
GAM 240: Playgramming

Winter 2023-24

Course Modality: Course meets MW 10:10AM - 11:40AM in CDM 00819 at Loop Campus

Instructor Info

Instructor: Richard Wetzel (he/him)

Office: Daley 205D

Phone: 312-362-6955

Email: richard.wetzel@depaul.edu

Office Hours: M 12:45PM – 1:30PM and W 1:30PM – 2:15PM
(in person or <https://depaul.zoom.us/my/richardwetzel>)

Communication: Email is the best way to reach me, and I will typically respond within 2 working days. I am not checking email outside of normal work hours or on weekends. Before emailing, please check if the answer can be found in this syllabus.

Course Description

This workshop introduces computer programming to artists and game designers. Programming is an art, but before students can create masterpieces they first need to explore, play, and sketch with code. Students learn basic concepts and techniques of computation and apply these to craft gameplay experiences, improvisational experiments, and software toys. Students will author code from scratch and remix code to complete their weekly projects. No prior programming experience or knowledge is required.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Program simple playful applications
 - Analyze, debug, and refactor code
 - Apply core programming concepts to solve algorithmic problems
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Recommended Materials

McCarthy, Lauren, Casey Reas, and Ben Fry. Getting Started with P5.js: Making Interactive Graphics in JavaScript and Processing. 1st edition. San Francisco, CA: Make Community, LLC, 2015.

Start learning here! – YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRqwX-V7Uu6Zy51Q-x9tMWlv9cueOFTFA>

Course Schedule

The course schedule can be divided roughly into two parts. In the first 6 weeks of class we will cover the basics of programming by using p5.js (<https://p5js.org/>). The remaining 4 weeks we will focus on your final projects and dive into some deeper programming topics.

Approach

The course has no formal requirements. There is no assumption that you already have pre-existing experience in programming; we will start from zero.

Programming, however, is a challenging skill to pick up from scratch. As with any course, it is therefore required that you engage with the course material substantially outside of class time as well.

The main thing to be successful in this course is to constantly challenge yourself. This applies not only to students without previous knowledge but also to more experienced programmers taking this course. The main basis for grades in this course will be how much you personally grow and learn.

We will regularly have a meta discussion about the course. These discussions will e.g., relate to specific topics that should be covered, pace of the course, content of assignments and their grading, and other course modalities. In short, you as individuals and cohort will be able to shape the course so that it matches your needs and interests. However, this requires that you actively participate in these discussions and reflect on your own learning and learning requirements.

If you are struggling in the course, please let me know! Either in class, by email, or by making use of my office hours. I am there to help you, and asking questions is always appreciated.

Class Policies

Changes to the Syllabus

This class will be shaped based on your participation, input, and interests. This means that not only the lesson plan but also this syllabus might be adapted during the term. We will discuss any changes during class, and the new syllabus will be uploaded to D2L, and announced via email.

This is syllabus version 1.0.

Attendance

It is highly recommended to attend every class, and your attendance record is part of your final grade. However, sometimes things come up, or you have other priorities, and this is totally fine. For example, if you are feeling sick, please do not attend class.

If you cannot attend a class for any reason, email me before class starts. The non-attendance will be classified as “excused” and not negatively affect your grade. In your email, you do not need to provide any personal details.

Late Work

It is recommended that you submit your assignments on time as they build on each other, and otherwise you might fall further behind. However, sometimes missing a deadline is unavoidable.

To avoid grade penalties, you must email me before the submission deadline. You do not need to provide personal details about your reasons. You will then be allowed to submit your

work up to one week late. However, no guarantee for timely marking and/or feedback can be given under these circumstances.

If you submit late work without emailing beforehand, you will receive a grade penalty of one-third per full day or part thereof that your submission is late. E.g. submitting 60 seconds or 23 hours late would both decrease a B- to a C+. Submitting 25 or 47 hours late would decrease a B- to a C.

Revisions

You can resubmit each piece of work once. Changes to your original submission must be clearly highlighted. A resubmission can only improve your original grade by up to one whole letter grade (e.g. going from C+ to B+). Revisions must be submitted within one week of original grade publications.

Late submissions can never be revised.

Assignments

There are two types of assignments in this class:

- A. 8 short assignments spread out over the term. These will typically be programming tasks but might also take on other forms such as quizzes.
- B. 2 individual self-chosen projects due in week 6 (smaller scope) and 11 (bigger scope).

Assignments typically consist of a code submission via D2L and accompanying “developer diaries” outlining your process, issues you encountered, and a personal reflection.

Details of the assignments will be discussed in class, and you will find instructions on D2L.

Grading

Assignments of type A are graded as pass/fail.
Together, they will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Assignments of type B will receive letter grades.
Assignment B1 will be worth 30% of the final grade.
Assignment B2 will be worth 45% of the final grade.

The attendance record will be worth 5% of the final grade.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D	60-69
B-	80-82	F	0-59

Extra Credit

You will be able to gain extra credit for activities that either benefit this course directly or show a deeper personal engagement with games, game design, programming, or other

related topics. Examples include but are not limited to attending relevant events and reflecting on them, tutoring classmates, creating sample projects to share, etc.

If you have an idea for something that might be worth extra credit, talk to me about details and specific requirements! I will point out specific opportunities during the term. Multiple submissions are possible. You can gain a maximum of 10 grade points this way.

Use of AI

Generative AI tools are trained on existing texts, algorithms, and models to generate content like writing, images, and videos based on prompts from users. ChatGPT, Midjourney, Google Bard, and DALL-E are examples of generative AI tools. Please refrain from using generative AI in this course for any purpose. We will be developing skills that are important to practice on your own and using generative AI may inhibit development, practice, or understanding of those skills.

In addition, many AI tools have also been trained unethically which makes their use inappropriate.

If you are unsure if a specific tool makes use of AI, or if a specific tool is permitted for use on assignments in this course, please contact me. Attempting to pass off AI-generated work as your own will violate [DePaul's Academic Integrity Policy](#).

University Policies & Resources

COVID-19 Updates

For the latest news and resources, please visit [DePaul's response to COVID-19 page](#).

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.

Library Resources

The DePaul University Library (<https://library.depaul.edu>) provides access to authoritative information sources, such as scholarly articles, journals, and books, primary sources, and research databases. Research help is available daily in-person and via chat, email, phone, or text. You may also make an appointment (in-person, phone, or Zoom) with a librarian to discuss your research projects.

Center for Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students can also email the office at csd@depaul.edu

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

University Counseling & Psychological Services

[University Counseling & Psychological Services](#) (UCAPS) helps remove barriers to learning and support academic success by providing free, goal-focused, collaborative, short-term, confidential, individual, and group counseling services for DePaul's students. UCAPS has a diverse multi-disciplinary staff that includes licensed mental health professionals in psychology, counseling, and social work.

Students* can talk to a therapist or schedule a brief screening and consultation appointment in the following ways:

- To speak directly to a therapist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) and Press "1" when prompted.
- To schedule a brief screening and consultation (BSC) appointment, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) during regular business hours and Press "2" when prompted.
- Students can visit go.depaul.edu/ucaps and click the '[Schedule a Consultation](#)' button to use online scheduling for a Brief Screening & Consultation (BSC) appointment. Online scheduling is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. *All BSCs scheduled online are for phone appointments. To schedule an in-person or telehealth BSC, please call 773-325-CARE (2273) and Press "2" when prompted.*

*Services are provided based on student eligibility. For full eligibility details please visit go.depaul.edu/ucaps.

The 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.

Name & Pronouns

I will gladly address you by the name and pronouns that you indicate. Please advise me of your name and/or your pronouns early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate notes in my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a first name that differs from their legal name, and they may also update their gender and gender pronouns. If a new name is identified, it will display as a “preferred name” in University-related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal necessity. For more information and instructions on how to make these updates, please see the LGBTQIA Resource Center’s [Personal Information Change](#) resources and the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at policies.depaul.edu.

Dean of Students

The [Dean of Students Office \(DOS\)](#) promotes student learning and ethical decision making in an inclusive and validating 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.

The Dean of Students Office is primarily responsible for administering and adjudicating violations of the Code of Student Responsibility at DePaul University. Additionally, the office provides the administrative withdrawal and absence notification process, and can help students identify campus and community resources in times of personal and/or family crises and medical emergencies.

You can contact the Dean of Students Office by calling (773) 325-7290 or emailing deanofstudents@depaul.edu. In cases of emergency, please call the Department of Public Safety at (773) 325-7777.

Sexual & 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 may 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) and/or the Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 312-362-8970 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 <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html>. 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.

Basic Needs

Access to nutritious food and reliable housing are factors that influence many students' ability to succeed in the classroom and beyond. However, students facing food or housing insecurities may be hesitant to call attention to their ongoing struggles. DePaul University is committed to and cares about all students. To help you manage personal challenges and basic needs security, the university offers several resources. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office for support: by calling (773) 325-7290 or emailing deanofstudents@depaul.edu. You can also contact [Elizabeth Ann Seton Food Pantry and Sandwich Kitchen](#) and the [Dax Program](#) (Chicago - Depaul; email: emily.edwards@depaulusa.org; phone: (312) 362-7931 for support. The Center for Access and Attainment has also created [a guide for Food and Housing Resources](#) that you can review.

If you are comfortable doing so, please also let me know about these challenges, so that I can help you access resources.