

GAM 499: Making Deep Games: SYLLABUS for grad students

Class Meeting Time & Location

M/W. 11:50am – 1:20pm

CDM 924

Instructor

Doris C. Rusch

Office: CDM building, room 513

Office hours: Mon: 5:00-5:45pm; Wed. 2:00pm - 4:15pm

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Course Description:

In this workshop-based class, we are going to explore how to design games that can illuminate the human condition. We will look to personal experiences as inspiration sources for game ideas and use metaphor and analogy to create games on complex, abstract ideas, such as loyalty, dignity, courage or trust.

Our goal is to raise awareness for the expressive potential of videogames, the many decisions that go into a design process and to push the boundaries of games.

Prerequisites: GAM 224 or GAM 226 (or permission from instructor).

Learning Goals:

Students should learn to:

- Understand how games are and can be used to express and convey ideas beyond entertainment.
- Become more conscious of their experiences and use them as inspiration sources for a broader range of games that illuminate the human condition.
- Systematically analyze and understand the structures of experiences to model them in games.
- Clearly identify a vision for a “deep game” and design with intent and purpose.
- Use metaphors deliberately and coherently to grasp and model abstract ideas in order to make games about the human experience.

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.

Supporting literature:

There is no dedicated textbook to accompany the course. However, there is a range of complementary readings that are made accessible to students on D2L as pdfs or, if available on the web, as URLs. These texts are liable to change, but an overview can be found in the lesson plan.

Games:

Students will be asked to play and analyze a range of games throughout the term. All of these games are either available in the game lab on the 5th floor or free to download or play online. Games are liable to change, but a tentative list can be found in the lesson plan.

Required Materials:

Analogue prototyping tools, design

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

- **Participation and 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. This is a topic that gains much from in-class discussions and the idea exchange amongst peers. Due to the nature of the course, some game designs may deal with personal topics. Be mindful to discuss the design, not the person who made it and keep comments in good taste.
As stated below, 20% of your grade depends on participation and attendance. You should not assume that these points are “a given”. On the contrary, participation must be earned by showing up on time to every class, displaying full engagement in all discussions and activities, completing all assignments, and listening actively and attentively to the instructor and your peers.

Regarding attendance, 1/3 of a letter grade will be docked from your final grade in the course for each absence beyond two (2). For example, if you end the class with an A-, but have missed 4 classes in total. Your final grade would be a B. Think of the two “free” absences as sick days or emergency days. If you use them for other reasons early in the term, you may find yourself in a bind if you get sick later on, or need to miss class for a family emergency. Because it is impossible for me to determine fairly what constitutes a compelling reason to miss class, there are no excused absences beyond these two. In all cases, please make every effort to contact me and explain the circumstances of your absence before you miss class. Always check with me about any work or assignments you may have missed.

Please be aware that being absent on a day you are assigned to present / playtest your

design in class will result in a grade of zero for that assignment. You will know your presentation / playtesting date for each assignment at least one week before the assignment is due. 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 show up.

Tardiness: please arrive to class on time! Tardiness under any circumstances is disruptive to the class as a whole. Habitual lateness, however, is a sure sign of disrespect to your classmates. As such, it will be factored into your participation grade as the instructor sees fit. If for some reason you have a class schedule that makes it physically impossible for you to arrive by 11:50am, please let me know by the end of the first week of classes so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Otherwise, all students are expected to be ready to begin class at 11:50am.

- Late assignments: very few assignments can actually be turned in late in this class (see next point). For those that could theoretically be turned in late, I will accept them ONLY if you (1) contact me at least 6 hours before the due date and (2) turn in the assignment within three days of the due date. Each day the assignment is late will decrease the possible point value by 10%.
- Please note that 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 or to be present during presentation, you receive 0 points for them. In-class discussion of assignments is crucial to learning from the assignments, so it is not enough to do them, if you do not show up to also present them and participate and their critique.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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, 773.325.167 7phone
Loop Campus, Lewis Center #1400. 312.362.8002 phone
 - www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/csd
 - csd@depaul.edu

Important Dates AQ2013:

Sept. 11th 2013: Begin AQ 2013 All Classes

Sept. 24th 2013: Last day to drop classes with no penalty. Last day to select pass / fail option

Oct. 29th 2013: Last day to withdraw from AQ2013 classes

Nov. 19th: End AQ2013 Day & Evening classes

Nov. 20th 2013: Begin AQ2013 Day & Evening classes final exams

Nov 26th 2013: End AQ2013 Day & Evening final exams

Grading:

Class Requirements:

- 42 % attendance and in-class participation
- 45 % assignments:
 - Assignment 1: Due Sept. 23rd: game analysis of meaningful gameplay experience: 3%
 - Assignment 2: Due Sept. 30th: Playable, physical prototype of metaphorical self-portrait game (5min playthrough time!) 6%
 - Assignment 3: Due Oct. 3rd: bring casual game to class: 1%

- Assignment 4: Due Oct 7th: playable prototype of experiential metaphor game: 6%
- Assignment 5: Due Oct. 14th One pager for personal or social issue game design: 3%
- Assignment 6: Due Oct. 16th: Playable, physical prototype of personal or social issue game + design write-up: 6%
- Assignment 7: Due Oct. 21st Come to class prepared with a deep question, philosophical theory or conundrum: 1%
- Assignment 8: Due Oct 23rd: playable prototype of philosophical game + game design rationale write-up: 6%
- Assignment 9: Due Oct. 28th: one sentence pitch for personal game project: 1%
- Assignment 10: Due, Nov. 4th: one pager vision statement for deep game project: 3%

Final project: "Deep Game" prototype:

- Assignment 11 & 12: Due Nov 6th & Nov. 13th: project reports: 4% (2% each)
- Assignment 13: Due Nov 25th: playable prototype of "deep game": 16% (only in Assignment 14: Due Nov 25th: 3-5 page reflection paper on intent, design process and outcome
- Assignment 15, Due Nov. 25th: peer evaluations: 2%
- Assignment 16, Due Nov. 25th: reflection paper on application of deep game design to analogue design practice 20%

Detailed description of assignments and grading rubric is available on D2L under "contents", "course info". Hard copies of assignment descriptions will be handed out in class throughout the term in time before each assignment is due.

Grand total of 120 possible points.

A = 111+

A- = 100

B + = 99

B = 98-91

B- = 90

C + = 89

C = 88-81

C- = 80

D + = 79

D = 78- 71

D - = 70

F = 69 or lower

LESSON PLAN: please note that this lesson plan and the assignments are not part of the syllabus anymore and liable to change.

		Sept. 11 th	<p>Introductions and course overview (syllabus, lesson plan)</p> <p>What are “deep games”? Why “deep games”?</p> <p>Festivals and communities: G4C, IndieCade</p> <p>Reading: Clint Hocking: Game Designers’ Rant, GDC 2008</p>
Sept. 16 th	<p>Games can mean something! How? Theme ≠ Meaning. Mechanics = Message. Games as simulations</p> <p>What games are good at http://www.slideshare.net/jesseschell/what-games-are-good-at-25505419</p> <p>Playing and analyzing some meaningful games, and discussing their intent, message and design choices. e.g. Way; Afterland; Buffalo; Layoff Game; the future of nursing</p> <p>Newsgames: http://www.kn9.dk/</p> <p>Discussion of home assignment 1; team building and brainstorming on theme based game design</p> <p>Reading: Hillman Curtis: Process, Inspiration and Practice for the New Media Designer pp.41---73. (chapter on “theme”).</p> <p>Brenda Brathwaite, Ian Schreiber:</p>	Sept. 18 th	<p>Games 4 Change</p> <p>Play “Hush”</p> <p>In class design exercise: Grow a Game</p> <p>Reading: Mary Flanagan: Critical Play: pp 223-263</p>

	<p>Challenges for Game Designers, p.9 (where ideas come from)</p> <p>Jesse Schell: The Art of Game Design. pp. 9-22; pp. 58-60)</p> <p>Soren Johnson: Theme is not meaning</p>		
Sept 23 rd	<p>About the human experience and the use of metaphors for “deep games”.</p> <p>In class exercise: structural metaphors of complex, abstract ideas</p> <p>Play and analyze metaphorical games: e.g. Passage, Lim, High Delivery, Akrasia, Hurdles, Thomas Was Alone; Conglomeration</p> <p>Reading: Johnson & Lakoff: “Metaphors we live by”, CH15</p> <p>Due: Assignment 1: game analysis of meaningful gameplay experience</p>	Sept. 25 th	<p>Love card game workshop</p> <p>Reading: Doris C. Rusch and Matthew Weise: Games About Love And Trust? Harnessing the Power of Metaphors for Experience Design.</p>
Sept. 30 th	<p>Metaphorical game self-portrait presentations</p> <p>Due: Assignment 2 Playable, physical prototype of metaphorical self-portrait game and write-up.</p>	Oct. 3 rd	<p>Implied meaning of image schemata</p> <p>Exploring and identifying “Experiential Metaphors”: play abstract, casual games</p> <p>Due: Assignment 3: bring casual game to class</p>
Oct 7 th	<p>In class playtesting of experiential metaphor game</p> <p>Due: Assignment 4: playable prototype of experiential metaphor game</p>	Oct. 9 th	<p>Personal Games Movement: http://indiegames.com/2013/04/four_perspectives_on_personal.html</p> <p>Play and analyze games: Dis4ya, Mainchi, Elude, Depression Quest, A Closed</p>

			<p>World, etc. (see “Different Games” conference)</p> <p>Reading: http://www.gamesforchange.org/2012/01/closed-world-todd-harper-interview/</p> <p>My personal trip to the moon http://www.differentgames.org/nicole-brauer-a-personal-trip-to-the-moon/</p>
Oct 14 th	<p>Lecture: purposeful design of transformational games</p> <p>In-class exercise: problem statement generation and solution brainstorming for personal and social issue games</p> <p>http://www.slideshare.net/jesseschell/secrets-of-amazing-transformational-games</p> <p>Reading: Jesse Schell, The Art of Game Design, 57-74</p> <p>Due: Assignment 5: One pager for personal or social issue game design</p>	Oct 16 th	<p>In-class playtesting of personal or social issue game based on one pager and last class’ brainstorming</p> <p>Due: Assignment 6: playable, physical prototype of personal or social issue game</p>
Oct. 21 st	<p>Philosophical game design</p> <p>In-class brainstorming on philosophical game</p> <p>The Buddhist: http://creativespirited.com/concept.html</p> <p>Lindsay Grace: Wait http://www.differentgames.org/lindsay-grace-wait/</p> <p>Ten Games That Make You Think About Life</p>	Oct. 23 rd	<p>In-class presentation and discussion of philosophical game</p> <p>Due: Assignment 8: playable prototype of philosophical game</p>

	http://www.casualgirlgamer.com/articles/entry/22/Ten-games-that-make-you-think-about-life/ http://soulpancake.com/ Due: Assignment 7: come to class prepared with a deep question, philosophical theory or conundrum		
Oct. 28 th	Pitch and discussion of concepts for deep game project, part 1 Due: Assignment 9: one sentence pitch for personal game project;	Oct 30 th	Pitch and discussion of concepts for deep game project, part 2
Nov. 4 th	In-class prototyping of deep game project Assignment 10: one pager vision statement for deep game project	Nov. 6 th	Transmedia project: playtesting and discussion of interactive sequences Due: Assignment 11: 1 st project report due
Nov. 11 th	Playtesting of deep game project, part 1	Nov. 13 th	Playtesting deep game project, part 2 Due: Assignment 12: 2 nd project report due
Nov. 18 th	Perspectives on games as art and cultural commentary (Surrealism; art games;)	No class finals week	
Nov. 25 th	Final presentations and critique Due: Assignment 13: finished prototype for deep game project Assignment 14: reflection paper on intent, design and outcome. Assignment 15: peer evaluation form		