In this class we will combine academic study with an experiential approach to the topic of games and, more generally, participatory entertainment in early China. Thus in addition to thinking about the meaning of play as a universal human activity and contextualizing examples of popular games from the Chinese tradition with background reading on related philosophical and cosmological beliefs, we will learn the fundamentals of the ancient Chinese game of Go (a.k.a. weiqi), a favorite pastime of scholars since at least the Han dynasty. Students will be introduced to on-line resources that allow them to play the game in real time with opponents from around the world, and they will also visit local New York City Go clubs. Through diligent study, students will be expected to achieve a reasonable level of competence in the game and asked to demonstrate that for a portion of their final grade. By demanding real immersion in an absorbing and characteristically Chinese activity that has remained essentially unchanged over at least two millennia, it is hoped that students will begin to recognize the fundamental humanity they share with the former peoples of early China.
Course Objectives:

1. To introduce methods of inquiry characteristic of an interdisciplinary seminar and prepare students for further engagement with Gallatin’s curriculum.
2. To help students find relevance to their own experience in the study of an ancient culture.
3. To develop writing skills necessary for the expression of subtle ideas and complex emotions.

Course Texts:


All of the above texts are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore, 726 Broadway. Any other required readings will be distributed electronically.

Internet Resources: In addition to the reading the course texts, students are expected to become familiar with the following websites:

- The KGS Go Server ([http://www.gokgs.com](http://www.gokgs.com))
- The American Go Association ([http://www.usgo.org](http://www.usgo.org))
- Sensei’s Library ([http://senseis.xmp.net](http://senseis.xmp.net))

In particular, all students should establish player accounts on the KGS website and download the “CGoban 3” client and SGF editor for use in the second half of the term.
Course Policies and Requirements:

Grading: Grades will be awarded on the following basis

10% Completion of 10 one-paragraph weekly response papers addressing any aspect of the week's reading assignments (submit by email attachment labeled with your name and the date no later than midnight on Monday or Wednesday). Submit more than 10 responses for extra credit!

15% 1st writing assignment, due Fri. 9/27 at 5pm (submit by email)

20% 2nd writing assignment, due Fri. 11/1 at 5pm (submit by email)

25% 3rd writing assignment, due Fri. 12/6 at 5pm (submit by email)

30% Class participation, including punctual attendance, completion of assigned readings, participation in class discussion, and participation in out-of-class activities. This aspect of the class is weighted heavily because it will be to everyone’s benefit if you are actively engaged with class readings and work together with your classmates through class discussion and active play to draw connections with larger themes of the course. Please note – bodily class attendance is a necessary but not sufficient condition for receiving participation credit. Exceptions will be made for documented medical illnesses or family crises. Whenever possible in such cases, please notify me by email in advance of your absence.

Late papers will be penalized by one letter grade per day. No rewrites will be allowed, but you are encouraged to discuss drafts of your papers with me or with tutors at the Writing Center in advance of final submission deadlines.

Academic Integrity: High standards of academic integrity are essential to your reputation and that of Gallatin/NYU. I will uphold the Gallatin policy on cheating and plagiarism found at http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html.

Electronics: Cell phones should be turned off and placed out of sight during class. Laptop computers, tablets, and e-readers may be used for class-related purposes.

Course Calendar:

Wed. 9/4: Preliminary Discussion.

Mon. 9/9: Huizinga, Homo Ludens, 1-27; Kim, Learn to Play Go (v.1), 1-33.

Wed. 9/11: Huizinga, Homo Ludens, 28-75; Kim, Learn to Play Go (v.1), 34-61.

Mon. 9/16: Huizinga, Homo Ludens, 76-104; Kim, Learn to Play Go (v.1), 62-73.


**WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1:** 4-PAGE PAPER DUE FRIDAY 9/27 BY 5PM (EMAIL)

Q: Discuss the role of play in your own life experience with reference to Huizinga’s observations about the role of play in culture.

Mon. 9/30: Callois, *Man, Play and Games*, 3-36; Kim, *Learn to Play Go* (v.2), 1-29.


Mon. 10/7: Callois, *Man, Play and Games*, 71-97; Kim, *Learn to Play Go* (v.2), 53-80.


Mon. 10/14: Fall Break – No Classes Scheduled!


**WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2:** 5-PAGE PAPER DUE FRIDAY 11/1 BY 5PM (EMAIL)

Q: This paper should be in the form of a Go (*weiqi*) journal in which you relate your experience of learning the game and/or reflections on go as a metaphor for some aspect of life. (For inspiration, you might wish to follow some of the links here: [http://senseis.xmp.net/?PhilosophyAndGo](http://senseis.xmp.net/?PhilosophyAndGo)) The paper can consist of one long journal entry or several shorter ones.


Sun. 11/10: Chinatown Trip! A visit to the Flushing neighborhood in Queens and a dim sum brunch.


Mon. 11/25: “The Go Master” continued; class discussion.


**WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3:** 10-PAGE PAPER DUE FRIDAY 12/6 BY 5PM (EMAIL)

(See separate handout on final paper project.)


Wed. 12/11: PGEC Go Tournament – Championship Rounds. Note: the tournament winner will receive extra credit amounting to a single-step upward adjustment of his/her final course grade, e.g. a B+ will become an A-, an A- will become an A, etc.!!!