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.

Objectives

Students who complete this course will:
- 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
- Develop a traditional game in a team environment
- Develop a simple video game in a team environment.

Requirements and Evaluation:

At the beginning of each class, students should come prepared to discuss assigned readings and ongoing projects. A lecture will follow. Oftentimes there will be team exercises done during class.

Readings and/or short assignments will complement most lectures. Some of these readings will be quizzed during a following class.

For mid-term, students will submit and present a playable, non-digital game of their own design.

During the final exam period, students will submit and present their final projects. Students must create and submit one of the following as their project:
- Game Design Document
- 5-10 page historical paper
- A “Vertical Slice” digital game prototype done in an instructor-approved game engine

Grading Criteria:

Grading will be based on student performance in five areas of assessment:
- Participation in classroom and attendance (20%)
- Homework assignments (20%)
- Quizzes on the reading material (20%)
- Midterm presentation and project (20%)
- Final presentation and project (20%)

To receive a grade of "A" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 90% on the course work requirements.
To receive a grade of "B" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 80% on the course work requirements.
To receive a grade of "C" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 70% on the course work requirements.
To receive a grade of "D" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 60% on the course work requirements. Failure to receive a "D" grade will result in a grade of "F".

**Assignments**

Students are expected to check Blackboard on a weekly basis to preview their upcoming assignments. Digital assignments must be turned in via Blackboard.

**Participation & Attendance**

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 the course.

Each class is a building block for the next. Some of the information for the course can be found in the text, but not everything. The lecture will cover additional necessary information and discussions that you will not want to miss, so come to class. Attendance does weigh into your final grade (see Grading above). In the event that you have to miss class, you still are responsible for the material covered that day, including project or homework assignments and changes in schedules.

**Late Work and Make-up Policy**

Meeting deadlines is one of the most important aspects of game design. Please pay careful attention to the DUE DATE & TIME for each assignment. **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!!!**

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from finishing an assignment, the student must contact the instructor BEFORE the assignment is due. Late work is only accepted at the instructor’s discretion.

**Resources**

**Required Text:**


**Open Lab Sessions**

To aid students with their projects, Open lab sessions may be arranged at specific times and locations (TBD) during the semester. The instructor will be available in these open sessions to answer questions. Since these sessions are optional, there will be no lecture and no new material will be covered.

**GMU 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.

See GMU Honor Code: [http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/)

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.

Sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website [https://alert.gmu.edu](https://alert.gmu.edu), and an emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises; emergency procedures exists on: [http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert](http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert)

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