Game Design as Narrative Architecture

Environmental Storytelling

Evocative Spaces
- builds upon stories players already know
- Ex: Star Wars the game
- Ex: Barbie game

Enacting Stories
- narrative elements are staged
- episodic games that develop plot
- Ex: Last of Us
- Ex: God of War

Embedded Narratives
- spaces contain story info for players to discover
- memory palace
- Syuzet vs Fabula
- Detective games
- Ex: Escape room
- Ex: Super Mario

Emergent Narratives
- designed for player-created stories
- less chaotic than life
- Ex: Minecraft

Ludologists vs Narratologists

Ludologists
- Focus on mechanics & gameplay
- Jesper Juul
- Markku Eskelinen

"Interactivity is almost the opposite of narrative"
- Ernest Adams

Narratologists
- Studies games alongside other storytelling media

"There is a direct conflict between the demands of a story and the demands of a game"
- Greg Costikyan

Common Ground Principles
- Most games have narrative
- Story in games diff. stories in media
- Narrative Analysis does not need to be prescriptive
- Not all games tell stories

SPATIALITY
- Games design worlds > plots

Historical Precedents
- → board games
- → RPGs
- → Nintendo game w/ simple tools but complex spaces