

# GAM 229: Presentation & Communication – Autumn 2020

## INSTRUCTOR

Ross A. Hersemann

Email: [rhersema@depaul.edu](mailto:rhersema@depaul.edu)

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 4:30pm – 5:30pm

Schedule Office Hours:

<https://calendly.com/rosshersemann/gam-229-office-hours>

## COURSE INFORMATION

GAM 229 – 401

Time: Mondays 5:45pm – 9:00pm

Virtual Classroom: Join URL:

<https://depaul.zoom.us/j/96705290630>

Password: N3xtl3v3l!

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

GAM 229 focuses on effective oral communication for designers in the professional world and beyond. While teaching communication skills for a variety of social contexts within the game industry, GAM 229 aims to raise students' awareness for the "human" aspects of becoming an effective communicator and offers experimental, creative solutions to communication problems, such as team or client issues. Based on psychology research and playful methodologies, this course offers insights on what it takes to "hear others" and "be heard" as well as experiments with creating constructive, productive, playful work environments and team relationships. This course targets all design disciplines and deliberately avoids any domain specific subjects.

PREREQUISITE(S): none

## LEARNING GOALS:

In this course, students learn to

- Break down and communicate design ideas
- Prepare and give compelling oral presentations in various formats and contexts
- Develop an identity as a presenter / designer

- Become an effective, compassionate communicator
- Acquire a toolbox of creative techniques to improve "presence" and address and resolve communication and collaboration issues

## REQUIRED MATERIALS:

No required textbook.

Useful books and other resources will be suggested throughout the course.

Complementary reading and other supportive materials will also be posted on D2L under contents.

## OFFICE HOURS

I will hold office hours by appointment on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:30pm – 5:30pm. You can schedule a time to connect with me via phone conference using the Calendly link at the top of this page.

## ZOOM

We will meet for each class virtually using Zoom, a video conferencing tool. Zoom allows people to gather in a virtual room and meet synchronously. We're going to use Zoom to meet as a whole class and in breakout rooms.

During our sessions, I'll be sharing materials, facilitating discussions, and checking in with you. I'll also be recording our sessions and uploading them to our D2L course site.

## D2L

We are using D2L <http://d2l.depaul.edu> as the learning platform for this course. All course materials including weekly lecture slides and class info (syllabus, slides, assignments, 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.

## EVALUATION & GRADING

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Presentations	50%
Assignments	30%

Attendance: Points for every class attended

Participation: Contributions to class discussions and activities; presentations

Presentations:

- Networking (10%)
- Convention (10%)
- Interview (10%)
- Pitch (20%)

Assignments: 6 written reflections (5%) each

Detailed descriptions of all assignments will be posted week by week in D2L

## GRADING SCALE

Letter grades will be based on the minimum percentages of total points earned

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	50% or lower

## COURSE POLICIES

In addition to [CDM Academic Policies](#) and [DePaul University Policies](#), the following policies will apply to this course:

**Email:** Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time.

Students should verify that their email listed under “demographics information” at <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu> is correct.

Some guidelines for your emails:

- Be clear and concise in your subject line; ex: “GAM-229 – question about assignment X”
- DO NOT reply to class-wide email unless it pertains specifically to the subject of that email
- Begin a new email thread for ANY NEW question, notification, etc.
- Expect a reply within 48 hours during the week. Expect a delayed (or no) response on weekends. If you do not get a response within 2 business days, please resend as there may be an email issue, or it was immediately buried under the crushing weight of all my other emails, and consequently overlooked.

## Course Lectures / Reading Assignments:

The assigned and recommended readings/viewings/etc offer an opportunity for independent learning that supplements the lectures. Lectures will introduce material not available in the readings, and the readings will explore concepts not mentioned in class.

All documents delivered in this class 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.

**Late assignments:** In order to receive any credit for an assignment, you must communicate with me at least 24 hours before the due date/time regarding it being late. Late assignments will have points reduced. No assignment will be accepted more than 7 days late without proof of a medical excuse. Very few assignments can actually be turned in late in this class. Some of the main assignments for this class require your

presence in class on the due date or provide the basis for in-class exercises. Extensions on these assignments cannot be granted. If you do not manage to deliver these assignments on time, you receive 0 points for them.

**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. Showing up, after all, is a core ingredient of communicating and presenting effectively. Further, presentations are a community endeavor. No audience, no presentation – you are only talking to yourself. Do your colleagues the courtesy of being a supportive audience. Your contribution is crucial.

An absence is defined as not showing up for class, arriving 30 minutes late or leaving 30 minutes early. All absences will result in a reduction of the attendance / participation grade. 3 absences, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

Being absent on a day you are assigned to present will result in a grade of zero for that presentation assignment. You will know your presentation date for each assignment at least one week before the presentations begin. Since you will be aware of your schedule well in advance, no unforeseen conflicts should arise and thus no make-up presentations will be permitted. Should dire circumstances render you physically unable to present on the agreed-upon day, you must make every effort to contact me and explain your circumstances prior to the class. Examples of circumstances that would make you physically unable to present include a highly contagious illness, accidents, or deaths in the family. If you have a cold or other minor illness, you will still be expected to present. The presentation grade will account for the fact that you were not at your physical best.

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the [Dean of Students office](#).

**Class Participation:** Student participation is crucial to this class. Students are encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the class topics. Students are encouraged to offer answers, insights, and best guesses to questions posed in class. Being prepared, making the most of class time, and being fully present and engaged add towards the class experience and your participation points. Productive critiques of your own and everyone else's work is critical.

**Virtual Participation:** This course will meet virtually each session via Zoom. I'll be sharing materials, facilitating discussions, and checking in with you via live video stream. You are expected to be present in the Zoom Room, on time, ready to participate. Consider it your virtual classroom and the same rules for acceptable conduct apply. Be present.

This course is lecture and presentation based. Secure video and audio channels are a prerequisite for participation in this course.

**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 hospitality can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course.

**Preferred Name and Gender Pronouns:** Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun if you advise me of this preference. Students who choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and update their gender. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the [Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy](#).

**Plagiarism:** It is your professional responsibility to ensure that all submitted work is your own. Please read DePaul's policy on plagiarism and other academic integrity violations at: <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/ContributionFolder/Resources/Students/ViolationDefinitions.html#aiPlagiarism>

**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 and approved by the Dean of the School of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

**Important Dates AQ 2020:**

Sept. 9 <sup>th</sup>	Begin AQ2020
Sept. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Last day to drop AQ 2020 classes with no penalty
Oct. 27 <sup>th</sup>	Last day to withdraw from AQ 2020 classes
Nov. 17 <sup>th</sup>	End AQ 2020 Day & Evening Classes
Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup>	Last day to select pass/fail option for AQ 2020 classes

## SCHEDULE

9/14	<p><b>Lecture: Course Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instructor Introduction</li><li>• Syllabus Introduction</li><li>• Zoom &amp; D2L Introduction</li><li>• Student Introductions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Share your name, career goals, and how 2020 has affected you</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Lecture: Welcome to the Playspace</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is “playspace”? Why should we have one?</li><li>• What is improv? Why use it in a presentation &amp; communication class?</li></ul> <p><b>Reading: What Gamers Can Teach Us</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jane-mcgonigal/watch-now-1up-your-life_b_3876195.html">http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jane-mcgonigal/watch-now-1up-your-life_b_3876195.html</a></li></ul> <p><b>Homework: Assignment 1</b></p>
9/21	<p><b>Lecture: Dealing with Jitters &amp; Presentation as Conversation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How we transcend anxiety.</li></ul> <p><b>Lecture: Authenticity, Point of View, &amp; Purpose</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>TED talk: Simon Sinek: How great leaders inspire action:</b> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action/up">https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action/up</a></li><li>• <b>Stanford: Purpose learning:</b> <a href="http://www.stanford2025.com/purpose-learning/">http://www.stanford2025.com/purpose-learning/</a></li><li>• <b>TED talk: Tony Robbins: Why we do what we do</b> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_robbins_asks_why_we_do_what_we_do">https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_robbins_asks_why_we_do_what_we_do</a></li></ul>
9/28	<p><b>Lecture: The Power of Story</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>TED talk: Nancy Duarte: the structure of great speeches:</b> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks">https://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks</a></li></ul> <p><b>Lecture: Working a Room</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Networking scenes, strategies &amp; keys to success</li></ul>
10/5	<p><b>Presentation: Networking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will participate in Zoom room breakout sessions during class and will interact with their classmates.</li><li>• First, the discussions will be casual and feature introductions and small talk related to current events and shared experiences.</li><li>• Next the discussions will be more professional in tone, focusing on student work experience, career ambitions, and "shop talk."</li><li>• Grading will be based on active student participation in discussion and attendance.</li></ul> <p><b>Homework: Assignment 2</b></p>

10/12	<p><b>Lecture: Working a Convention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convention scenes, strategies &amp; keys to success as an attendee</li> </ul> <p><b>Lecture: Demoing at a Convention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demo strategies for conventions</li> </ul>
10/19	<p><b>Presentation: Convention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will showcase a game of their choosing to the class via Zoom Room as if they were a convention exhibitor.</li> <li>• Students should be prepared to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The game, its premise, mechanics, art style, other features.</li> <li>○ Their involvement in and contributions to making / selling the game</li> <li>○ Relevant information like what platform the game is on, when it available, etc</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The content of the conversation is less important than the salesmanship.</li> <li>• Grading will be based on active student participation in discussion and attendance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework: Assignment 3</b></p>
10/26	<p><b>Lecture: Preparation &amp; Nailing the Interview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview scenes, strategies &amp; keys to success</li> </ul> <p><b>Lecture: AMA with Professor Hersemann</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask me anything about the Chicago video game community, networking, public speaking, video game law, etc</li> </ul>
11/2	<p><b>Presentation: Interview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will participate in a mock interview via Zoom Room as if they were interviewing for a job at Next Level Studios.</li> <li>• Available jobs include, but are not limited to: Producer, Game Designer, Programmer, Artist, Audio Engineer, or QA Tester.</li> <li>• Students should be prepared to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduce themselves &amp; indicate which job you're applying for</li> <li>○ Answer 3 questions related to the job, your experience, or your vision</li> <li>○ Ask 1 question related to the job, logistics, our company culture, or other concern</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Grading will be based on active student participation in discussion and attendance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework: Assignment 4</b></p>

11/9	<p><b>Lecture: Designing the Presentation; Visual Aids</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tom Phillips:</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xXORdq-Otk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xXORdq-Otk</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Lecture: Delivery, Star Moments, Body Language</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>TED talk: Amy Cuddy: Your body language may shape who you are</b> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are">https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are</a></li> <li>• Morgan, Nick. "<a href="#">How to Become an Authentic Speaker</a>." <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, November 2008.</li> <li>• <a href="https://hbr.org/2008/11/how-to-become-an-authentic-speaker">https://hbr.org/2008/11/how-to-become-an-authentic-speaker</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Lecture: Making the Pitch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch scenes, strategies &amp; keys to success</li> </ul>
11/16	<p><b>Presentation: Pitch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will give a Pitch Presentation via Zoom Room as if they were pitching a game to Next Level Studios.</li> <li>• Their task is to pitch a game to a division of Next Level Studio LLC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Studio Division Your goal is that they will develop &amp; produce your game</li> <li>○ Publisher Division Your goal is that they will market and distribute your game</li> <li>○ Investor Division Your goal is that they will finance your game</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students may choose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A game of their own creation</li> <li>○ An existing game or unreleased prototype</li> <li>○ A hypothetical sequel, reboot, or remaster</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Remember: The game chosen is less important than the substantive support and style of the pitch itself. That said, existing games will have more information available to fill slides, so take that into account.</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework: Assignment 5 &amp; 6</b></p>

## DEPAUL UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**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.

**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 under [Enrollment Policies](#).

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability

should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at:

[csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu). Lewis Center 1420,  
25 East Jackson Blvd.  
Phone number: (312)362-8002  
Fax: (312)362-6544  
TTY: (773)325.7296

### Grading on Pass/D/Fail Basis

Click on this link to learn [How to change your grading basis](#)

More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/faqs/Pages/classes-academics-students.aspx>