

***Snip*, a production of Sinister Rooster**

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During the Fall 2015 semester, a group of undergraduates, staff, and faculty at Rutgers University-Camden formed the Sinister Rooster game studio. The project was supported by the Rutgers-Camden Digital Studies Center (DSC) and led by DSC Fellow, instructor, and videogame designer Adam Nash. Sinister Rooster is spending the academic year designing a game called *Snip*, a puzzle platformer (constructed using the Unity game engine) that features a unique character and game mechanic. The game's main character is Anais, a girl of around 9 or 10 years old with a broken and introverted personality. She holds in her hand a pair of golden scissors that allow her to cut between two different realities. One of the most important features of this game is that it represents the experience of a person who is not in a position of power and a character type that is not often the central focus of videogames. *Snip* uses play to model the world of Anais, a non-white, female foster child.

However, there are two levels of play at work when it comes to Sinister Rooster and *Snip*, one involving the game itself and the other involving a student-run game studio that is not linked to course credit. We have long known that play is crucial to learning, and Sinister Rooster demonstrates what is possible when students are offered a space to create that is simultaneously tied to a university setting (making available its resources, spaces, and expertise) and also freed from the rhythms and structures of the traditional 14-week college course. Sinister Rooster sits in between "work" and "play," offering students the opportunity to acquire skills in an environment that they themselves structure.

One of the questions listed on the CFP for this conference asks: "How can the study of computer gaming, in line with studies of other cultural forms and productions, contribute to culture studies in the academy?" We see *Snip* as an example of how computer gaming offers a particularly useful way of examining culture by way of interdisciplinary collaboration. *Snip* offers a window onto a particular cultural scene, one that does not always get the attention of those who make and market videogames, and it is also the result of a massively interdisciplinary effort amongst a group of students with a wide range of abilities and competencies. While *Snip* is an important cultural artifact, the Sinister Rooster game studio has also become a cultural and educational effort. Students created team leads for programming, design and writing, sound, art, and production. They held meetings, employed project management software, and thus constructed both a demo game *and* an organization. Given these intricacies, the making of a game as well as the making of a game studio can be seen as relevant to the study of culture.

Sinister Rooster's demonstration for "In Play" will include a playable prototype of *Snip* as well as a poster presentation describing the experiences of people who created the game, the challenges they faced, and the collaborative strategies they drew upon. Multiple members of the game studio will be on hand to discuss both *Snip* and Sinister Rooster.