GAM 365 Advanced Game Design

Instructor: Dr. Bobby Schweizer
Term: Fall 2016
Section: 401
Meeting time: T/Th 10:10–11:40am
Location: 14EAS (Daley) 505 at Loop Campus

Email: rschweiz@cmd.depaul.edu
(Please prefix all emails with [GAM 365])
Office: Daley 1630
Office Hours: Tue 11:45–1; Wed 2-3

Overview

This is a studio course in which students work in teams to design and develop slices of polished, small-scale gameplay experiences. The focus is on developing team-based creative and technical processes to produce innovative, engaging, and playable games. Over the course of the quarter, each team will build two different short gameplay experiences or "vertical slices" using Unity. Each slice will demonstrate an understanding of the role of game mechanics, game art, audio, and technology platform in creating a cohesive and compelling gameplay sequence. Team roles will include game design, producing, game art/animation, and programming. Teams will iterate on projects until they can show through playtests that they have met their gameplay goals. Students can use any art assets, sound effects, music, or code they can find online as long these help flesh out the vision and intent of the game projects.

Students will...

- use previously acquired game design principles and technical skills in the creation of short, polished projects,
- learn to execute methods and workflows for rapidly prototyping and iterating game designs,
- understand how to divide and share the tasks and responsibilities of a complete game development project,
- recognize the role that themes and constraints play when designing games
- learn to constructively critique each other's work

The class schedule can be found on D2L.

Work Ethic

Expect to work 20-30 hours a week on projects to do well. Do not rely on teammates to be told what to do. Be proactive and always think about how YOU could improve the game experience to meet the project's goals. Then run your ideas by your team before you do them. Seek and use DAILY feedback on your work. Get it from me, classmate, outside playtesters, roommates—anyone who'll be honest, critical, and who understands the project's goal.

Team Studio Culture

For each project, students will form a game studio and will have to figure out how to divide the labor. Teams do not have just one programmer or one artist. Everyone will be responsible for multiple roles.

Communication is key to fostering and maintaining a healthy team dynamic. You must meet in person with your team TWICE A WEEK OUTSIDE OF CLASS. Find a regular time and stick with it. You will also be joining a Trello board and Slack group for each project to facilitate rapid and fluid communication. Use

these to communicate on a daily basis. Post something you made / changed in game (screenshots / builds are good) or comment on a teammate's post.

Each student will be responsible for producing quality work in at least two of the following job fields:

Artist
Artists will work in 2D, creating icons, buttons, model textures, and game screens as well as 3D, creating models, UV mapping, rigging, and animating. A close working relationship with the programmer will be key to creating assets that will work well in the game engine.

Designer
Designers should spend at least 80% of their time WORKING IN ENGINE. Designers will develop and program prototypes, devise and implement in code, and strategically structure playtests to solicit the most meaningful feedback. A close working relationship with the programmer will be key to designing a game that has the intended play experience. Design roles include gameplay design, level design, difficulty and balance, feel and polish,

Programmer
Programmers will work with the designer to develop the game mechanics and implement the game levels, and will work with the artists to develop the GUI and HUD. Programmers, with the help of designers, will prototype game concepts in order to test their technical feasibility, playability and fun. NOTE: Messy code that that works imperfectly is infinitely better than beautiful code that takes a long time to write—holding out the empty promise of working perfectly.

Sound Designer and Music Composer
Sound designers/composers will work with the game designers to create sound effects and music that serves the narrative and theme of the game design. Downloading sound effects from the internet and remixing them into new sound effects is encouraged.

Producer
Either the professor or team members will designate a person to serve as their Producer. In addition to their other responsibilities, the producer will be responsible for project scheduling, organizing meetings, and always ensuring that the big picture of the project is always being served.

Grading

95 – 100	A
91– 94	A-
88 – 90	B+
85 – 87	B
81 – 84	B-
77 – 80	C+
73 – 76	C
69 – 72	C-
65 – 68	D+
61 – 64	D
0-60	F

Vertical Slice #1 Comedy Games
- Prototype 5%
- Alpha Build 10%
- Beta Build 10%
- Polished Demo: 15%
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Vertical Slice #2 Humor Games
- Prototype 5%
- Alpha Build 10%
- Beta Build 10%
- Polished Demo: 15%
-

Participation in Class and Team: 20% (Be active, vocal, and courteous.)

Participation & Attendance: Your participation in class will be measured during discussions, design exercises, and playtests. During discussion, you are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows me to get to know you, which will give me

insight into your assignments. Both those who *give help* and those who *ask for help* are considered to be active participants in class.

Being a good game designer means being involved in a community of peers to give and receive feedback and attendance is a significant part of this. You can't participate if you're not in class! If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to make up the work. If you must be absent, email your team. Excused absences must go through the Office of the Dean of Students.

You are expected to attend all classes and participate in class activities as scheduled. If you miss a class for any reason, you are expected to follow up with the instructor and your team, and find out what was missed and make up any work. A note from a doctor or nurse will be required for an absence to be excused. The third unexcused absence, and each subsequent absence, will result in an automatic final grade deduction of one letter grade. Being late to class counts as 1/3 of an absence. More than 4 absences will result in automatic failure of the course.

Late assignments: will only be accepted within three days of the due date. Each day the assignment is late will decrease the possible point value by 20%. You must email me if a project is going to be late.

Incomplete: An Incomplete grade is given only for an exceptions approved by the Office of the Dean of Students. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be submitted at least two weeks before the final exam. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

RESOURCES

Labs: As a student in the class, you have access to the CDM Gaming and computer 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

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 while someone else 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, you may be asked to leave the classroom. I will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such 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. Again, I will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Digital Devices: While class is in session, your attention should not be divided between classroom activities and your laptops, smart phones, iPads, etc. (unless you've been asked to play a game or do research). Set your phone ringers to silent. Should you need to answer a call during class, please leave the room in an undisruptive manner. Out of respect to everyone in the room, texting/messaging 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.

Writing: While this class does not emphasize essay writing, design reflections 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 rschweiz@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 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

To learn about your rights as a student please read DePaul's policies 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: http://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.ed

LESSON PLAN

Please note that some of these sessions may change during the course. Always check the schedule on D2L for updates.

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 (Sept 8)		"Introductions" and "Theories of Comedy"
Week 2 (Sept 13, 15)	"Finding the Humor"	Due: Two Humorous Interactions
(September 20 is the last day to drop classes with no penalty)		
Week 3 (Sept 20, 22)	Due: Prototype	Studio
Week 4 (Sept 27, 29)	Due: Present Alpha Build	Studio & Check-in
Week 5 (Oct 4, 6)	Due: Beta Build & Playtesting	Studio
Week 6 (Oct 11, 13)	Due: Polished Comedy Vertical Slice	"Introducing Affection"
Week 7 (Oct 18, 20)	Due: Pitches	Studio
(October 25 is the last day to withdraw from AQ2016 classes)		
Week 8 (Oct 25, 27)	Due: Rough Prototype	Studio
Week 9 (Nov 1, 3)	Due: Present Alpha Build	Studio & Check-in
Week 10 (Nov 8, 10)	Due: Beta Build & Playtesting	Studio
Week 11 (Nov 15, 17)	Studio	FINAL: 8:30AM–10:45PM Due: Polished Affection Vertical Slice