Intro to Game Design GAME 101 Policy Sheet
Fall 2015 \ Section 001 \ TR 10:30—11:45 \ A&D L008

Instructor: Mrs. Suzan Manis
Office Hours: TR 8:30-9:30am (by appt. only)

REQUIRED TEXTS


SUGGESTED/REFERENCED TEXTS


"Game Design Workshop-A playcentric design workshop" by Tracy Fullerton. 2008

Course Description

This course is an introductory overview of the video game development process with an emphasis on game design. Through detailed study of historical as well as current games, students will learn the language and structure needed to develop their own game ideas. Students will learn the many aspects of a game development team and learn how each of these roles contributes to a game’s overall design. Projects, in and out of class, will focus on creating and designing game concepts both digital and non-digital.
Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete GAME 101 will be able to:

- Be familiar with the evolution of electronic gaming and the factors that pushed its development.
- Understand the basic mechanics and design structure of traditional and digital games.
- Understand the basic game development process.
- Be able to identify the roles within a game development team.
- Have developed a simple game individually and in a team environment.
- Have an understanding of creativity theory and how to apply it to game design.

Assumptions

It is assumed that students are familiar with MLA format or are familiar with resources that contain such guidelines for writing assignments. *(You can also refer to this website [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/) for further info on how to do MLA citations.)*

It is also assumed that students have regular access to their school email and the Internet, so they will be able to receive updates and participate electronically when necessary. All correspondence between instructor and students will be done through official school email and not personal email addresses. Any issues with email or Blackboard access should be taken up with university ITU.

Late Work

Late work will only be accepted without penalty in the case of a documented medical illness or another situation that is out of your control. Other late work will be reduced by a letter grade for each class period it is late. Late work will only be accepted up to a week after it is due. Assignments are due at the beginning of class, and cannot be worked on during class time unless the instructor gives permission. If you are caught working on it in class it will be considered late and go down a letter grade.
Class Participation

Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions, answer questions when prompted, and in general, add to the collective dialogue. Participation in class discussions and activities is necessary for this course. Some of the information for the course can be found in the text, but not everything. The lecture will cover additional information and facilitate discussions that you will not want to miss, so come to class.

Special Note About Participation-
Class participation is factored into your grading. This means that if you are absent for class, or come to class very late within a half hour to an hour you will be given a 0 for class participation for that day.

Discussion Board

Each week a topic or question will be posted onto our class Blackboard in the Discussion Board Tab. You are required to post a response to the discussion. The discussion topic will be based off of what was talked about during the week. You are also required to reply back to one of the responses from any of your classmates. This will all be factored into your participation grade.

Requirements and Evaluation

- Students should arrive to each class meeting ready to discuss the assigned reading/viewing/playing, and also be prepared to participate meaningfully in group activities—the group activities may sometimes factor into your final mark beyond participation.

- Periodically throughout the semester, students will complete “Missions” that display mastery of the material through creative output and collaboration with other students. These may be added with other homework assignments or as standalone small projects. Details on these assignments will be outlined at the outset of each assignment.

Midterm Requirements (Midterm is assessed during Week 7)

- For mid-term, students will work in a team to submit and present a fully playable, table top (board) game of their own design.
  - TASK: In your teams, forms completed in class, design and produce a game of your choosing. In addition to creating the physical elements needed for gameplay (some items such as dice, cards, paper, poster board, etc. may
need to be purchased), you need to document the process using a template provided by the instructor.

- **ASSESSMENT:** Teams will be assessed through peer play-testing, self and group evaluations, a group presentation, and other criteria outlined by the instructor.
  
  - There will also be a multiple choice 'Midterm Exam' testing you on the terms and content that is taught throughout the semester up to the Midterm. There will be a Midterm Exam review during class, the week before.

**Final Project Requirements (Final projects are assessed on the last week of class- Week 16)**

- In lieu of a final exam, students will submit a final project by Week 16- Thursday - Dec. 17th, 11:59 PM Via Bb.
- You have three options in which to do your final project- You must pick one of the three options below.
  
  - **Game Design Document** - To Create a design document for a completely original game. Using a template provided by the instructor as a content guideline; research the various aspects of the design/development process necessary to complete the document.
  
  - **Historical paper** - This is a writer-researched paper about a video game of your choice (5-10 pages, double-spaced)-You must choose a game you haven’t played before and discuss gameplay experience, the history of the game, and discuss some design aspects. You will be using a template provided by the instructor.
  
  - **5-minute Video** - Create a 5-minute digital story/video that presents your game ethnography and outlines how games have been a part of your life, OR, use the 5 minutes to present some "research" you’ve done on a computer game.
  
  - You must pick one of the options and let instructor know what you decide by Midterm.

**Materials & Supplies Needed Throughout the Semester**

During the beginning of the semester you will be doing a variety of in class activities and will be working on designing your midterm game, which will require you to bring in certain materials in order to accomplish them.

All supplies are required to be purchased by week 2. Bring in all supplies to class, week 2, Tuesday. After that day, Instructor will let you know when to bring them in for in class work.
List of supplies needed:

- Pencil
- Eraser
- Ruler
- 1 pair of Scissors
- 1 Glue Stick
- 1 Roll of clear tape
- 1 pad of graph paper
- 1 pack of 8.5 x 11 card stock paper
- Sketchbook for ideas, brainstorming, and pre-production. *(This can be any size and with any type of backing or binding.)*
- 1 pack of 100 Un-ruled blank 4x6 index cards
- 2 six sided die
- 1 ten sided die
- 1 twelve sided die
  - *(Dice can be found at hobby shops and game stores. A good game store near the school is called- "Comics & Gaming Fairfax" off of main street.)*
  - *(All other supplies you can get at craft stores, supermarkets, Wal-Mart, staples, Kinko’s, etc.)*

Resources/Links

- [http://boardgames.lovetoknow.com/Create_Your_Own_Printable_Board_Game](http://boardgames.lovetoknow.com/Create_Your_Own_Printable_Board_Game)
- [https://www.thegamecrafter.com/](https://www.thegamecrafter.com/)
- [http://library.gmu.edu/](http://library.gmu.edu/)
- Also refer to your book- 'Game Development Essentials: An introduction' pgs. 454-462

Online Participation

Blackboard (Bb) will be your friend in exchanging ideas and communicating with one another during the term. If you have questions on using Bb please ask. I hope you all use the technology to take our discussions past two meetings a week and to get feedback on your assignments.

Email Policy

Students must use their MasonLIVE or gmu.edu email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See [http://masonlive.gmu.edu](http://masonlive.gmu.edu) for more information.
Students With Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see Seth Hudson and contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, http://ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Honor Code

George Mason University has an Honor Code that requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

University Catalog

Students are to be aware of the policies listed in the University Catalog: http://catalog.gmu.edu/. University dates concerning withdrawal are not negotiable by the professor. Other questions regarding university and program policies can be directed towards the Assistant Director of CGD (Seth Hudson) outside of class time.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-90</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Breakdown

- 10%  Participation in classroom activities and online discussions.
- 20%   Missions (4 throughout the semester)
- 20%   Exams
- 20%   Midterm Presentation and Project
- 30%   Final Project
Course Breakdown

Week 1:

**Tues.**- Class Introductions, Ice Breakers, Class Policies and Syllabus, Introduction to Midterm and Final Projects.

**Lecture:** Basics of Game Design. What is a Game? Formal and dramatic structures of games.

**In Class Activity** - Working in Groups to Create a Game - 'Prototyping & play testing.'


**Lecture**- Team Roles- 'Industry Game Design Roles'

Assigning Groups for Midterm Game Project.

**Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 3 of Required Book**

Week 2:

**Tues.**- Lecture: Formal Elements of games continued- Genres, Themes, & Settings.


**Weeks Topics Referencing from Chap's 2 & 3 of Required Book**

**Homework**- Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week’s lectures.

Week 3:

**Tues.**- Lecture: High Concept Document. Examples and Template for your group game. Template will be used in Midterm Presentations.

**Lecture:** Formal Elements of games continued- Player Patterns.

**Thurs.**- Lecture: Formal Elements of games continued- Player Demographics.

**Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 4 of Required Book**

**Homework**- Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week’s lectures.

Week 4:

**Tues.** - Lecture: Creating the Experience- 'Engaging Players - How to keep the players interested over and over again.'

**Thurs.** - Lecture: Creating the Experience- 'Engaging Players'- Continued- Story & Character Development.

**Weeks Topics Referencing from Chap's 5 & 6 of Required Book**

**Homework**- Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week’s lectures.
Week 5:
**Tues.** - Playtesting- Testing Out Group Games
**Thurs.** - Playtesting- Testing Out Group Games
**Homework-** Post thoughts and critiques about group projects on the Discussion Board on Bb.

Week 6:
**Tues.** -
In class discussion about HW Bb comments.
Lecture: Balancing out your game. Functionality, Completeness, and balance.

**Thurs.** - In class work time- Work on Midterm Project, get ready for presentations next class.

**Midterm exam review-** In class 'Jeopardy'!

Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 6 of Required Book

Week 7: Midterm Week- Group Game Presentations
**Tues.-** Midterm Exam on Terms Learned So Far.
**Group Midterm Presentations**
**Thurs.-** Group Midterm Presentations Continued.
**Homework-** Self and Group Evaluations from each group using template.
(each member turns in separate copy). Post documents on Bb by Thursday night.

Week 8:
**Tues.-** Lecture- Looking to the Past- ‘How did gaming evolve’- Early Gaming.
**Thurs.-** Lecture- ‘History of Gaming’ Continued- Early Gaming.

Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 1 of Required Book

**Homework-** Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week's lectures.

Week 9:
**Tues. -** Lecture- ‘History of Gaming’ Continued.
**Introduction to Project- **"Visual Timeline"**- Developments in Computers and Video in the evolution of Gaming.
**Thurs.-** Lecture- ‘History of Gaming’ Continued.

**Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 1 of Required Book**

**Homework-** Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week's lectures.
Week 10:
Tuesday - Lecture - Level Design in Games.
Thursday - Lecture - Level Design in Games Continued.
Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 7 of Required Book

Homework: Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week's lectures.

Week 11: Last week Mrs. Manis will be in class for Maternity Leave. Another instructor TBD will take over for the rest of the semester and will correspond with Mrs. Manis while she is out. Final grades will be given by Mrs. Manis.
Tues. - Lecture - Interface Design in Games.
Thursday - Lecture - Game Audio.
Weeks Topics Referencing from Chap’s 8 & 9 of Required Book

Homework: Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week's lectures.

Week 12:
Tuesday - Lecture - Jobs in the game industry. An overview of how games get made; The Publisher and the Developer.
Thursday - Lecture - Jobs in the game industry. An overview of how games get made; The Publisher and the Developer - Continued.
Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 10 of Required Book

Homework: Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week's lectures.

Week 13:
Tuesday - Lecture - The development process of video games: Preproduction, production and post production; proper planning.
Thursday - Lecture - The development process of video games: Preproduction, production and post production; proper planning - Continued.
Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 11 of Required Book

Homework: Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week's lectures.

Week 14:
Tuesday - Lecture - Marketing and Maintenance
Thursday - Lecture - Marketing and Maintenance - Continued.
Weeks Topics Referencing from Chp. 12 of Required Book

Homework: Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week's lectures.
**Week 15:**
Tues.- Lecture- Future of Gaming & Development
Thurs.- Lecture- Future of Gaming & Development Continued.

**Homework-** Post response on Discussion Board on Bb on topic related to this week’s lectures.

**Week 16- Last Week of Class- Working on Your Final.**
Tues.- In Class time to work and finish up Final Project.
Thurs. - In Class time to work and finish up Final Project.
**FINAL PROJECT DUE - Thursday - Dec. 17th, 11:59 PM Via Bb.**
I, ______________________, affirm that I have received the syllabus for GAME-101-001 for Fall Semester 2015. Furthermore, I have read the content of this document and understand that I will be held accountable for the information, assignments and other required work for this class.

I confirm that I have received the following documents:

- Syllabus
- Class attendance policy
- Grading criteria
- Purchase requirements
- Overview of assignments and class schedule

_______________________________  _______________________
Signature                        Date