start equidistant from the animal
- ★ The animal will ask a question phrased “this <insert animal here> likes <insert thing here> and <insert movement here>” eg: “this frog likes potato chips and frog hopping forward!”
- ★ If players agree with the question, they take the movement towards the animal, if they do not, they stay in place
- ★
- ★ The first player to reach the animal becomes the next animal and the game restarts

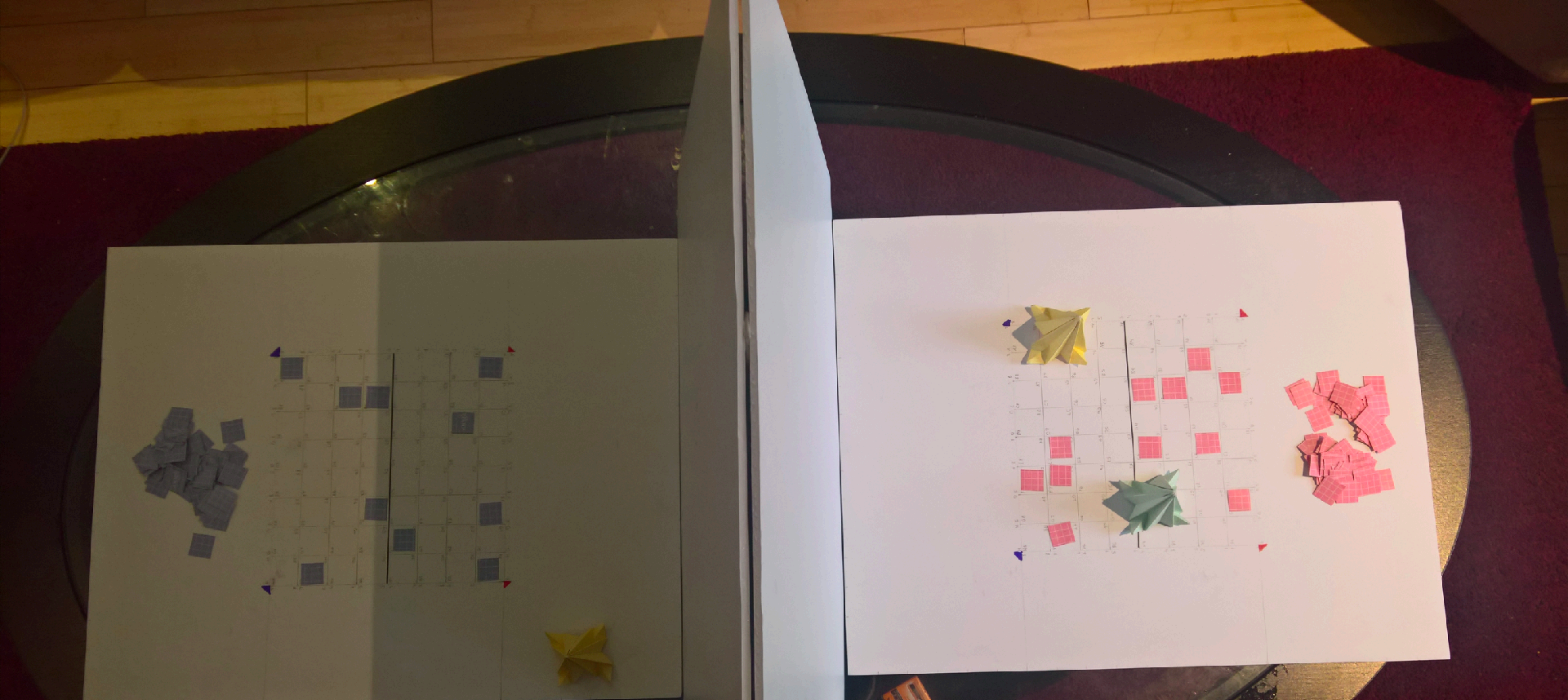
Mods:

- ★ If you disagree, do the same movement backwards until you reach where you started
- ★ The animal may specify moving backwards for a question as well eg: “this dog likes walking on the beach and crawling three steps backwards”

this animal



soubrette shapes



settlement

PASSING THROW

NAME	_____
MBTI	_____ AGE _____



HELLO, I AM A(N)...

PRONOUNS

BONUS

.....

STRAIN

CURRENT / MAX

_____ / _____

SHORT

_____ / _____

LONG

OPTIMISM

☐ GOOFERS ☐

☐ CONFIDENCE ☐



SOCIAL

☐ DEFLECTION ☐

☐ EMPATHY ☐



passing throw



next steps



institutional support



engaging with many facets



push outside comfort zones



What is justice? The heart of it is really longing for people to be able to grow and develop freely in a positive and constructive way. So what are the conditions that allow for that?

- **bell hooks**

empowerment



our responsibilities



Games and Social Justice

adopting service learning for games education

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