History of Game Design*
GAME230-001/CS225-001
TR 1:30 – 2:45 am
Spring 2015
Sandbridge Hall 107

* Cross-listed as CS225-001 Culture and Theory of Games

Instructor: Sang Nam
Assistant Professor, College of Visual and Performing Arts
Email: snam5@gmu.edu
Office: A&D Building 2024
Phone: 703-993-3163/office
Twitter: twitter.com/sangumc
Office Hours*: TR 11:45 am – 1:30 pm

* There might be school meetings during these office hours, thus, the best way to reach me is via email.

MASON MISSION STATEMENT
Mission-Who we are and why we do what we do
A public, comprehensive research university established by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the National Capital Region, we are an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.

MASON GAME DESIGN MISSION STATEMENT
The Mission of the Computer Game Design Program at George Mason University is to prepare students for employment and further study in the computer game design and development field, doing so with a curriculum designed to reflect the gaming industry’s demand for an academically rigorous technical program coupled with an understanding of the artistic and creative elements of the evolving field of study.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION
History of computer game design including games as a new medium for education, entertainment, and communications. Aspects of the business of computer game publishing, game criticism, storytelling, interactive fiction, violence, and virtual communities will be explored.

COURSE OVERVIEW
This course will involve lectures on game design history from ancient games to electronic games in the 20th century, game design from other cultures and countries, innovators in the field, and the historical context for video game design today. This course provides a necessary historical basis for students in this major, through lectures, participatory exercises, discussion and writing assignments. During the course, students will learn about important games and genres throughout the history of the medium and play several important games to learn why they made such an impact on the industry. Students in the course will look at the industry to explore how the development of games has evolved to become a multi-billion dollar a year industry and gain insight into what makes people make games. Also, students will build essential critical thinking skills with relationship to conceptual game design strategies and game analysis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- Survey the history of game design as a form of education, entertainment, and communication.
- Explore the technologies that form the evolutionary backbone of the history. i.e. “The technology that drives the medium.
• Explore the critical issues concerning computer game culture.
• Explore games of different eras and genres.
• Enrich critical thinking skills through readings, lectures, discussions, and writing.
• Develop a historical awareness – be able to evaluate your work in terms of its context in order to evolve and contribute in constructive ways to the world in which we live and work.
• Identify prominent experts in the world of computer game and their important works.

REQUIRED TEXTS

REQUIREMENTS
This is a reading course. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading and to think about them in advance of class, and to bring questions and comments to our meetings, so that this course can proceed with informed participation. College education is not just about improving practical skills, but also about developing a more sophisticated ability to interpret, critique, integrate, and produce knowledge.

Our class together will focus not only on reviewing the key points of the readings but also on critically digesting the material and composing a context for understanding its meaning and significance. Since this is designed to be a survey on the history of game design class, the breath of literature you will encounter is extensive. Some topics may be a review of themes you are already familiar with, while others will require you to stretch your intellectual boundaries. Staying engaged with your colleagues and instructor is key to your success in this class.

Intellectual Presence
Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in the class activities as active, collaborative participants. Your participation is vital to your learning as well as to the learning of the other students. The intellectual presence requirement includes attendance, participation, and courtesy.

* What is “Intellectual Presence?”
  • I will call on class members randomly to present their questions and insights on an assigned reading or film. I will ask students to share their annotations with the class and how the annotation relates to a particular course question, previous reading or discussion, and the student learning outcomes.
  • You must be able to locate your annotation and speak clearly and cogently. This is NOT a lecture class. It is a discussion class. YOU must be ready to express your ideas and respond to those of other students and the professor. Put very succinctly, I am interested in listening to YOU. My job is to help us evaluate, review, and synthesize our discussions in a meaningful way.
  • Presence means that if you come consistently to class and speak up, seize upon questions and issues in the readings and discussion of writing, then you will be assured of the full portion of the intellectual presence grade. This is a difficult part of the grade percentage to “quantify,” but you are in the clear if you try to speak clearly and comprehensively to questions or issues at least twice a week. “Extroverts” have an easier time of speaking up or out, of course, but I am putting the “introverts” on notice. You are required to practice speaking in my class—when called upon or especially on your own initiative—or accept an immense reduction in your final grade. That is, if you are silent throughout the semester, or when called upon, you have nothing clear or comprehensive to say, or if you do not show up at required attendance to scheduled events in the QU Community, you cannot expect to receive anymore than a zero for your “Presence” grade. (I will contact those
who demonstrate difficulty in speaking their minds early in the semester. It is important that we speak together to determine what can be done to help with your “Presence” in class.)

- Extroverts and introverts, take note, I will call on all members of the class and at any time at my discretion.
- Controversial issues are considered in this course. In order for everyone to feel comfortable voicing their opinions or asking questions, a climate of broadmindedness and respect is essential. Discrimination, harassment, or intimidation will not be tolerated.

Attendance
Attendance will be taken daily. The basic expectation for this class is that all students will attend every class (once they are enrolled). You are, however, permitted one absence. Beyond the one ‘free’ absence, only absences documented by a certified notice of athletic travel, medical illness, religious observance, or death or serious illness of a close family member qualify as ‘excused’ absences. There are 26 total class days this semester, which means that each one missed represents a loss of 3.9% of the course. Unexcused absences therefore will result in deductions from your final grade as follows:

2nd unexcused absence = 2.5% deduction  
3rd unexcused absence = 5% deduction  
4th unexcused absence = 7.5% deduction  
Five or more unexcused absences will result in failure of the course

Participation
As a survey course, class time will be devoted primarily to lecture and discussion. You should actively participate by making relevant comments, asking questions about the texts, and responding to the comments and questions of others.

Weekly Reading Assignment
Every week, there are required readings and documentary films related to the subject. Students are expected to think about the facts and post personal opinions on the discussion board of blackboard in each week, which can be used for the discussion materials.

Writing
Writing and speaking are important skills, and you will be expected to write and speak often in this course. This seminar will use writing as a learning tool and as a means of measuring student understanding.

GRADING & ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW
This class utilizes a hybrid assessment method using both performance-based and quest-based works. Performance-based works include group presentations, exams, and research papers – students will get a grade based upon their performance. Quest-based works includes assignments that you will be graded based upon whether or not you completed the “quest” - upon completion you will get the full credit awarded.

In this method, you will earn 50% of your grade if you work diligently. Thus, your final grade won’t be solely based upon your performance.

50% Performance-based Work

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<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>Final Paper or Game Proposal</td>
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50% Quest-based
33% 11 Quiz Questions (3% each)
10% Expert in the Field & Game Analysis
7% Reflections on Films

* Note that if you are having trouble in the class, need an extension on a given assignment, or things outside of class are affecting your ability to do the work, talk with me about it sooner. In all likelihood, we can work something out.

A  90% - 100%
B  80% - 89%
C  70% - 79%
D  60% - 69%
F  0% - 59%

CLASS POLICIES
Cell phones must be turned off or turned to “silent” mode.
Please do not text during class.
Laptops are NOT allowed in class unless required by the Professor for academic purposes relevant to the class.

EXCUSED ABSENCES
Students have the right to miss class for religious observances. Students wishing for time off for this reason should let the instructor know within the first two weeks of class. Sometimes absences from class are unavoidable because of illness. Emergencies, other than illness, could cause absence from class. In these cases, students are expected to meet with the instructor as soon as possible after the crisis has passed and arrange to make up any missed work. However, a written document that proves your absence was unavoidable must be submitted, and the instructor reserves the right to determine whether or not to excuse such an absence.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
For complete information about the University’s policies on academic honesty, please see:
http://www.gmu.edu/cte/Teaching/Getting_Started/Designing_Syllabus/academic_honesty.html

GMU HONOR CODE
http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/index.html#Anchor12
Honor Code: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
GMU Student information and resources: http://www.gmu.edu/mlstudents/.

There will be a good amount of writing expected throughout the class. Please make use of GMU’s Writing Center (http://writingcenter.gmu.edu) if you feel you are struggling.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, and the specific accommodation will be arranged through the Disability Resource Center.
DISCLAIMER
In this class, I reserve the right to show a broad range of course materials, some of which assume the audience to be adult in age and demeanor. Should you at any time in the course of the class feel offended by something you have seen or heard, we would appreciate you staying to be part of a dialogue. If you feel that you cannot stay, remove yourself from the classroom as discretely as possible. You may be asked to report on your response.

PRIVACY
Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.

COURSE SCHEDULE
Please, refer to the class Blackboard for the course schedule as well as important dates, such as assignment due dates, exam dates, and so on.
# GAME230/CS225 - Tentative Schedule

## Week 01 (01/19/15)

### Reading Assignment:
- ESA 2014 Annual Report

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 01/20</td>
<td>Course Introduction; Course Survey &amp; Student Information Sheet;</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 01/22</td>
<td>Lec.01</td>
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* M 01/19 – MLK Day (no classes)  
* T 01/20 – First Day of Spring Class

## Week 02 (01/26/15)

### Reading Assignment:
- Ch. 1 “Hey! Let’s Play Games!” (Donovan, p.3-13)  
- Ch. 2 “Avoid Missing Ball for High Score” (Donovan, p.15-27)  
- Ch. 3 “A Good Home Recreation Thing” (Donovan, p.29-37)  
- Ch. 4 “Chewing Gum, Bailing Wire and Spit” (Donovan, p.39-47)

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<td>Lec.02</td>
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<td>R 01/29</td>
<td>Lec.03</td>
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* T 01/27 – Last Day to Add

## Week 03 (02/02/14)

### Reading Assignment:
- Ch. 5 “The Biggest Eureka Moment Ever” (Donovan, p.49-63)  
- Ch. 6 “High Strung Prima Donnas” (Donovan, p.65-79)  
- Ch. 7 “Pac-Man Fever” (Donovan, p.81-93)

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<td>T 02/03</td>
<td>Lec.04:</td>
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<td>R 02/05</td>
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Assignment: Quiz Questions 01

## Week 04 (02/09/14)

### Reading Assignment:
- Ch. 8 “Devilish Contraptions” (Donovan, p.95-109)  
- Ch. 9 “Uncle Clive” (Donovan, p.111-123)  
- Ch. 10 “The French Touch” (Donovan, p.125-137)  
- Ch. 11 “Macintoshization” (Donovan, p.139-151)

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<td>R 02/12</td>
<td>Lec.06:</td>
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Assignment: Quiz Questions 02

## Week 05 (02/16/14)
Reading Assignment:
- Ch. 12 “A Tool to Sell Software” (Donovan, p.153-163)
- Ch. 13 “I Could Have Sworn It Was 1983” (Donovan, p.165-177)
- Ch. 14 “Interactive Movies” (Donovan, p.179-185)
- Ch. 15 “Ah! You Must Be a God” (Donovan, p.187-197)

T 02/17 Lec.07:
R 02/19 Lec.08:

Assignment: Quiz Questions 03

* F 02/20 – Last Day to Drop

**Week 06 (02/23/14)**

Reading Assignment:
- Ch. 16 “A Plane to Moscow” (Donovan, p.199-211)
- Ch. 17 “Sega Does What Nintendon’t” (Donovan, p.213-223)
- Ch. 18 “Mortal Kombat” (Donovan, p.225-235)
- Ch. 19 “A Library in a Fish’s Mouth” (Donovan, p.237-247)

T 02/24 Lec.09:
R 02/26 Lec.10:

Assignment: Quiz Questions 04

**Week 07 (03/02/14)**

Reading Assignment:
- Ch. 20 “The Ultimate Display” (Donovan, p.249-263)

T 03/03 Lec.11:
R 03/05 Midterm Exam

Assignment: Quiz Questions 05
Expert in the field & Game Analysis

**Week 08 (03/09/14) – Spring Recess**

* Spring Recess – M 03/09 – S 03/15

**Week 09 (03/16/14)**

Reading Assignment:
- Ch. 21 “We Take Pride in Ripping Them to Shreds” (Donovan, p.265-279)
- Ch. 22 “Beatmania” (Donovan, p.281-287)
- Ch. 23 “You Haven’t Lived Until You’ve Died in MUD” (Donovan, p.289-307)
- Ch. 24 “Second Lives” (Donovan, p.309-319)

T 03/17 Lec.12:
R 03/19 Lec.13:

**Week 10 (03/23/14)**

Reading Assignment:
• Ch. 25 “Little Computer People” (Donovan, p.321-331)
• Ch. 26 “All Access Gaming” (Donovan, p.333-341)
• Ch. 27 “The Grooviest Era of Crime” (Donovan, p.343-355)
• Ch. 28 “Magic Shooting Out of People’s Fingers” (Donovan, p.357-369)

T 03/24     Lec.14:
R 03/26     Lec.15:

Assignment: Quiz Questions 06

Week 11 (03/30/14)

Reading Assignment:
• Part One: Why Games Make Us Happy (McGonigal p.19–115)

T 03/31     Lec.16:
R 04/02     Lec.17:

Assignment: Quiz Questions 07

Week 12 (04/06/14)

Reading Assignment:
• Part Two: Reinventing Reality (McGonigal p.119–215)

T 04/07     Lec.18:
R 04/09     Lec.19:

Assignment: Quiz Questions 08

Week 13 (04/13/14)

Reading Assignment:
• Part Three: How Very Big Games Can Change the World (McGonigal p.219-344)

T 04/14     Lec.20:
R 04/16     Lec.21:

Assignment: Quiz Questions 09

Week 14 (04/20/14)

Reading Assignment:
• Part Three: How Very Big Games Can Change the World (McGonigal p.219-344)

T 04/21     Lec.22:
R 04/24     Lec.23:

Assignment: Quiz Questions 10

Week 15 (04/27/14)

Reading Assignment:
• Conclusion: Reality Is Better (McGonigal p.345-354)
T 04/28   Lec.24:
R 04/29   Student Evaluation: Last Day of Class

Assignment: Quiz Questions 11

Week 16 (05/04/14)

T 05/05   Reading Day (No class)

• Exam Period Begins (W 05/06 – W 05/13)

Final Exam

T 05/12   Final Exam on 1:30 pm – 4:15 pm
          Final Paper or Game Proposal Due before the Final Exam

* There will be no final exam given prior to the final exam date. Do not plan to leave before the final exam date.