CMS.608 / CMS.864 Game Design
Spring 2008

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A bit of a recap…
- This class takes the historical approach on games
- Games began with chance (dice, casting lots, cards) which can be divided into:
    - Random (which is not fun)
    - Statistics

Race Games
- What's new?
- The focus changes to the counter rather than the die
- Visual info -> counter; environment -> board
- The board comes first!
    - Designing a space where the game takes place
        - Very clear in sports, looser in card games
- Each object has a rule attached to it
- What kind of rules can you enforce on a board?
    - Number of players
    - Relation of spaces
    - Movement of the pieces
- In most of this, we're thinking in 2D
- What's the starting point of the design of a board game?
- Who came up with these games we've been playing for hundreds of years?
    - Oral traditions, iteratively spreading
- The rules can be lost and reconstructed, but the boards are left behind to give information
- Race games are the basis of proprietary games
- Traditional vs. proprietary; Evolved vs. invented
- How do traditional games survive?
    - Cultural phenomenon, religion, fads
    - Ease of access to materials
    - Thousands of years of tweaking
- So how can contemporary designs compete?
    - Pull elements from old games
    - Analysis
    - Layers of fiction
- The fictional layer can help you understand the rules
- Game of Life and Careers For Girls (played on Tuesday)
    - Both games are versions of the originals
    - Representations of life as a single path
- 'Life' games are found in most cultures
- Life games are reassuring – all you have to do is follow very simple rules and Professional Success, Happiness and Wealth follows! Life is winnable!
- Are there video life games?
    - The Sims, Fable

- Life games can't be an exact simulation
    - What would be the point of playing? It wouldn't be fun
    - It misses the opportunity to make a statement (see the careers in Careers For Girls)
- Diner Dash models the job of a waitress
- Legend of Zelda models a boy growing up
    - By getting weapons and killing things
- Complaints
    - (A lot about Careers For Girls and stereotypes in games)
    - The ideologies and assumptions can be very offensive
        - In the available options, the way the goals are calculated, which resources are easier to obtain
    - Vicious cycle of media artifacts and ideology
- Don't rely on stereotypes when you're designing a game!
- Playing games are about experimentation, so the ideology should be about change

Choice
- Usually only in simulation videogames
- Not very present in race games
- Less choice is more reassuring in some ways
- Current trend is for more choice
- But even in videogames, choice is often either obvious or binary