

Olivia Shepard
Fourth Year Award Outcome Report
17 March 2023

Regency Romance Tabletop Roleplaying Game: Outcome Report

Original Proposal

For my 4th year project, I proposed that I would spend the 2022-2023 school year creating and visually designing a Regency romance tabletop roleplaying game. In my game, players would create characters through a character sheet and play as them through a story of Regency Romances. While each player's character would have a different personal aspiration from the others, the players and their characters all share one main goal: to debut into society and find love. I proposed to use my game to create an alternate-Regent society where marginalized groups including people of color, the queer community, disabled people, etc. could enjoy the Regency genre and see themselves included in it. I proposed to design my game using Adobe products such as Photoshop and InDesign, as well as Microsoft Word or other word processors.

Faculty Mentor

My game design project was advised by Dr. Sean Duncan of the Media Studies department. Sean has over 13 years of experience teaching analog games media and design to students in multiple universities. I became a student of Sean's in Spring 2021 when I enrolled in his MDST 3712: Interactive Storytelling course, where I was initially introduced to Tabletop Roleplaying/Interactive Storytelling Game Design. I have taken several other media design courses with Sean, and much of my creative practices have been shaped by his media design pedagogies. Working with Sean this past year was a great opportunity and I thank him for donating his time and expertise in game design to aid in the development of my project.

Outcome Summary

In summer 2022, I began meeting with my advisor, Dr. Sean Duncan, to discuss the planning of my game. We determined we would use the iterative game design approach developed by game design scholars John Sharp and Colleen Macklin. From then, in Fall 2022, we developed an independent study course, the syllabus of which can be found [here](#). I had three main objectives during the course: 1) to read and annotate several TTRPGs and find "key design takeaways", that I could then apply to my own game design, 2) create a rough yet playable prototype of my game for early playtesting 3) construct a plan for playtesting to conduct playtest and collect playtest data.

I used a large portion of my Fourth Year Award grant to purchase games for my research -- the games that ultimately had the largest impact on my design was *Thirsty Sword Lesbians* by April Kit Walsh, *Kids on Brooms* by Doug Levandowski, Spenser Starke, and Jonathan Gilmour, *Starcrossed* by Alex Roberts, *Romance Trilogy* by Emily Careboss, and *Fiasco* by Jason

Morningstar. From purchasing these games, I was able to view a wide variety of game design approaches, most of which used the Powered by the Apocalypse (PbtA) System for rolling and character sheet design. From here, I was able to begin developing my game.

Unfortunately, playtesting was pushed back due to the events of November 2022. Having known D’Sean Perry who was fatally wounded in the events of November, I needed personal time to cope and heal from the tragedy. After having that time, game design continued.

The project took an unintended yet favorable turn when over Winter Break, I decided to genre blend Regency with science fiction to create what my game is today, *Regency and Robots*. In this iteration, a powerful artificial intelligence species has taken over Earth, the dystopian future taking the shape of Regent High Society, where robots and humans court each other to find their perfect “sync”. The science-fiction/romance blend has both narrative and mechanical implications, perhaps the most interesting being that of the binary code dice: for any robot character wanting to see if they can successfully complete an action, players roll four six-sided dice (4d6), each with three sides of “1” and three sides of “0”. Players then roll these dice and use binary code language to calculate a value for their move between 0-15 (0000 = 0, 0101=5, 1001=9, etc.). This is perhaps the most unique feature of my game, and is what sets apart my game from other PbtA games. Coming back from Winter Break, I designed a rough draft of the game rulebook, blank character sheet, and new plan for playtest. With several other Media Studies students, I began playtest trials, which continue today. Sean has also continued to advise the creation of my project.

As of now, the game is still undergoing playtest trials and will be ready for final draft creation after my final playtest on Saturday, March 18th. For the Miller Arts Scholars Annual Outcome Showcase, I am using my award funds to create a bound, printed manuscript of my game available to browse through. This will allow me to prepare my final draft for online publication in Summer 2023. PDFs of my game will be available through sites including Itch.io and DriveThruRPG.com. I am using the remaining funds of my award money to print paper copies of the game that I may sell through Etsy, local craft shows, and Gaming Expos.

This project went through many unexpected ups and downs, but I can say thoroughly I am proud of the work I did over this past school year and am happy with where my game development is currently at. I thoroughly thank the Miller Arts Scholars program for funding the games research and development I conducted over the course of this school year. I also thank Dr. Sean Duncan again for being my advisor during this project and lending me his expertise in game design to aid in the creation of my own game. I am grateful to have had this opportunity and am excited to continue building my game for publication in Summer 2023.

Expenses

Kids on Brooms: Core Rulebook	\$18
Strange Adventures: Volume One	\$5

Bubblegumshoe	\$8
Alice Is Missing: A Silent Roleplaying Game	\$12
Monster of the Week	\$12
Advanced Lovers & Lesbians	\$20
Glitter Hearts	\$15
Hearts of Wulin	\$15
Wise Women	\$14
Monsterhearts	\$20
Noir World	\$20
Masks: A New Generation (Phone Edition)	\$5
Princess of the Universe (Fate)	\$13
Dangerous to Go Alone (core book)	\$15
Super Destiny High School Rumble!!	\$10
Tricube Tales	\$10
Saga of the Goblin Horde (Savage Worlds Deluxe)	\$5
Wanderhome	\$25
Monster Mix	\$5
Babes in the Wood 2e	\$15
Bluebeard's Bride	\$15.00
Star Crossed	\$12.00
Teens in Space: Core Rulebook	\$10.00
Avatar Legends: The Roleplaying Game	\$30.00
Avatar Legends: Wan Shi Tong's Adventure Guide	\$20.00

Low Stakes	\$15.00
Lighthearted	\$50.00
Rapscallion: Ashcan Edition	\$5.00
Reimagined: Fanfic Role-Playing Game	\$5.00
You & I: Roleplaying Games for Two	\$25.00
Jinkies!	\$20.00
Fiasco!	\$30
Skillshare	\$120
Prototyping Materials (Dice Set, Blank Cards, Paper)	\$100
Upgrading Site to Business-Premium (2 years) ¹	\$450
Total Expenditure (as of 3/17/2023)	\$1,169
Remaining Funds ²	\$331

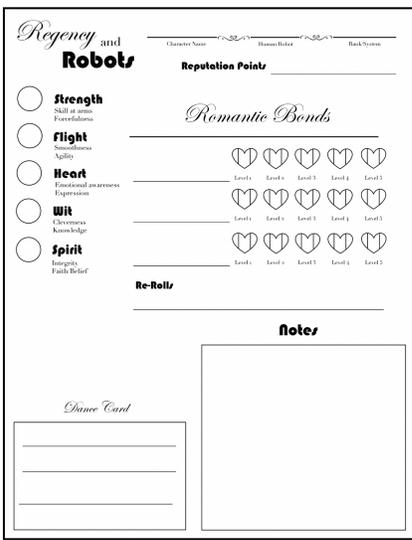
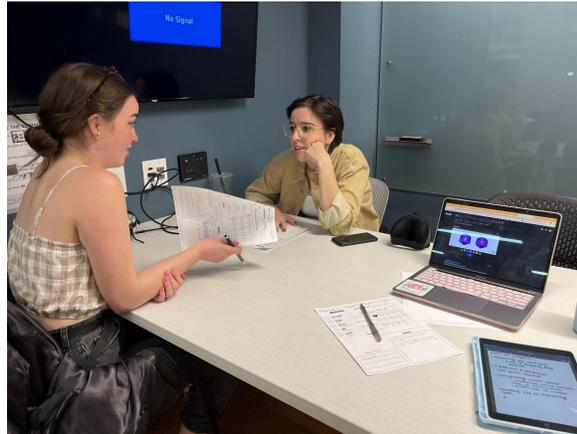
¹ I had a few hundred dollars of left over money as several of my proposed expenses did not cost as much as originally expected, so I decided to use some of the extra funds to upgrade my website to a business site. This will allow me to sell copies of my game directly through my site, which one must have a Business subscription to enable. I gave myself two years of a pro subscription so I could have two years to sell my game on my site and leave enough money left over to print physical copies of the game.

² I leave myself the remaining funds, \$331 dollars, to spend on printing physical copies of my game that I can sell on my website, Etsy store, craft fairs/shows, and gaming expos. Because I am still developing the game, I unfortunately was unable to spend the entire grant money by the time the Outcome Report was due. I would like to assure the Miller Arts Scholars committee that, on my honor, I will be using the entirety of the funds provided for the development of my game project and for no other purposes outside the project scope.

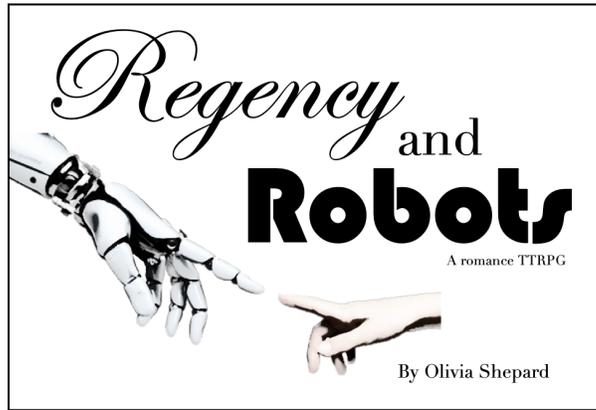
Media Examples:

Initial Playtest Plan:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jvBVuFdiffU9vbyV7Nq00iShPizG3T3hr6XclobK-XM/edit?usp=sharing>



3.



1. Photo of 2d8 and blank dice used for prototype/playtesting
2. Image from first playtest session, with Kerry Ronayne (left) and Katelyn Friedline (Right)
3. *Regency and Robots* character sheet prototype
4. *Regency and Robots* RPG cover art, prototype