SYLLABUS: GAM 226: Fundamentals of Game Design, Autumn 2015-2016

CLASS MEETING TIME & LOCATION
Wednesday 5:45PM-9:00 PM
Location: CDM building, room 222 at Loop Campus

INSTRUCTOR
JJ Bakken
Office: CDM building, room 434
Office hours: Thursday 6:00PM – 7:30PM or anytime by appointment
E-mail: jbakken@cdm.depaul.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
GAM 226 provides students with a practical foundation in game design with a focus on concept development, design decomposition, and prototyping. Using game design theory, analysis, physical prototyping, playtesting, and iteration students learn how to translate game ideas, themes, and metaphors into gameplay and player experiences. Students will further be exposed to the basics of effective game idea communication.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Students will learn to
  • develop the vocabulary and critical understanding to describe and analyze the components of games and gameplay experiences,
  • develop a game idea from concept to playable, analogue prototype,
  • use common methods for documenting game designs such as game design documents and playtesting reports,
  • communicate their game ideas through pitch, prototype and presentation

REQUIRED MATERIALS
  • Fullerton, T. (2007). Game Design Workshop (GDW): A playcentric approach to creating innovative games. Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.

  • Other recommended reading
    • Anthropy, A. & Clark, N. (2014) A Game Design Vocabulary
    • Schell, J. (2008) The Art of Game Design. Burlington
    • Salen, K. and Zimmerman, E. (2004) Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals

D2L
We are using D2L (http://d2l.depaul.edu) as the supporting learning platform for this course. All course materials including weekly lecture slides and class info (i.e. syllabus, lesson plan, assignment descriptions etc.) are available through D2L under "contents".
Assignments are submitted to its dedicated folder on Dropbox on D2L. This is also where you will get written feedback to your assignments from me.

GRADING:

Grand total of 100 possible points (plus 2 bonus points)
A = 91+
A– = 90
B + = 89
B = 88-81
B– = 80
C + = 79
C = 78–71
C– = 70
D + = 69
D = 68– 61
D – = 60
F = 59 or lower

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW & WEIGHTED GRADE BREAK-DOWN:

Attendance and In-Class Participation: *20%*
For more details on attendance and in-class participation points, see **Course Policies** below.

Preparation Phase:
- 2 One Paragraph Game Ideas: 8% (4% each) of final grade
- Modify a broken game into a more meaningful gameplay experience 8%
- Designing a Kindness: 4%
- Narrative Game Design One Pager: 5%

Final Game Design Project:
- One Sentence Pitch: 1%
- Team Formation and Schedule Document: 4%
- One Pager: 5%
- Game Design Pillars: 4%
- 4 Progress Reports: 8% (2% each)
- Game Pitch Presentation: 15%
- Playable Prototype: 15%
- Peer Evaluation: 3%

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Game Design Journal
Get one. See it as your first act in becoming a game designer. A simple graph paper notebook will do. Use it to write down game ideas. All the time. Notice the games and gameplay opportunities in your daily life. Inspiration is everywhere. Make it your goal to jot down at least 3 ideas every day. This will help you learn to see life through the eyes of a game designer. As your game designer eyes develop (focus) you will find that game ideas will pop up everywhere and the journal will provide a place to collect them for future reference. The more you put in, the more you get out.

Prototyping Materials
Get yourself some graph paper, Legos, blank index cards, playing cards, and a bag of dice. Prototyping materials for in-class exercises will be provided by the instructor, but for your work on the final project, you will need to get your own materials. Educational supply shops, dollar shops, even your kitchen can be amazing sources for prototyping materials.

RESOURCES:
As a student in the class, you have access to the CDM Gaming labs (see http://defrag.depaul.edu for details). If you're working on an assignment, you have priority for the use of the lab hardware and software. Student ID is required to use the labs.

COURSE POLICIES

Participation and Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes and participate in class activities as scheduled. Do not underestimate the importance of attendance and participation in this class. As stated above, 20% of your grade depends on participation and attendance. You should not assume that these points are "a given". On the contrary, participation must be earned by showing up on time to every class, displaying full engagement in all discussions and activities, completing all assignments, and listening actively and attentively to the instructor and your peers.

Regarding attendance, 1 a letter grade will be docked from your final grade in the course for each absence beyond three (3). For example, if you end the class with an A, but have missed 4 classes in total, your final grade would be a C. Please make every effort to contact me and explain the circumstances of your absence before you miss class. Always check with me about any work or assignments you may have missed.

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

Attitude: A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

Civil Discourse: DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be Socially Responsible Leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

This class has a "no-screens" policy. While class is in session, your attention should not be divided between classroom activities and electronic devices, including laptops, smart phones, iPads, etc. If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undisruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

Assignment Submission: Most assignments will be submitted to Dropbox on D2L (except for presentations). Do not submit assignments by email. All assignments are due before class on the due date. Late assignments except for the last one will be accepted up to two days after the due date with a letter grade deduction for each late day (If an assignment with an "A" grade is turned in 2 days late, it will receive a "C".) After two days late, no work will be accepted.

Please note that some of the main assignments for this class consist of in-class playtesting of your projects. Since these assignments require your presence on the day of playtesting, deadlines are fixed and extensions cannot be granted.

Writing: While this class does not emphasize essay writing, game rules and text are expected to be clear, spell-checked, and demonstrate a high proficiency in written English. The Writing Center offers free one-on-one professional advice from published writers about all types of academic, creative, and professional writing and oral presentations. Go to http://condor.depaul.edu/writing/ for more information and to set up appointments.

Email: Email is the preferred means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. My email is jbakken@cdm.depaul.edu

COLLEGE POLICIES

Changes to Syllabus
This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

Online Course Evaluations
Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in CampusConnect.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Student rights
You have rights as a student. To learn about these rights please read DePaul's policies for

students regarding student rights, located here
http://sr.depaul.edu/catalog/catalogfiles/current/undergraduate%20student%20handbook/pg51.html

Incomplete*:*
An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final. For more information on requesting an Incomplete: http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx.

Academic Policies
All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the University Academic Calendar. Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

Students with Disabilities
Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussion will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of the course) and be sure to contact the following office for support and additional services:

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)
Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.
Phone number: (312)362-8002
Fax: (312)362-6544
TTY: (773)325.7296
www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/csd
csd@depaul.edu

Important Dates AQ2015:
Sept 09: Begin SQ 2015 All Classes
Sept 15: Last day to drop classes with no penalty. Last day to select pass / fail option
Sept 22: Last day to withdraw from AQ2015 classes
Nov. 18: Begin AQ2015 Day & Evening classes final exams
Nov. 24: End AQ2015 Day & Evening final exams
Nov. 26: Begin Winter Break
Dec. 03: Autumn 2015 Grades Due

LESSON PLAN

Note that the lesson plan is not part of the syllabus anymore and that some of these sessions and readings may change during the course. Please check the schedule on D2L for updates.

Sept 9 Week 1	<u>Lecture</u> Course and Syllabus Overview Introduction to Games and the Role of the Game Designer <u>Exercise</u> Brenda Romero's design exercise <u>Reading</u> GDW CH1: "Role of Game Designer" GDW CH6: "Conceptualization" GDW CH3: "Formal Elements" GDW CH5: "Working With Formal Elements" <u>Homework</u> One Paragraph Game Idea #1
Sept 16 Week 2	<u>Lecture</u> Games, What are they Made of? All You Need is Verbs <u>Exercise</u> Common Verbs game creation <u>Reading</u> A Game Design Vocabulary, CH2 (D2L, contents, week 2) Rules of Play: CH3, Meaningful Play (D2L, contents, week 2) <u>Homework</u> One Paragraph Game Idea #2
Sept 23 Week 3	<u>Lecture</u> The MDA Framework Meaningful Play <u>Exercise</u> Modify "Jason's Crappy Race Game" <u>Reading</u> MDA (D2L, content, week 3) Soren Johnson: Theme is not Meaning (D2L, content, week 3) <u>Homework</u> Modify a broken game

Sept 30 Week 4	<u>Lecture</u> The Play Experience Core Mechanics <u>Exercise</u> Seven deadly sins game design <u>Reading</u> GDW CH4: "Working with dramatic elements" GDW CH10: "Functionality, Completeness and Balance" <u>Homework</u> Designing a Kindness
Oct. 7 Week 5	<u>Lecture</u> Story and Games Balance <u>Exercise</u> Us vs. It <u>Reading</u> GDW CH12: "Team Structures" GDW CH 13: " Stages of Development" (particularly: how to make a project plan, p.382) Matthew Weise "Demon's Souls" (D2L, content, week 5) <u>Homework</u> Narrative Game design assignment Final: Team formation & Schedule document Final: One sentence pitch
Oct 14 Week 6	<u>Lecture</u> Analog prototyping and playtesting <u>Exercise</u> Analog Prototyping a digital game <u>Reading</u> GDW CH7: "Prototyping" GDW CH9: "Playtesting" <u>Homework</u> Final: One pager description Final: Project progress report #1

Oct. 21 Week 7	<u>Lecture</u> Real-Time simulation <u>Exercise</u> Shooter prototyping In-class work-session for final project <u>Homework</u> Final: Game design pillars Final: Project progress report #2
Oct 28 Week 8	<u>Lecture</u> Games Which Are Good <u>Exercise</u> In-class work-session for final project <u>Homework</u> Final: Project progress report #3
Nov. 4 Week 9	<u>Lecture</u> Game pitch presentation: what should it contain? <u>Exercise</u> In-class work-session for final project <u>Homework</u> Final: Project progress report #4 Final: Game Pitch Presentation
Nov 11 Week 10	Game Pitch Presentations <u>Exercise</u> In-class work-session for final project <u>Homework</u> Final: analog game prototype
FINAL Nov 18 Week 11	Final Game Showcase