



# Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals (MIT Press)

By Katie Salen Tekinba?, Eric Zimmerman

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**Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals (MIT Press)** By Katie Salen Tekinba?, Eric Zimmerman

As pop culture, games are as important as film or television -- but game design has yet to develop a theoretical framework or critical vocabulary. In *Rules of Play* Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman present a much-needed primer for this emerging field. They offer a unified model for looking at all kinds of games, from board games and sports to computer and video games. As active participants in game culture, the authors have written *Rules of Play* as a catalyst for innovation, filled with new concepts, strategies, and methodologies for creating and understanding games. Building an aesthetics of interactive systems, Salen and Zimmerman define core concepts like "play," "design," and "interactivity." They look at games through a series of eighteen "game design schemas," or conceptual frameworks, including games as systems of emergence and information, as contexts for social play, as a storytelling medium, and as sites of cultural resistance.

Written for game scholars, game developers, and interactive designers, *Rules of Play* is a textbook, reference book, and theoretical guide. It is the first comprehensive attempt to establish a solid theoretical framework for the emerging discipline of game design.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

*Rules of Play* is an exhaustive, clear, cogent, and complete resource for understanding games and game design. Salen and Zimmerman describe an encyclopedia of game design issues, techniques, and attributes. In particular, they analyze the elements that can make a game experience richer, more interesting, more emotional, more meaningful, and, ultimately, more successful. It should be the first stop you make when learning about game design.

(Nathan Shedroff, author of *Experience Design*)

*Rules of Play* makes a monumental contribution to the development of game theory, criticism, and design. It will instantly become a standard textbook in the field on the basis of its rigor and scope -- yet it is written in such an engaging style that many will read it for pleasure. Salen and Zimmerman do for games what Sergei Eisenstein did for cinema -- offer an expert practitioner's perspective on central aspects of the aesthetics and cultural importance of an emerging medium.

(Henry Jenkins, Director of Comparative Media Studies, MIT)

This is the most impressive book on game design I've ever seen. Broad in scope yet rich in detail, *Rules of Play* sets a new standard for game analysis.

(Will Wright, Game Designer of *Sim City* and *The Sims*)

#### About the Author

Katie Salen Tekinba? is Professor in the School of Computing and Digital Media at DePaul University and Chief Designer and Researcher at Institute of Play.

Eric Zimmerman is a game designer, game design theorist, and co-founder and CEO of gameLab. He has taught at universities including MIT, the University of Texas, Parsons School of Design, New York University, Rhode Island School of Design, and the School of Visual Arts.

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