

Assignment for *World of Warcraft*

March 24 – April 23

Please have created an account, downloaded and launched *World of Warcraft*, logged on, and created a character by Monday, March 23rd at the earliest and Tuesday, March 24th by the latest.¹ You should make your way to the human starting area outside Stormwind City, the major city for the Alliance, located in Elwynn forest, for Tuesday's in-class tutorial. If you are having trouble locating the city, or do not know what this means, do not fret, hopefully these issues will be covered below and during Tuesday's tutorial.

Requirements

As playing a videogame entails a number of activities that are different than other assignments I give you (e.g., reading a certain amount of pages), you will be asked to do a number of different things in the game, and there will be a small amount of extra credit available for certain activities. We will be reading a number of texts alongside *Warcraft*, and you are also expected to fulfill the following requirements. Failure to do so will negatively affect your participation grade. For instance, failing to achieve the correct level by the assigned date will be the same as failing a quiz. For those who are unfamiliar with videogames or find themselves struggling with the game, see "Most Frequent Mistakes Students Make When Playing *Warcraft*" below.

Server and Faction, Race and Class

We will be playing on the *Galakrond* server on the side of the *Alliance*. So please make sure you create a character on the right server and faction. For the purposes of Tuesday's tutorial, if you have *not* played *WoW* before, *please make a human character*. Humans have their own starting point, and this will put you where the other members of the class will be for Tuesday. If you do *nothing* else before Tuesday's class but create a human character and log on, you'll be all set to go. Students who have a familiarity with *WoW* are urged to create whatever race or class they wish, just so long as they are ready to go in the human starting area outside Stormwind by the beginning of Tuesday's class. People familiar with *WoW* are further encouraged to play as either a healer or a tank, as this will help us diversify in-game groups.²

Levels

You will be asked to reach a certain "level" by each Thursday while we're playing the game. Players gain experience during the course of the game, and upon earning enough experience, a new level is gained. Levels go from 1 – 100, but for our purposes, students will be asked to reach level 30 by the time we finish playing. Doing quests, running dungeons, and completing other activities will net you experience and increase your level. Note: players should have reached the levels listed below by the beginning of class on that day, *but they should not go beyond the level cap*. Players who fail to reach, say, level 20 by Thursday, April 2nd will not be able to participate in class, but players who go beyond level 24 will also not be able to participate in class. If you

¹ You will get a free month of play when you purchase the game, so I have an "earliest" date so that you will be able to use this month all the way up until your final essay is due and not be responsible for any additional fees.

² Note: the default human class is "priest." So if you just click on "accept," you will be a priest. One semester this meant that we had a ton of priests. This wasn't bad *per se*, and the priest is a fine class to play, but I just want to alert students to other options. This is also to say that this note discouraged *any* students from being priests the following semester, and we desperately needed more healers (and tanks).

imagine yourself wanting to play more or beyond the level cap set for each Thursday, I urge you to create an alternate character or characters to play. There will be no level cap for any alternate characters you create.

3.26—Reach Level 10-14

4.2—Reach Level 20-24

4.9—Reach Level 25-29

4.16—Reach Level 30-34

Achievements

Activities like questing, running a dungeon, performing well in a battleground, and *many* other things in *World of Warcraft* will earn a player an achievement. Students are expected to have gotten *at least* ten achievements by April 16th, the last day we will be playing the game.

Whoever has the most “achievement points” (different achievements are worth more points) by 4.16 will get a small amount of extra credit.

Dungeons, Battlegrounds, and Other Things

World of Warcraft is a *social* game. It can be played alone in isolation, but its real attraction comes from doing things with other players. You will be expected to have at least tried out the following things before the designated class, and on some Thursdays we will be playing together.

3.26—This first week you should try to familiarize yourself with questing and playing with other people. Prior to class, try to team up with your classmates to do quests together.

4.2—Dungeons. Prior to class, please have attempted to do a dungeon either with other classmates or with strangers in the game.

4.2—Battlegrounds. Prior to class, please have attempted to take part in a battleground, specifically either Warsong Gulch or Arathi Basin. We will be splitting the class into two factions and doing a battleground in class.

4.16—Prior to class I will be putting players into 2 person teams. These teams will then battle each other in specific arena-style battles in a tournament. The winning team will get a small amount of extra credit.

The Guild

Students will be expected to have all their characters in the class guild. The class guild is “AmLitTrad.” Students will be expected to contribute to the guild, use the guild bank, and help the guild earn achievements. We will also be playing with members of my other Narrative and Technology class, so there will be many people in the guild.

Money and Goods

WoW has a complex in-game economy that allows players to trade goods through the Auction House (AH) for in-game gold. As much of our engagement with the game will ponder what it means for such an economy to emerge, students are required to buy and sell things in the AH. At the end of our time playing the game, students will be asked to deposit all the money they have earned into the Guild Bank. The two students who deposit the most money will receive extra credit.

Social

Though we will be looking closely, carefully, and rigorously at *WoW*, I also imagine that we will have quite a bit of fun. Students are expected to talk to each other, help each other, and do activities together. If I am on and see people failing to interact with each other, I will most definitely frown on this. Basically, our experience of *WoW* will be predominantly what *we* make of it, so please take full advantage of being able to talk with your classmates in a virtual environment, as well as students from the other section of Narrative and Technology.

Most Frequent Mistakes Students Make When Playing *Warcraft*

Massively Multiplayer Online games can be a bit frustrating if one is unfamiliar with their conventions. But these things can be negotiated, especially if students keep the following few things in mind. One of the biggest frustrations is *dying*. You will die, probably a lot. But in my experience, most of the struggles (especially the dying) can be addressed by keeping the following few things in mind *and* you will be able to level more quickly.

Chat: The most important thing you can learn to do is communicate, especially with the class guild. There are different modes of chat. You can “say” something into the world (the default), whisper (by clicking on a characters’ avatar or name), party chat, etc. So, if you are struggling, chances are there is a classmate (or myself) online that you can talk to.

- Hit “enter” to bring up a chat line.
- Type “g/” and hit “enter” again.
- Hit “enter.” Before your blinking cursor should be a “G:” that is green. This means you are in guild chat. Anything you type in here will go to everyone in the class online at that moment.
- You can check who is online by pressing “O” or clicking on the guild crest on the bottom of the screen. You can click on players directly from here, whisper them, invite them to parties, etc.
- Basically, guild chat will allow you to ask other people to help you if you are having trouble. Partying up and questing together is a great way of not dying *and you level up faster. . . .*

ARMOR: The number one reason students struggle with *WoW* and die a lot is that they forget to do 2 things: equip the best armor and weapons available, and after level 10, *repair your armor frequently* (say once an hour), as it will break and disappear if you fail to repair it. You can repair armor at vendors who display an anvil when you scroll over them.

- When you complete a quest, often you will get a piece of armor. Scrolling over it will show you the armor’s stats, and you can compare it with what you currently have equipped. *Equip the armor if it is better.* You have to do this manually. Failing to equip armor will cause frequent death. Check the guild bank and AH for armor too.

In my experience, once students learn how to chat, equip better armor, and repair their armor *frequently*, they struggle much less. I am not saying you will not die. You will. But remembering these few things will make dying a heck of a lot less frequent and frustrating.