GAME 230 History of Computer Game Design  
Fall 2016 – Section 002  
Thursday 10:30 AM – 1:10 PM, Art and Design Room 2001

Instructor and Contact Info
- Instructor: Josiah Lebowitz
- Office: Art and Design, Room 2015
- Office Phone: 703-993-8823
- E-Mail: jlebowi2@gmu.edu
- Office Hours: Monday: 2:30 – 4:30 PM; Wednesday/Thursday: 9:30 – 10:30 AM
- General Notes: Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns, or just to chat about the course, games, and the like. The best contact method is e-mail. I will normally reply to all course related e-mails with 24 hours (48 hours during weekends and holidays). I am generally available for phone calls and in-person visits during my office hours, but it’s best to check ahead of time and let me know when you want to come by. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be arranged at other times if necessary.

Course Description
This course provides a comprehensive survey of the history of video games. The class begins by exploring ancient games, early mechanical novelty machines, pinball and computers. The bulk of the class examines arcade games, modern console games, and game hardware. This class will detail the people, the technology, and the companies that have made video games the multibillion dollar industry that it is today. Hands-on study and analysis will include writing about, discussing, and playing games past and present.

Learning Outcomes
Students who complete this course will:
   A. Have a broad understanding of the significant early video games
   B. Be able to identify the advances in the technologies that shaped the games industry
   C. Be able to write effectively about the history of computer games/video games
   D. Be able to identify and discuss key persons in computer gaming history
   E. Understand the lineage of notable companies and games in the game industry

Requirements and Evaluation
Students should come to class prepared to discuss any and all material covered in the assigned readings. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, videos, hands-on gameplay, and group activities.

Students will show their knowledge and mastery of the material via tests and a set of short research papers focused on important games, hardware, and industry figures. These assignments will be spread evenly throughout the semester. See Blackboard for all assignment details and due dates.

Students’ final grades are calculated by comparing their scores to the maximum possible score. The breakdown is as follows:
• 70% - Projects and Assignments
• 20% - Tests
• 10% - Attendance / Class Participation

A: 90–100 B: 80–89.9 C: 70–79.9 D: 60–69.9 F: 0–59.9

**Required Texts and Materials**
The Ultimate History of Video Games: From Pong to Pokemon
By Steven L. Kent
ISBN: 0761536434

**Assumptions**
It is assumed that students are familiar with MLA and/or APA formatting or resources that contain such guidelines for writing assignments. It is also assumed that students have regular access to email and the Internet. Any issues with email or Blackboard access should be taken up with university ITU. Finally, it is assumed that students are familiar with and have regular access to Microsoft Word.

**Late Work**
Unless otherwise noted, all quizzes, assignments, and projects must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM on their due date. Anything submitted after this time will be considered late. They can still be turned in for credit, but for each day a quiz or assignment is late your score will be reduced by 5%. The final turn in date for late assignments and quizzes is one week after their original due date. After that, they will automatically receive a score of 0.

Late work will only be accepted without penalty in the case of a documented medical illness or another serious extenuating circumstance. In such cases, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

**Class Participation**
Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions and activities. While reading assignments and lecture notes will be made available online, in-class lectures and activities will contain additional information, allow students hands-on time with a wider variety of games, and also offer opportunities to earn bonus points via in-class assignments and challenges.

The use of laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc. is allowed in-class for the purposes of note taking, following along with the lecture material, and participating in certain activities. However, all devices must be in silent mode and used in a way that does not disrupt the class or otherwise disturb fellow students.

**Online Participation**
All course assignments and due dates can be found on Blackboard, along with announcements, lecture notes, and other important information. Many of the assignments must also be submitted via Blackboard. Therefore, it is recommended that students familiarize themselves with Blackboard at the start of the semester and check it regularly. If you have any non-technical questions about Blackboard and how it’s utilized as part of the course, don’t hesitate to ask.
E-Mail 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 for more information.

Students With Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the professor 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
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.

Students are expected to follow all University policies and guidelines. 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/.

GMU Add/Drop Policy
It is the student’s responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled as no credit will be awarded to students who are not. University dates concerning withdrawal can be found in the academic calendar and are not negotiable by the professor.