

CLASS MEETING TIME & LOCATION

Thursday, 5:45-9:00pm

Location: LEWIS 01001

INSTRUCTOR

Michael "Mischa" Hiessboeck

Office: CDM building, room 429

Office hours: TTh 3:30pm-5:00pm

mhiessbo@cdm.depaul.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course approaches the study of computer games from three angles: first, as examples of media that can be analyzed and critiqued for their thematic elements, formal structure, plot and interactive appreciation; second, as complex software artifacts subject to technological constraints and the product of a labor-intensive design and implementation process; and three as a cultural artifact with behaviors and associations comparable in import to other popular art forms. Student will study the principles of game design and use them both to analyze existing games and to develop their own original game ideas. Students will also learn about the process of game development, starting from the game's narrative concept and moving to consideration of a game's components: the representation of the player, of artifacts, the virtual world that contains them and the interaction between them and the player.

PREREQUISITES: none

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Salen, K. and Zimmerman, E. *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. MIT Press. 2004.
- Other readings on-line.
- The board game "Clue" (the classic edition) - each team will need to buy a copy of the game for the design projects.

RESOURCES: As a student in the class, you have access to the CDM Gaming 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.

D2L

We are using D2L (<http://d2l.depaul.edu>) as the supporting learning platform for this course. All course materials including weekly lecture slides and class info (i.e. syllabus, lesson plan, assignment descriptions etc.) are available through D2L under "contents".

Assignments are submitted to its dedicated folder on Dropbox on D2L.

POLICIES

- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend all classes and participate in class activities as scheduled. Class will start promptly. I will take attendance. Arrival more than 10 minutes late for class will constitute an absence. Students are individually responsible for material they may have missed due to absence or tardiness.

- This class has a “no-screens” policy. While class is in session, your attention should not be divided between classroom activities and electronic devices, including laptops, smart phones, iPads, etc.
- Most assignments will be submitted to Dropbox on D2L, or the "turnitin.com" site. Do not submit assignments by email. All assignments including analysis papers are due before class on the due date. Analysis papers should be submitted in hard-copy form as well as electronically. Late analysis papers except for the last one will be accepted up to two days after the due date with a ½ grade point penalty per day. Other assignments will not be accepted late.

The design presentations must be made on the presentation date unless other arrangements are made in advance. 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). Papers must conform to the course guidelines on references and documentation. Use of sources without attribution constitutes plagiarism, a serious violation of academic integrity. Consult the assignment handouts or the instructor if you have questions about how or what to document.

- 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 Computer Science, Telecommunications and Information Systems. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.
- 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)

Lincoln Park Campus, Student Center #370, 773.325.1677 phone

Loop Campus, Lewis Center #1400. 312.362.8002 phone

- www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/csd
- csd@depaul.edu

- Email: Email is the preferred means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. My email is drusch1@cdm.depaul.edu

DOMAIN DESCRIPTION

GAM 224 is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Arts and Literature Domain. Courses in the Arts and Literature Domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning, and through critical and/or creative activity to come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take course in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

GRADING:

Grand total of 100 possible points.

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 = 59 or lower

ORGANIZATION and ASSESSMENT

GAM 224 will meet twice a week. Generally, our 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, do the assigned reading and homework before class time.

Student progress will be assessed through a combination of 2 quizzes, 2 game analyses on one game of student's choice, 2 group game design projects, and participation in the class.

- Game Analysis (2 papers) – 30%
- Design Projects (2) – 30%
- Quizzes (2) – 20%
- Participation (including in-class activities) – 20%

GAME ANALYSES

Each student will perform an in-depth analysis of a single video game title of his or her choice.

The following will be required:

- Substantial play-time with the title, sufficient to master basic game play and to encounter most of the game's components. (Playing the game all the way through would be ideal but not practical for many titles.)
- Researching the game's community presence through FAQ files, walk-throughs, fan sites and other documents.
- writing two 5 page (1300-1800 words) papers. Following the course content, the first analysis paper focuses on "rules". The second analysis paper deals with aspects of "play", such as the play of experience and pleasure, core mechanics, narrative play, or games as the play of simulation etc.. Papers have to be turned in on the due date before class to dropbox on D2L. For details on Game Analysis assignment, see Game Analysis handout on D2L under "contents".

DESIGN PROJECTS

Students will work in instructor-assigned teams on two separate game design projects. Each team will present its project work to the class on designated days. Contribution to the project will be assessed via a peer-assessment protocol. For details on Design Project Assignments see Design Project handout on D2L under "contents".

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note that the lesson plan is not part of the syllabus anymore and that some of these sessions and readings may change during the course. Please check the schedule on D2L for updates.

Jan 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Intro; hand out descriptions for assignments and discuss them with students; introductions: favorite games? background? Interest in class – what do they expect?- what is a game?- formal game elements (20 questions)- game mechanics and core concepts in game design- the magic circle and the ludic attitude <p>Reading: Rules of Play, CH 7-10</p>
Jan 17th UNIT 1 RULES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- in-class design activity <p>Assigned: Design project #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Games as rule systems;- Rules and procedures- uncertainty, probability and chance- meaningful play <p>in-class: FLUXX</p> <p>Due: Game analysis: game selection</p> <p>Reading: Rules of Play, CH 11, 14, 15</p>

<p>Jan 24th</p>	<p>Writing about games: audiences and expectations. Game reviews, game journalism and critical inquiry. Academic writing about games.</p> <p>read assigned articles on D2L under “contents”.</p> <p>What is being discussed here? What does that teach us about game elements? The experience of playing? Game design? Games in general?</p> <p>Intro to game analysis: - lecture on writing a game analysis</p> <p>in-class activity: design project #1 - brainstorming</p> <p>Reading: assigned texts (TBA) see D2L: “contents”</p>
<p>Jan 31st</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Games as systems of conflict - game structure and emotional engagement (Jarvinen; Frome) - breaking the rules <p>in-class: “Us vs. It”</p> <p>Reading: Rules of Play, CH 20, 21</p>
<p>Feb 7th</p>	<p>Game theory: choices and decisions in games - designing interesting dilemmas</p> <p>purposeful game design: games beyond entertainment - various design approaches.</p> <p>Due: Game analysis #1 Reading: Rules of Play, CH 19</p>

<p>Feb 14th</p> <p>UNIT 2 PLAY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quiz #1: Rules - Play and experience. play personality and player types. Experiential aspects of game design. Qualities of play activities. <p>group work: design project #1 playtest</p> <p>Due: Design project #1 (draft design)</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules of Play, CH 22 & 23 - Brown: play personalities (on D2L under "contents") - Bartle: players who suit Muds <p>http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/hclds.htm</p>
<p>Feb 21st</p>	<p>in-class activity: game mechanics analysis</p> <p>Games as narrative play; narrative architecture; space as narrative paradigm and possibility space.</p> <p>Reading: Rules of Play, CH 26</p> <p>Due: Game analysis #1, rewrite (only for papers which received C- or lower)</p>
<p>Feb 28th</p> <p>Feb 27th: submit ppt to D2L</p>	<p>Games as the play of simulation. Abstraction and verisimilitude. Immersion and remediation.</p> <p>Presentations for design project #1</p> <p>Due: Design project #1: final design doc & presentation; peer evaluation form.</p> <p>Assigned: Design project #2</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules of Play, CH 27; - Juul: half-real (on D2L, "contents")

<p>Mar 7th</p> <p>UNIT 3 CULTURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quiz #2: Play. - In-class activity: Design brainstorming for design project # 2. <p>In-class: (movie)</p> <p>Due: Game analysis #2</p> <p>Reading: Rules of Play, CH 29 & 30</p>
<p>Mar 14th</p>	<p>open culture, play communities and play culture; fan culture and appropriation; machinima</p> <p>In-class: playtest for design project #2.</p> <p>Due: Design project #2 (annotated map & design draft)</p> <p>Reading: Rules of Play, CH 31 & 33</p>
<p>Mar 21st</p> <p>March 20th submit ppt to D2L</p>	<p>Presentations for design project #2</p> <p>Due: Design project #2: final design doc & presentation; peer evaluation form</p>