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# GAM 226: Fundamentals of Game Design

Spring 2023-24

Course Modality: Course meets T 1:30PM - 4:45PM in LEWIS 01007 at Loop Campus

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## Instructor Info

Instructor: Richard Wetzel (he/him)

Office: Daley 205D

Phone: 312-362-6955

Email: [richard.wetzel@depaul.edu](mailto:richard.wetzel@depaul.edu)

Office Hours: T 10.30AM – 12PM (in person)

W 9AM – 10.30AM (<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.

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## Course Description

This course provides students 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, game pitches, and design documents. Students will analyze and recognize play that exists in important games, stories, and other media.

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## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able 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 through several cycles of the iterative game design process
  - use common methods for documenting game design such as game design documents, playtesting reports, and post mortem
  - communicate game ideas through pitch, prototype, and presentation
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## Course Schedule

In the first half of term, we will lay the groundwork for the project work, that will make up the majority of the second half of term. We will play a lot of games (in-class and as homework) as well as analyze and modify them. There are regular assignments each week.

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## Recommended Readings

Macklin, Colleen, and John Sharp. *Games, Design and Play: A Detailed Approach to Iterative Game Design*. 1st edition. Boston: Addison-Wesley, 2016. Print.

[https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI\\_DPU/1ihqd0q/alma9912834327305831](https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_DPU/1ihqd0q/alma9912834327305831)

Koster, Raph. *A Theory of Fun for Game Design*. Second edition. North Sebastopol, California: O'Reilly Media, 2013. Print.

[https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI\\_DPU/1mqg358/alma9912850439105831](https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_DPU/1mqg358/alma9912850439105831)

Schell, Jesse. *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses, Second Edition*. 2nd ed. Florida: A K Peters/CRC Press, 2015. Web.

[https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI\\_DPU/8tvalj/cdi\\_proquest\\_ebookcentral\\_EBC1598419](https://i-share-dpu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_DPU/8tvalj/cdi_proquest_ebookcentral_EBC1598419)

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## Rapid Prototyping Kit

We will be doing a lot of paper prototyping in this class. To this end, by week 2, students will need to always bring the following to class:

- A box or pack to keep materials together
- Scissors
- Tape
- Paper, cardboard, index cards
- Pens, pencils, colored markers
- Six-sided die (D6)
- Standard deck of cards (54 with Jokers)

In addition, the kit must also contain multiples of at least 3 different types of additional “random” small objects, such as: additional dice / dice with different number of sides, coins, tokens, pipe cleaners, pearls, stickers, paper clips, plastic cups, paper plates, figurines, LEGOs, game pieces from existing games, etc.

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## Class Policies

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### 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.

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### Attendance

We are only meeting ten times during this term. You should attend every class. Your attendance record is part of your final grade. If you cannot make it to class for any reason, you must email your instructor before the start of class. In such a case, it is your responsibility to show that you have engaged with the class content after the session in a meaningful way. This includes watching the recording and doing the in-class activities in your own time. Afterwards, you must upload evidence of these activities to D2L. This means documenting any activities you did, and also writing an additional 0.5 page reflection about it.

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### Late Work

To avoid grade penalties for late work, you must email the instructor before the submission deadline. Your email must contain a proposed new reasonable deadline for your late work. The instructor will usually accommodate these requests, but there is no guarantee.

If you submit late work without previous notice, you will receive a penalty of 3.33% 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.

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## Revisions

With your instructor's permission, you can resubmit a piece of work once. Changes to your original submission must be clearly highlighted. A resubmission can only ever improve your original grade by up to one whole letter grade (e.g. going from C+ to B+).

Submissions affected by late penalties can never be revised.

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## Assignments and Grading

There will be 10 assignments in this class:

- A. 5 assignments of various types (readings, playing games, writing, ...) due in weeks 2 to 6.
- B. A game design project consisting of 5 different milestones due in weeks 7 to 11.

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

Assignment	Weight	Due
A1	7.5%	Week 2
A2	7.5%	Week 3
A3	7.5%	Week 4
A4	7.5%	Week 5
A5	7.5%	Week 6
B1 – Pitch	7.5%	Week 7
B2 – Iteration 1	7.5%	Week 8
B3 – Iteration 2	7.5%	Week 9
B4 – Iteration 3	7.5%	Week 10
B5 – Final report	22.5%	Week 11

The individual attendance record will be worth 10% of the final grade.

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## 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

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## 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 game design. A typical example is attending a talk or event and reflecting on it. There will be an Extra Credit submission area on D2L outlining further requirements. If you have an idea for something that might be worth extra credit, talk to your instructor about details and specific requirements. Opportunities for extra credit might be pointed out during the term. Multiple submissions are possible. Students can gain a maximum of 10 additional grade points this way.

One specific way to get extra credit is to sign-up to the DePaul Participant Pool. This allows you to participate in user studies. Some of these are shorter, some are longer. At the end of term, you will gain 0.5 points of extra credit per 30min of studies you participated in. The maximum amount of extra credit you can gain this way is 2 points.

You need to create an account for this at <https://depaulurparticipant.sona-systems.com/>

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## 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](#).

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## University Policies & Resources

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### COVID-19 Updates

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

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### 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.

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## 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.

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## 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](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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](http://go.depaul.edu/ucaps).

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## 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](http://www.depaul.edu/writing) for more information.

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## 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](http://policies.depaul.edu).

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## 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](mailto:deanofstudents@depaul.edu). In cases of emergency, please call the Department of Public Safety at (773) 325-7777.

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## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.