



GAM 440-901: Games with a Purpose

SQ 2021 :: M 5:45PM - 9:00PM, online synchronous



Instructor Info

Lien Tran, M.F.A.
Email: lien.tran@depaul.edu
Pronouns: she, her, hers

Office Hours: by appointment via BlueStar
Location: Zoom

Regarding email communication: I will usually respond to emails within a few hours between 9AM - 5 PM Monday through Friday. Please do not expect responses over the weekend or in the late evening.



Course Description

This game design course focuses on the rapid yet deliberate creation of a game with a purpose beyond entertainment. Every two weeks, students are expected to deliver a significant iteration for a game project that addresses a real-life issue, has a clear statement of intent (including player transformations) and uses specific properties of games as a medium to achieve its declared purpose with the intention of being used in a real-world context. Students will also study existing games as case studies including playing, discussing, and learning about the design process and challenges of these purposeful games.

For Spring 2021: Students will work in teams on researching, designing, and prototype playful experiences for implementation consideration by the World Wildlife Fund (US chapter). These

projects must relate to a current campaign topic **plastics in nature** and will be ideated upon in consultation with WWF-US's Activism and Outreach program.



Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the quarter, you will be able to:

- Describe the field, its potential, and the limits of Games with a Purpose
- Articulate and leverage game's medium-specific expressive and persuasive potentials to promote player transformations and achieve specific goals
- Apply this understanding of games' expressive and persuasive potential to concrete projects, following a deliberate, intentional and rigorously iterative design process
- Demonstrate effective communication with clients, including developing a common vision for the game, gathering the necessary research and background materials and finding creative, effective solutions to the problem statements posed by clients
- Conceptualize, prototype, playtest and evaluate GWAP and their potential impact in regard to their stated purposes

Writing Expectations

Game documents are designed to be pleasing visually, proper grammar and spelling are expected. Game analysis papers must be written using a thesis statement in which the student is then expected to prove their thesis in the rest of the paper.



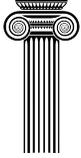
Required Materials

- [Transformational Framework](#) by Sabrina Haskell Culyba (digital copy is free to download)
- A rapid prototyping kit that includes:
 - A box or pack to keep materials together
 - Scissors
 - 1 d6 (six-sided die)
 - index cards
 - tape
 - loose-leaf paper
 - markers/colored pencils
 - a pen or pencil
 - Standard deck of cards (54 with Jokers)
 - Game pieces (from existing games or coins could work)
- Assigned games will be made available to students.
 - Ability to print (with advanced notice) is ideal in order to play certain games.

- Additional readings will be posted on D2L in the “Content” section. Students are expected to apply these to weekly discussions.
- Games and Software
 - MURAL.co - design thinking and collaboration tool; provided free to members of the class
 - Playingcards.io - free way to play and digitize components for tabletop games
Twine software - Windows, OSX, Chrome browser (not Safari)
<http://twinery.org/>
 - Bury Me My Love (\$2.99) - <https://www.thepixelhunt.com/categorie/bmml>

Optional Books

- Grace, L. *Doing Things with Games*. CRC Press. 2019. ISBN 9780429429880
 - <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/things-games-lindsay-grace/10.1201/9780429429880>
- Burak, A. and Parker, L. *Power Play*. St. Martin's Press. 2017. ISBN 9781250089342
 - <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250089342>
- Macklin, C. and Sharp, J. *Games, Design, and Play*. Addison-Wesley Professional. 2016. ISBN 9780134392233
 - eBook available freely for DePaul students with institutional credentials through the library and O'Reilly for Higher Education:
https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_DPU/1ihqd0q/alma9912834327305831
- Schell, Jesse. *Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses (3rd edition)*. CRC Press. 2019. ISBN 9781138632097
 - eBook available freely for DePaul students with institutional credentials through the library
https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_DPU/8tvalj/cdi_safari_books_9781351803632
- *Reality Is Broken* by Jane McGonigal
- *Super Better* by Jane McGonigal
- *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames* by Ian Bogost
- *Serious Games* by Clark Abt (no longer in print and therefore hard to find)
- *Rules of Play* by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman
- *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* by Donella Meadows
- *The Well-Played Game* by Bernard De Koven
- *Impact with games: A fragmented field* by Benjamin Stokes
- *Beyond Fun* edited by Drew Davidson



Course Structure

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.

Synchronous Meetings

Students will have access to the Zoom meetings using their DePaul University credentials to login. Scheduled meetings will be recorded and posted to D2L. I am not requiring you to have or use a webcam for this class, but if you do have one, I would greatly appreciate it if you turned it on during our course meetings. It is more energizing and connective to talk seeing you all instead of a screen of black boxes with names.

Students will work in small groups on their game design projects as well as pitching ideas for class feedback. You will also playtest each others' games. Depending on the week, these will be done in the latter part of a synchronous class session or at a time agreed upon by your team. The class will also have opportunities to meet with and present to subject matter experts from our client partner organization, World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US), throughout the term.



Grading Breakdown

Class sessions will combine lectures on game design topics, with analysis of particular games and in-class activities designing and playing games. Students are expected to attend all classes and do the assigned reading, homework, and gameplay before class time.

Student progress will be assessed through a combination of homework assignments, game analysis papers on a game of student's choice, a group game design project, and class participation.

Syllabus Quiz	*
Attendance	5%
In-class participation and engagement	15%
Discussion Board submissions	15%
Game Design Document **	5%
Prototype #1 / concept **	15%
Prototype #2 **	10%
Prototype #3 **	10%

A	93-100
A-	92-90
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72

Final Game Prototype ** (final presentation)	15%
Game Design Post Mortem	10%

* Students must complete *Syllabus Quiz* on D2L before they are eligible to start earning points for the course.

** Assignments completed and evaluated as a team.

D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	59-

Students wishing to **contest a grade** may do so during office hours or by appointment a minimum of 24 hours and a maximum of a week after assignments have been returned.



Assignment Info

All assignments are due on the indicated date at the beginning of class. Below is a brief summary of each assignment. More detailed instructions will be provided on assignment sheets on D2L.

Assignments (except for designated group assignments) must represent a student's individual effort. While students are permitted to discuss assignments at the conceptual level, under no circumstances should students share specific answers (electronically or otherwise). You must credit/cite anything content, image, writing, or idea that is not your own.

*Unless there are unforeseen circumstances, assignments will usually be graded and returned within one week of the due date.

Attendance / In-class participation and engagement

Some credit is earned for showing up (attendance points). Most credit is earned by engaging in the class activity; participating in your group's presentations as well as listening to other presentations and providing constructive feedback; attending and being prepared for your individual team meetings with your instructor.

Game + Design discussion board submissions

Every week, you will discuss the assigned games, lecture, and/or readings via the D2L discussion board.

Game Design Document

Design documents - along with the Transformational Framework templates - are used to record (evolving) design decisions, including things like a game's design values (see Games, Design, and Play Ch. 6 for more on design values). For each game project, a design document should be created from the provided Google Doc design document template and updated through the semester. This file must also be shared with your instructor on Google Drive. If

students work as part of a team, each team member should be added to the shared Google Doc and each member will receive credit for this assignment based on their contribution to the evolution of this document over the course of the semester.

Client-based Game Design Project

Over the quarter, students will work in small teams to develop a polished game for our partnering organization to consider implementing and making it public-facing. Each team will need to produce a pitch, design document, iterate on a playable prototype, and playtest throughout the term. The final project will be the finished, polished, and playable game posted online. (Games consisting of mini-games are not allowed unless otherwise indicated.) This project will be scaffolded into smaller assignments, allowing more opportunities for feedback. These include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Game Pitch and Initial Concept | Week 3-5 |
| 2. Alpha Prototype | Week 7 |
| 3. Beta Prototype | Week 9 |
| 4. Polished Prototype | Week 11 (finals week) |

Game Issue/Topic Research and Presentations

A critical requirement to designing social impact games (also known as transformational games, games for change) is doing research on the central topic of the game and/or desired outcome for the game. What type of research is most relevant will depend on the topics selected by our client partner. All students are required to do due diligence in understanding the issue they will address via a game system - including common misconceptions; critical messages and takeaways; ideal calls to action - in order to adequately prototype several iterations.

Game Design Post Mortem

A short report at the end of a project about the prototyping process along with analysis of the successes and failures of the design process and the game itself (including all iterations).

- Include rationale behind your design decisions and future possibilities for the game. Be honest. Don't be afraid to share shortcomings or failures. You will learn from both of these.
- This is an individual submission to document your design process. This should be portfolio-worthy.
- Start organizing your progress and thoughts along the way. For example take notes re: conversations, ideas, and/or decisions made about the game. Any relevant diagrams or photos, including annotations/captions, that will help you recall the game design process when it comes time to write your post mortem. Throughout each game design project, document all playtests. You should record video and take photos of players playing the game. This will help you to write a thoroughly reflective post mortem.
- Summarize the evolution of your game pitch, game concept, and game rules.

- Describe what you attempted to do with each iteration. You should document at least 3 distinct iterations, supported by video evidence.



Late Work, Absences, Make-Ups, and Extra Credit

Late work will receive a 10% penalty for every course meeting following the due date/time. *Exception:* Students with extreme circumstances should contact the Dean of Students Office who will then contact your instructors (including me) and we will work out an alternative approach.

Makeup Work: Students are allowed to resubmit work for regrading. The student will submit a brief document addressing how they incorporated feedback from the initial assignment along with the iterated assignment. All work considered for regrading must be submitted by Week 10. If the original submission was late, the resubmission will only be eligible for the number of total points possible minus any late penalties (if an assignment was submitted 2 course meetings late, a resubmission may receive up to 80%).

Extra credit will be given at the instructor’s discretion, this usually involves attending a design or games related lecture and writing a reflection.



Course Schedule

Games will be assigned regularly to be played during class time and outside of class time. The schedule below only outlines high-level deadlines and deliverables regarding the client-based design project. Detailed assignments and related videos or reading links/files will be provided via D2L.

Week	Class Activities	Assignments
Week 1 3/29	Course Overview	Form 5 design research teams and begin research and brainstorming
Week 2 4/5	WWF to join class (tentative) Ideation, Part 1	Begin using the Transformational Framework
Week 3 4/12	Team presentations: share findings and ideas; feedback provided	
Week 4 4/19	WWF to join class (tentative) Pitching plus Ideation, Part 2	
Week 5 4/26	Finalize selected concepts Form new project teams	Prototype #1: Project Concept due (game objective, audience, platform)

Week 6 5/3	Group check-in with professor	
Week 7 5/10	WWF to join class (tentative) Present progress for feedback	Prototype #2 due (outline of game goals; game system and its rules; player transformations)
Week 8 5/17	Design + Playtest + Feedback session	
Week 9 5/24	Group check-in with professor	Prototype #3 due
Week 10 5/31	Design + Playtest + Feedback session	
Week 11 - Finals Week 6/7	Final scheduled with WWF: Monday 06/07 2:30pm-4:45pm	Submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Game (Prototype #4) • Major Project Postmortem

Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.



Resources for Students

Writing Center

I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as

well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit www.depaul.edu/writing for more information.

Idea Realization Lab (IRL)

The Idea Realization Lab is a resource available to the entire DePaul University community, from students to alumni, faculty, and staff. They provide machines, tools, and materials at no cost, and offer workshops to teach visitors how to use the equipment safely. Their goal is to foster a spirit of collaboration and to promote creativity across the campus and throughout the city of Chicago.

I encourage you to make use of the IRL, including prototyping your design and getting a consultation from the staff there. This space is a great resource for all levels of the design and development process. Visit <http://irl.depaul.edu/> for more information.

Contact Info:

Email: idearealizationlabdpu@gmail.com

Phone: (312) 362-1451

Location:

Room 310

14 E Jackson Blvd

The Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) is primarily responsible for meeting the urgent needs of students by providing clear and critical support structures in times of need. Additionally, the department helps develop and maintain community standards in order to facilitate a safe and healthy campus environment for our students. The Dean of Students Office provides the administrative withdrawal and absence notification processes, and can help students identify campus and community resources in times of personal and/or family crises and medical emergencies.

The Dean of Students Office at DePaul University promotes student learning and ethical decision making in an inclusive and student-centered environment. Utilizing a comprehensive approach to student advocacy that is informed by DePaul's Catholic, Vincentian, and urban mission, the office collaborates with students, staff, faculty, parents and community partners to support students in reaching their academic and personal success.

Contact Info:

Phone: 773-325-7290

Email: deanofstudents@depaul.edu

Or visit their [Website](#)

Location:

Lincoln Park Campus

Student Center, Suite 307

2250 N. Sheffield Ave.



DePaul and College-Specific Policies

NAME & 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. Please advise me of this preference early in the

quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332

RESOURCES FOR 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) by emailing csd@depaul.edu and/or visiting one of the locations below.

Loop Campus

Lewis Center Suite 1420
25 East Jackson Blvd
phone: (312) 362-8002
fax: (312) 362-6544
tty: (773) 325-7296

Lincoln Park Campus

Student Center, Suite #370
2250 N Sheffield Ave
phone: (773) 325-1677
fax: (773) 325-3720
tty: (773) 325-7296

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.depaul.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PLAGIARISM

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found on DePaul's [academic integrity website](#). If you have any questions, be sure to consult with your professor.

SEXUAL AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

As a DePaul community, we share a commitment to take care of one another. Classroom relationships are based on trust and communication. Sometimes, material raised in class may bring up issues for students related to sexual and relationship violence. In other instances, students may reach out to faculty as a source of help and support. It is important for students to know that faculty are required to report information reported to them about experiences with sexual or relationship violence to DePaul's Title IX Coordinator. Students should also know that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence in course assignments or discussion does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response.

Students seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7777; Loop: 312-362-8400) or the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7290; Loop: 312-362-8066 or titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu).

Students seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or hpw@depaul.edu). More information is available at the [Office of Health Promotion and Wellness website](#). Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services and to seek help around sexual and relationship violence for themselves as well as their peers who may be in need of support.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL AND OTHER 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 registration policies can be found at [DePaul Central](#).

WITHDRAWAL

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (campusconnect.depaul.edu). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL

Administrative Withdrawal Appeals are submitted to and processed by the Dean of Students Office, and allow students to be retroactively withdrawn from classes for medical, mental health or personal crises even after the term has ended. More information is available on the [Division of Student Affairs](#) website.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the [Absence Notification form](#) through the [Dean of Students office](#). Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

SYLLABUS CHANGES AND ERRORS

The instructor may make changes and updates to the course syllabus and schedule as needed. Students will be notified of any changes. If you find any broken links, outdated information, or other content that just seems “off” somehow, please let me know so I can fix it. I really do appreciate students helping me find and fix mistakes or confusing wording in my materials.



Resources for Students in Need of Support

Safety and Mental health safety are important. If you find yourself in a state of distress, depression, or unsafe circumstances, please make use of any of the following resources should you seek counseling.

DEPAUL STUDENT COUNSELING

Full time and Part time DePaul students may schedule appointments with the University Counseling Service Info here:

<https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/counseling/Pages/default.aspx>

The front desk staff is working remotely and will answer your call directly. If they are taking another call, please leave a message and your call will be returned within a business day. **If you would like to be contacted by a counselor please call (773) 325-7779 or (312) 362-6923.**

OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION AND WELLNESS

Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) provides holistic education, support and resources for individuals to establish and sustain long-term, healthy behaviors.

In light of the COVID-19 impact on the University, the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness programs and services remain open and can be accessible to students remotely. Students can meet with a staff member via Zoom. Appointments can be requested by calling 773-325-7129 or [completing this online intake form](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES EXTERNAL TO DEPAUL

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Phone: 1-800-273-8255

Online chat feature: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Available 24/7. Offers help in more than 200 languages. All calls are free and confidential.

Phone: 1-800-799-7233

Chat online with someone: <https://www.thehotline.org/>

The Trevor Project

For young LGBTQ persons in crisis or in need of someone to talk to:

Phone: 1-866-488-7386

Text START to 678678

Chat online by visiting: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/>

Trans Lifeline

A peer support hotline run by trans people for trans people.

Phone: 877-565-8860