

# Larp Studies Seminar

Poznań, Poland, 29.04.2017

## Timetable

10:00 - 10:40	J. Tuomas Harviainen <b>Designing for Awesomeness, or Designing for Experiences?</b>
10:40 - 11:20	Annika Waern <b>Genre Shifts as Larp Goes Mainstream</b>
11:20 - 11:30	<b>short break</b>
11:30 - 12:10	Rafael Bienia <b>Future Larp Design, Research and Practice: Towards Next Generations of Role-playing</b>
12:10 - 12:50	Yaraslau I. Kot <b>Larp Research in ex-USSR Region</b>
12:50 - 14:00	<b>lunch break</b>
14:00 - 14:40	Piotr Milewski <b>Everyday Larping – Designing Larps for Non-gamers</b>
14:40 - 15:20	Krzysztof Chmielewski <b>How (Not to) Kill the Cat – Larpcraft vs Creativity in Larp Design Teaching</b>
15:20 - 15:30	<b>short break</b>
15:30 - 16:10	Jerzy Szeja, Augustyn Surdyk <b>Reflections of Practitioners. Students Taking Part in School Larps in the Years 1999-2017 and Their Transformations</b>
16:10 - 16:50	Panel discussion. Chair: Michał Mochocki <b>Academic Larp Studies: Methods &amp; Approaches</b>
circa 17:00	<b>Thank you!</b>

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**Dr. J. Tuomas Harviainen (Hanken School of Economics)**

**Designing for Awesomeness, or Designing for Experiences?**

In this lecture, I discuss historical and current trends in larp design. My main focus is on the changes wrought by documentation, promotion and emergent professionalism. The key question is on whether developments in larp mechanics and documentation have changed the way we play: are players still playing for stories or immersive experiences, or have things such as photographs and promo campaigns taken the first priority in how larp is now done? And does it really matter if they have?

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**Prof. Annika Waern (Uppsala University)**

**Genre Shifts as Larp Goes Mainstream**

This talk is based upon a text about what the communication for *College of Wizardry* and *Inside Hamlet* tell us about how the genre of larp changes when you aim to reach for a wider audience. Annika will go through some of the resources for the two larps to see how they present themselves both as larp and as something else - a theme park and a theatre play, respectively.

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**Dr. Rafael Bienia (Maastricht University)**

**Future Larp Design, Research and Practice: Towards Next Generations of Role-playing**

Larp studies keeps pace with current larp practices, but while larp studies offers answers to current developments and successful larp designs, there is little systematic collaboration between larp theory and design. I propose a theoretical toolset that includes different elements of larp and categorizes their collaboration in three categories that span successful, failed, and non-existing collaborations. I argue that larp theory offers design possibilities for innovative larp practices, but only if a collaboration between larp theory and design draws upon an analysis of the actual role playing context and all the involved elements.

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**Dr. Yaroslau I. Kot (Belarusian State University)**

**Larp Research in the ex-USSR Region**

In this speech I will present an overview of research on live action role-playing, which has been conducted in the territory of the former Soviet Union (mainly modern Russia, Belarus and Ukraine) in the span of the last 100 years. We will analyse the etymology of key terms, the work of the leading researchers, and the different dimensions of knowledge (pedagogy, psychology, anthropology, philosophy etc.) which has informed larp theory in the Russian-speaking world.

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**mgr Piotr Milewski (Kazimierz Wielki University)**

### **Everyday Larping – Designing Larps for Non-gamers**

The lecture presents a framework for the design of larps targeted at the mass audience of popular culture. The framework is based on narrative psychology and on the concept of “Subject Player” taken from the DDE model (Design, Dynamics, Experience).

Larp games have a relatively high barrier of entry, as they require active participation by role-playing. With player experience considered as the primary goal of participation in larp, the presented framework is a set of tools for generating this experience in a way that minimises the responsibility for the game on the part of the player. Thanks to this approach, the role entered by the participant emerges spontaneously and naturally, integrated seamlessly in their Subject-Player construct.

The discussion of the framework will be supported by case studies of games played without a classic component: the “character sheet”.

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**mgr Krzysztof Chmielewski (Kazimierz Wielki University / Polish Naval Academy)**

### **How (Not to) Kill the Cat - Larpcraft vs Creativity in Larp Design Teaching**

How to teach larp design to non-larpers in an approach that combines theory, creativity, and social capital? At Kazimierz Wielki University’s *Gamedec - Games Studies & Design*, the vast majority of freshman students are passionate creative designers in statu nascendi. Over 85% have never participated in a larp, and more than 50% (of those enrolled in 2016) had never heard of larp before entering the BA program. The case study presented here will cover 3 years of larp design courses, with over 110 students and three different educational approaches. The study compares 3 different approaches (year 1: drama-based experience design; year 2: theoretical approach + plot design; year 3: mechanics & simulation design and creative writing), their tools, basic classroom activities, and student’s results. It aims to shed some light on the possibilities of developing a comprehensive method of teaching larp design at higher-ed level, demonstrating a selection of tools that have been found to be the most efficient.

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**Dr. Jerzy Szeja (Games Research Association of Poland),**

**Dr. Augustyn Surdyk (Adam Mickiewicz University / GRAP)**

## **Reflections of Practitioners. Students Taking Part in School Larps in the Years 1999-2017 and Their Transformations**

The paper is a result of an analysis of students' transformations observed among the participants of 27 theatrical role-playing games (larps) which took place in the years 1999-2017 in the high school in Łochów, Poland. Seven areas of observations of the transformations have been distinguished:

1. Difficulties in the introduction of larp at school.
2. The attractiveness of voluntary participation.
3. The occurrence of hate speech.
4. Playing aimed at the very pleasure of participation vs playing aimed at the measurable outcome/completion of the mission.
5. Students' attitude to historical realities vs fantasy convention
6. Type of involvement: aimed at private story vs participation in great social events.
7. Students' attitudes: involvement on the evil vs the good side; the choice of moral and immoral methods of reaching aims.

The authors attempted to set up theses concerning probable causes of transformations (or their lack) and draw conclusions.

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**Chair: Dr. Michał Mochocki (Kazimierz Wielki University / GRAP)**

**Academic Larp Studies: Methods & Approaches**  
panel discussion