Introduction
Part of the joy of reading in game studies right now comes from the diversity of the theoretical models, arguments, and approaches. We’re in a classic moment of confusion in which everyone is forced to innovate, adapt, and borrow in order to proceed. It’s also early enough in the academic endeavor that scholars are still talking almost directly to one another in the publications. Consequently, it’s extra helpful to read around because the connections are so fresh. Although I’ve tried my best to capture the major strains within the burgeoning discourse on digital games, with an eye to our focus on RPGs as a particular form, it’d be pompous and foolhardy to claim I’ve provided a perfect canon.

This assignment is a response to this situation, as well as a designed effort to tap the power of our seminar-structure and diverse interests: what I’ve missed or willfully kicked out, you can bring in or revive. Furthermore, the nature of the writing of a “critical” précis (more on this below) will practice a useful skill – the art of faithful, yet rigorous concision in summarizing arguments or concepts in academic writing. It is an exercise in precise analysis and thinking (when done right) that maximizes the benefit to others, too. These are also a chance to explore the course reserves in preparation for any other research you might do for this class, or another.

Directions
This assignment has two parts: 1. the written document -the critical précis- and 2. your -sharing session- of the reading you did in the form of an extending inquiry for the class discussion.

The Critical Precis
This is pretty much a normal précis [a formal, concise summary of the main idea(s) of a text in your own words] with a twist. At the end of your summary you will also include a paragraph on what you see as significant for our thinking in this class. This is not your chance to “bash” or critique the work rhetorically, to take cheap shots, but rather to pull out what you see as most meaningful – a productive flaw, a concept, an insight – and formulate a question you think the work poses for us as a class. This entails tough thinking – you’ll have to decide what is most important to cover in the summary –to do the work justice– and also read it critically enough to perceive where the ideas can be taken, what is left to be done, etc. in order to formulate your inquiry. The goal is to inform us as well as to push our thinking – a tall order. So, even though this is a short document, you should think long and hard about it.

The Sharing Session
This is nothing big – you will simply chat with us about the reading experience and what you got out of it—it’s mostly casual. However, the main purpose is to add something to our ongoing discussion about the current game we are playing. So, part of the task here is to translate the ideas you read about into something useful for our immediate purposes. This means you have to know the material well enough to think about it outside of its context (none of the reserve materials talk about our games directly). This skill of adaptation is a crucial one to practice, too.

*Key Constraints*
You are limited to the chapters or essays in texts on course reserve, or something cleared by me ahead of time. We might agree that *insert name of awesome theorist from your native discipline here* is seminal to all thinking, even thought about digital games, but the purpose of this is to read something new, and to engage game studies/theory texts. You will all have ample room to indulge this disciplinary impulse in your individual projects 😊

Details
Type these short documents in Word (or equivalent) with the following specifications:
1. Font 12pt, Times New Roman
2. 1-page max, single-spaced
3. Full name in the header
4. Text citation at top of the page

The document will be due on the day of your assigned sharing session. Let me know ahead of time if you cannot make this deadline. These will be circulated to the group and archived on the course website for reference.