Course Syllabus

COURSE CODE:CMM241G

Gamification in Politics, Business & Communications:
An Interdisciplinary Approach

Number of ECTS credits: 6

Course Time: tbd

Contact Details for Professor

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Office hours: Wednesday 13.00-14.00 in the VeCo Faculty Space (Please schedule an appointment <u>or</u> please feel free to email to schedule an appointment at another time).

Course Description
The course on *Gamification* aims at introducing students to the uses of game design elements (such as online games or apps) in non-game contexts. Gamification is a broad concept, which has been increasingly applied to different sectors and areas, ranging from political communications, the non-profit sector ("gamification for advocacy"), the business sector, and even the public sector. The rise of gamification as an important tool and strategy raises fundamental questions about the opportunities, challenges and the risks of the increased use of websites, online games and apps for major sectors of society.
This interdisciplinary course aims to: *(1)* **introducing and comparing scholarly analyses of gamification** across a variety of fields (politics, public governance, advocacy, marketing); *(2)* **illustrating relevant case-studies and best practices** of gamified strategies from business organizations/non-profits/media outlets/political parties/governments; *(3)* **pinpointing common patterns** in the development of gamification strategies from various actors; *(4)* **highlighting the benefits for participation and democracy** arising from the increased use of gamification strategies; *(5)* **Discussing the issues of gamification** and the problems arising from its increased use.
Typical class will involve case analysis, group problem solving, analysis of relevant materials (movies, podcasts, pictures) and debate.

Learning Objectives

The major learning objectives of the course:

These learning outcomes are in line with the following Discipline Learning Outcomes for the Bachelor in Communications Sciences as ratified by the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders): DLO 3 and 8.

3. Describing and comparing theories, concepts, authors and paradigms of the domains within the communication science.

8. Reflecting critically on the role of media and communication in social, cultural, economic, psychological, technological, political, legal and other contexts.

9. Assessing the impact of social, cultural, economic, psychological, technological, political, legal and other factors on communication processes.

10. Apply and transfer of models, methods and theories from auxiliary sciences.

The Specific Learning Outcomes of the course

By the end of the course, students will have a firm grasp of:

- ➤ **In terms of knowledge** – *(1)* Gain a proper understanding of the concept of gamification and its usages in different contexts, ranging from political communication to civil society advocacy and business; *(2)* Understand how different actors (business companies, public administrations, not-for-profits) may use games for different scopes; *(3)* Develop a conceptual framework to understand how gamification shapes and transforms marketing strategies, communication tactics, civil society advocacy and public policies (both national and supranational); *(4)* Gain a deep understanding of the promises and the risks of increased use of games.

- ➤ **In terms of skills** – *(1)* How to carry out independent research using a wide range of sources (along with the accurate documentation of these sources); *(2)* How to identify major patterns of relevant case studies and summarize them effectively; *(3)* How to work effectively in a team; *(4)* How to present case studies in class and argue dialectically with other students; *(5)* How to structure and compose a short essay integrating information from various sources and from class debate.

- ➤ **In terms of attitudes** – *(1)* Mature networking skills along with the ability to employ rhetorical strategies to defend opinions in class debate; *(2)* Increase management approach towards problem-solving; *(3)* Develop critical approach in the framework of written and oral assignments; *(4)* Understand one's limitations and apprehend ways to improve them.

Course schedule

Class 1 – Introduction to the course/Syllabus Review

Core Reading	YU-KAI CHOU, Actionable Gamification. Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards, Freemont (CA), 2014 (pp. 1-10)
Further Reading	(1) B. BURKE, Gamify: how gamification motivates people to do extraordinary things, Bibliomotion 2014 (pp. 15-75) (2) S. DETERDING, D. DIXON, R. KHALED, L. NACKE, From Game Design Elements to Gamefulness: Definition "Gamification", Proceedings of the 2011 MindTrek conference, 2011
Reading Questions	*(1)* What is the value of 'motivation' in Gamification?; *(2)* How can Gamification drive Innovation?; *(3)* How big is the "Game Market"?
Seminal Activities	*(1)* Introduction to the topic: what is 'Gamification', and how it is distinguished by 'videogames', 'games for change' and 'serious games'; *(2)* Glance through class textbook and other reading materials; *(3)* Explanation of course structure and main objectives; *(4)* Syllabus Review; *(5)* Definition of research groups' composition and preparation of weekly activities.

Class 2 – Gamification in business

Core Reading	YU-KAI CHOU, Actionable Gamification. Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards, Freemont (CA), 2014 (pp. 47-64)
Further Reading	(1) D. PALMER, The Engagement Economy: How Gamification is Re-Shaping Businesses, Deloitte University Press, 2012; (2) B. BURKE, The Gamification of Business, Forbes 2013
Reading Questions	*(1)* Why the business sector adopts gamification techniques?; *(2)* What are the main features of gamification in business?; *(3)* Is gamification an effective marketing strategy?
Seminal Activities	*(1)* Presentation of case studies; *(2)* cursory analysis of academic theories; *(3)* Class debate

Class 3 – Gamification for advocacy

Core Reading	YU-KAI CHOU, Actionable Gamification. Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards, Freemont (CA), 2014 (pp. 125-161)
Further Reading	(1) J. KAHNE, E. MIDDAUGH, C. EVANS, The Civic Potential of Video Games, MacArthur Foundation, 2009 (pp. 1-40); (2) L. LAMIN, Transmedia Activism: How Today's Gamified Storytelling Can Trigger Social Change, 2012 (pp. 1-12)
Reading Questions	*(1)* Why civil society organizations adopt gamification techniques?; *(2)* What are the main features of gamification for advocacy?; *(3)* Is gamification effective for raising awareness and/or fundraising?; *(4)* What are the main differences between gamification for business and gamification for advocacy?

Seminal Activities	(1) Presentation of case studies; (2) cursory analysis of academic theories; (3) Class debate

Class 4 – Gamification in media

Core Reading	R. FERRER CONILL, M. KARLSONN, The Gamification of Journalism, in H. GANGADHARBATLA, D.Z. DAVIS (*eds.*), Emerging Research and Trends in Gamification, Hershey 2016
Further Reading	*None*
Reading Questions	(1) Why media outlets adopt gamification techniques?; (2) What are the main features of gamification in media?; (3) Are journalism and communication benefiting from gamification?
Seminal Activities	(1) Presentation of case studies; (2) cursory analysis of academic theories; (3) Class debate

Class 5 – Gamification and social-networks

Core Reading	YU-KAI CHOU, Actionable Gamification. Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards, Freemont (CA), 2014 (pp. 197-230)
Further Reading	(1) D. DIXON, Players Types and Gamification, University of the West of England, 2011 (pp. 1-4)
Reading Questions	(1) What are the main features of gamification in social networks?; (2) What social networks make the most use of gamification techniques?
Seminal Activities	(1) Presentation of case studies; (2) cursory analysis of academic theories; (3) Class debate

Class 6 – Gamification in politics

Core Reading	N. MAHNIC, Gamification of Politics: Start a New Game!, 51 Teorija in Praksa, 2014 (pp. 143-161)
Further Reading	(1) I. BOGOST, Video Games Go to Washington: The Story Behind The Howard Dean for Iowa Game, Electronic Book Review 2008; (2) K. ANKARLO, The Gamification of Politics, Campaigns & Elections 2011; (3) D. EDWARDS, Gamification of Politics: Political Usage of Steemit, 2016
Reading Questions	(1) Why are politics increasingly gamified?; (2) What are the main features of gamification in politics?; (3) Is gamification effective for political reasons?
Seminal Activities	(1) Presentation of case studies; (2) cursory analysis of academic theories; (3) Class debate

Class 7 – Gamification in education

Core Reading	D. OSHEIM, Gamification of the Classroom: Potential, Pitfalls, and Practices, in H. GANGADHARBATLA, D.Z. DAVIS (*eds.*),

	Emerging Research and Trends in Gamification, Hershey 2016 (pp. 224-250)
Further Reading	(1) Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Research on the Use of Khan Academy in Schools, 2014 (pp. 1-16)
Reading Questions	*(1)* What are the main features of gamification for education?; *(2)* Is gamification effective for educational purposes?
Seminal Activities	*(1)* Presentation of case studies; *(2)* cursory analysis of academic theories; *(3)* Class debate

Class 8 – Gamification in the public sector, part I: national governments

Core Reading	R. Thaler, C.R. Sunstein, Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness, Yale 2008
Further Reading	(1) A. Asquer, Not Just Videogames: Gamification and its Potential Application to Public Services, working paper 2014 (pp. 1-28) (2) J. Lerner, Making Democracy Fun. How Game Design Can Empower Citizens and Transform Politics, Boston (MA) 2014 (pp. 1-27)
Reading Questions	*(1)* Why public administrations adopt gamification techniques?; *(2)* What are the main features of gamification in the (national) public sector?; *(3)* Is gamification effective for policy-making?; *(4)* What are the main differences between gamification in the public sector and the private sector?
Seminal Activities	*(1)* Presentation of case studies; *(2)* cursory analysis of academic theories; *(3)* Class debate

Class 9 – Gamification in the public sector, part II: supranational regulators

Core Reading	D. Waddington, A Parallel World for the World Bank: A Case Study of Urgent Evoke, An Educational Alternate Reality Game, 10(3) Revue internationale des technologies en pédagogie universitaire, 2013 (pp. 42-52)
Further Reading	S. Petersen, Gamification Based Decision-Making in Breakthrough Innovation, The Huffington Post, 2014
Reading Questions	*(1)* Why supranational regulators adopt gamification techniques?; *(2)* What are the main features of gamification in the (supranational) public sector?; *(3)* Is gamification effective for supranational policy-making?;
Seminal Activities	*(1)* Presentation of case studies; *(2)* cursory analysis of academic theories; *(3)* Class debate

Class 10 – Beyond gamification: crowdsourcing, civic tech & smart citizenship

Core Reading	Yu-Kai Chou, Actionable Gamification. Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards, Freemont (CA), 2014 (pp. 273 - 311)
Further Reading	(1) D.C Brabham, Crowdsourcing as a Model for Problem-Solving. An Introduction and Cases, 14 Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media

	Technologies, 75 (2008) (pp.75-90); (2) B.S. NOVECK, Smart Citizens, Smarter State, Cambridge (MA) 2016 (pp. 241-267)
Reading Questions	*(1)* Why crowdsourcing, civic tech and smart citizenship are related with gamification?; *(2)* What are the future scenarios of gamification?
Seminal Activities	*(1)* cursory analysis of academic theories; *(2)* Class debate

Class 11 – The risks of gamification

Core Reading	YU-KAI CHOU, Actionable Gamification. Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards, Freemont (CA), 2014 (pp. 377-405)
Further Reading	(1) J. ANDERSSON, L. RAINE, The Future of Gamification, Pew Research Center, 2012; (2) F. SMITH, Is it Game Over for Gamification?, EdTech 2015
Reading Questions	*(1)* How do citizens react to gamified experiments? *(2)* Is gamification desirable?
Seminal Activities	*(1)* cursory analysis of academic theories; *(2)* Class debate

Class 12 – Final exam – *no readings*

Course Materials

The Course Materials consists of: *(1)* Prezi presentations; *(2)* 'main readings' (ranging from chapters of core textbook, journal articles by key scholars, reports and essays from think-tanks and newspapers articles); *(3)* 'additional readings' related to case-studies to be discussed in class (see below for further info).

The syllabus, Prezi presentations, 'main readings' as well as important messages will be uploaded to the Vesalius portal 'Pointcarré' (pointcarre.vub.ac.be) at the beginning of the Semester. Students are expected to visit this site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions.

Case studies (only classes with case studies are listed below)

Class 2 – *The GoldCorp Challenge; M&Ms; Nike+*	Class 5 - *Farmville; Fourthsquare*
	Class 6 – *Howard Dean for Iowa Game; Hillary 2016*
	Class 7 – *Khan Academy*
Class 3 – *IHobo; Recyclebank; Gemma's World; Crowdrise*	Class 8 – *Run that town; MMOGWLI; The Red Balloon Challenge: Participatory Budgeting*
Class 4 – *Investigate your MP's expenses; World Without Oil; PlayGround*	Class 9 – *Economia; Evoke; Draw the World; My life as a refugee*

Textbook:
YU-KAI CHOU, Actionable Gamification. Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards, Freemont (CA), 2014

References books

➢ D.C BRABHAM, Crowdsourcing, Boston 2013
➢ B. BURKE, Gamify: How Gamification Motivates People to Do Extraordinary Things, Gartner 2014;
➢ V.F. HENDRICKS, P.G. HANSEN, Infostorms. How to Take Information Punches and Save Democracy, Springer 2014
➢ J. LERNER, Making Democracy Fun. How Game Design Can Empower Citizens and Transform Politics, Boston (MA) 2014;
➢ P. NORRIS, Digital Divide, Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, Cambridge 2001
➢ B.S. NOVECK, Smart Citizens, Smarter State, Cambridge (MA) 2016
➢ C.R. SUNSTEIN, Why Nudge? The Politics of Libertarian Paternalism, New Haven 2014

Additional Readings

Additional relevant materials (including academic papers, newspaper articles, institutional documents, videos, podcasts) necessary for gaining a preliminary understanding of the case studies to be presented and debated in class will be uploaded to the Vesalius portal 'Pointcarré' (pointcarre.vub.ac.be) every Monday. Students are expected to visit this site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions.

Follow 'Gamification' on Twitter

Twitter allows you to follow first hand news on gamification. Students are encouraged in creating their own portfolio of contacts (e.g. game-designers, academics, journalists, business firms and NGOs) drawing upon their major interest (e.g. geographical area; issue areas; topics). A preliminary list of recommended accounts to follow include:

1. *@GianlucaSgueo* – Professor Gianluca Sgueo, tweeting on gamification, democracy, advocacy, civil society activism and politics at the global level;
2. *@Gamification* – Official Twitter account of Gamification.org – the Gamification Wiki for Game Mechanics and Gamification Research;
3. *@yukaichou* – Gamification pioneer and keynote speaker;
4. *@DaveRage* – Founder of Gamified.UK gamification consultancy;
5. *@sjimenezarenas* – Creator of Gamification Model Canvas and co-founder of Gamification World Congress;
6. *@GamificationNat* – A London consultancy on Gamification design;
7. *@AlemannoEU* – Law Professor, founder of Citizen Lobbyist and Civic Entrepreneur;
8. *@CivicHall* – A civitech hub in New York City;
9. *@TheGoodLobby* – Innovative not-for-profit connecting experts with NGOs to impact on EU policymaking and beyond.

Course Assessment

The students will be evaluated and graded on the basis of their performance in written assignments. However, participation in class activities will also play an important part in the assessment of students' maturation throughout the semester. As

a rule, it is highly recommended to prepare for class using the course 'main readings' in order to be able to follow classes and pose questions. It is also crucial to have a look at the 'additional readings' related to case studies to be discussed in class. The weekly reading questions related to each class are helpful to orientate for preparations and discussion of case studies. Students who are absent are responsible for finding out what was covered in class.

The final grade will be based on the following:
- Groups' activities in class: 10%
- In-class participation: 10%
- Research Paper: 40%
- Final Exam: 40%
- Total: 100%

Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as stated follows:

Letter grade	Scale of 20	Scale of 100
A	17.0-20.0	85-100
A-	16.1-16.9	81-84
B+	15.3-16.0	77-80
B	14.5-15.2	73-76
B-	13.7-14.4	69-72
C+	13.1-13.6	66-68
C	12.3-13.0	62-65
C-	11.5-12.2	58-61
D+	10.7-11.4	54-57
D	10.0-10.6	50-53
F	0-9.9	0-49

Description of activities

For written assignments (final exam): The final exam will be held at the end of the course (Class 12). It consists of a long question and short questions.

The long question includes a comparative analysis of contrasting approaches to the topics discussed throughout the course (covered in classes 1 through 12).

The following criteria will be applied in assessing the final exam:

- ➢ *(a)* Completeness of answers to long question on contrasting approaches;
- ➢ *(b)* Evidence of understanding of the concepts linked to the research question;
- ➢ *(c)* Grammatically correct text.

Research Proposal and Research Paper Instructions

Research Proposal

The *research proposal* consists of the elaboration of a proposal for the research paper. Students are advised to go through the 'main readings' in order to be able to select a topic. Students are also encouraged to further explore academic (and popular) literature to better define the research problem and to formulate the research question they want to answer with their research proposal.

The research proposal should be structured as indicated in *Annex I*.

All research proposals are due on CLASS 5**.** Students are advised to prepare the outline of their paper proposal before the deadline, in order to save time and be able to work on details. Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor to receive guidance and suggestions about their research topics**. Late submissions are not accepted.** A hard copy should be submitted in class, and students should send also an electronic copy via email at gianluca.sgueo@vesalius.edu.

Research Paper

The *research paper* consists of the elaboration of a research paper. Your research paper must be written in Times New Roman font, 12 points type, 1,5 spaced with 2 cm margins**.** The paper should be structured in 5 sections, distinguishable by clear headings and subtitles (see the table below for more details). Make sure that each section is coherent and that the argument draws on and follows the selected subtitle. The paper should be structured *as indicated in Annex II*.

See *Annex III* for the criteria applied to assess research papers.

The *research paper* is due at the beginning of CLASS 9**. No late submissions are accepted.** A hard copy should be submitted in class. Please submit an electronic copy via email (gianluca.sgueo@vesalius.edu) and on Turnitin as well. When submitting to Turnitin, postings should be entitled with your surname and the issue covered (for example "Sgueo - Global Advocacy").

Extensions will not be granted except for attested emergency situations. Having a computer problem, attending to a wedding or doing an internship are not considered emergency situations. Students are responsible to start well in advance and have backups of their work. This policy will be strictly enforced. Failure to do so will result in an 'F'.

Annex I – Structure of the research proposal

A clear research question	The research questions should be clear, simple, straightforward and reasonably possible.
A paper outline	The paper outline provides an indication of how the student is going investigate the research question. Paper outlines should include: *(1)* the identification of a case study; *(2)* a list of relevant and reliable sources*; (3)* the approach (theoretical or factual) that the student would like to develop in addressing the research question.
A tentative layout	The tentative structure and headings that are likely to appear in the final paper

Length	500 words (excluding the cover page and the bibliography)

Annex II – Structure of the research paper

Research Question	The first section consists of the research question you are going to answer in the paper. The question should be as clear and simple as possible.
Introduction	The second section consists of the Introduction. This section is giving an overview of your paper. The introduction has two main goals: first, introducing the research question; second, discussing the significance of the case study used to answer the research question. Also, the introduction should provide core factual background information on the case study (what? when? who?).
Analysis	The third part of the paper is the most important one. This is the part that analyses the selected case study. The analysis is aimed at supporting the research question but it should be critical. Rather than copy-pasting scholarly opinions in the literature, students are encouraged to identify and substantiate critical claims.
Concluding remarks	The fourth section contains a brief summary of your argument. This section links back to the introduction, addresses the research question and summarizes the main points of the analysis section.
Sources	The fifth part includes all the sources used by the student to elaborate the paper. Sources should be organized in a rational way: primary sources (e.g. academic articles) should be separated by secondary sources (e.g. social media posts).
Length	3000 words (excluding the cover page and the bibliography)

Annex III - Evaluation sheet for research paper

Criterion	Description	Points	Comments (or directly in paper)
Introduction and Research Question / Statement / Puzzle (/8 Points)	Explain Choice of Topic and why it is academically relevant	/2	
	Clear and Concise Research Question / Research Statement	/4	
	Outline of structure of the paper and main argument	/2	
Literature Review (/12 Points)	The literature review identifies the relevant (i.e. to the chosen topic) arguments and debates in the literature and places the student's own topic in the wider academic context	/3	
	It compares, contrasts and synthesizes the main authors and arguments	/3	
	It evaluates strengths and weaknesses of the literature and identifies clear gaps the student's paper addresses	/3	
	Based on the Literature Review, the student also identifies major theories and core concepts that have been applied by authors to the topic at hand and applies some of them in the analysis part of the paper (see Analysis / Discussion criteria)	/3	
Methods (/8 Points)	The student chooses, explains and justifies an appropriate method to tackle the research question	/4	
	The student demonstrates the ability to select and present suitable data for the analysis	/4	
Analysis / Discussion	Extensive Analysis and Arguments supported by strong empirical examples and data	/8	
	Use and synthesis of a good number of sources and	/8	

(/32 Points)	references to support key arguments directly addressing the research question		
	The student explains and shows awareness of appropriate theoretical debates that have been used in the literature to examine similar problems and applies some concepts to the analysis	/8	
	Critical and dialectic (thesis/antithesis/synthesis) evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of core assumptions and arguments of other authors in non-prejudicial and open-minded manner	/8	
Structure (/20 Points)	The paper is structured in a coherent and logical way – with clear subsections – supporting the clarity of the argument and analysis	/10	
	A coherent line of argumentation, linking empirical examples back to answering the main research question.	/10	
Formal Aspects (/10 points)	Correct use of language (spelling, grammar, expression)	/3	
	Correct citation and bibliography	/3	
	Appropriate Number of Sources	/4	
Conclusions (/10 points)	Stating in clear and succinct manner the result of the analysis and main answer to the research question	/4	
	Critical, open-minded and non-defensive evaluation the validity of the student's own arguments and results to explore further avenues of research	/6	
TOTAL	Final and Overall Comments:	Total	

Additional Course Policies

Attendance and active participation to class activities is crucial to the student's progress. Students are strongly <u>expected</u> to attend classes on time and participate actively in debate. <u>Active participation</u> in this course means actively contributing to class discussions through asking questions, answering professors' questions, sharing views on topics discussed in class, and defending positions against critical remarks. Participation means attending class and actively contributing to class discussions.

Students who are absent are responsible for finding out what was covered in class. <u>Late assignments</u> will not be accepted unless there are serious legitimate reasons. Provision of a signed medical note is required, and notice must be given prior to the deadline.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic dishonesty is **NOT** tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else's work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.