

## GAM 226: Fundamentals of Game Design, Fall 2015

M/W 10:10AM-11:40 AM

Location: CDM 224 at Loop Campus

### INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Bobby Schweizer

Office: Daley 2, Room 205C

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

GAM 226 provides students with 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 and player experiences. Students will further be exposed to the basics of effective game idea communication.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will learn 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,
- use common methods for documenting game designs such as game design documents and playtesting reports,
- communicate their game ideas through pitch, prototype and presentation

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

### Textbook

Fullerton, T. (2014). *Game Design Workshop: A Playcentric Approach to Creating Innovative Games, Third Edition*.

(NOTE this book is available from [Amazon's rental service](#) for around \$20 for the semester as either a physical or a Kindle version. It's inexpensive and convenient!)

All other readings will be provided on D2L.

### Game Design Journal

Yes! A design journal will allow you to jot down gameplay ideas that come to you as you observe your world. Any simple notebook will do, though I prefer something with graph paper pages. Bring your journal to class. Make it your goal to jot down at least one idea every day. Be inspired by the world around you and collect those ideas for future reference. The more you put in, the more you get out.

### Prototyping Materials

Prototyping materials for in-class exercises will be provided, but for your work on the final project you will want to get your own materials. Get yourself some graph paper, legos, blank index cards, playing cards, board game pieces, and a bag of dice. Educational supply shops, dollar shops, and Amazon

### 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.

## GRADING SCALE

92 - 100	A
90 - 92	A-
87 - 89	B+
83 - 86	B
80 - 82	B-
77 - 79	C+
73 - 76	C
70 - 72	C-
67 - 69	D+
60 - 66	D

**Assignment Submission:** Most assignments will be submitted to Dropbox on D2L (except for presentations). Do not submit assignments by email. Assignment due dates are noted on the schedule. Late assignments (except for the final project) will be accepted up to two days after the due date with a ½ letter grade penalty per day. Since many assignments require your presence on the day of playtesting, deadlines for in-class activities are fixed and extensions cannot be granted.

**Participation:** Your participation in class will be measured during discussions, design exercises, and playtests. During discussion, you are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows me to get to know you, which will give me insight into your assignments.

Being a good game designer means being involved in a community of peers to give and receive feedback. I will not be taking attendance in this course. Instead, your participation grade will be the measure of your engagement and you are responsible for being an active member of the classroom. You will not be able to make up your participation grade if you miss class.

## ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

Game Review	10
Game Mod	15
Game Analysis	20
BattleBattle	15
Abstraction Game	40
Cooperative Game	60
Participation	40
Total:	200

## 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.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Attitude:** A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others while someone else is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise, you may be asked to leave the classroom. I will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such issues.

**Civil Discourse:** DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be Socially Responsible Leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a

student's ability to be successful in the course. Again, I will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

**Digital Devices:** While class is in session, your attention should not be divided between classroom activities and your laptops, smart phones, iPads, etc. (unless you've been asked to play a game or do research). Set your phone ringers to silent. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to everyone in the room, texting/messaging is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

**Writing:** While this class does not emphasize essay writing, game rules and text 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 [rschweiz@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:rschweiz@cdm.depaul.edu)

## COLLEGE POLICIES

### Changes to Syllabus

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 and sent via email.

### 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.

### Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

### Student Rights

To learn about your rights as a student please read DePaul's policies 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. For more information on requesting an Incomplete:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>.

### **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 enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

### **Students with Disabilities**

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)

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson  
Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

[www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/csd](http://www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/csd)

[csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)

## LESSON PLAN

Please note that some of these sessions and readings may change during the course. Check the schedule on D2L for updates. Readings not from Game Design Workshop can be found in the D2L resources folder.

Week	Topic	Activity	Read	Due
1: Sept 9	Introductions			
2: Sept 14, 16	What Game Designers Do	Simple Games	[GDW] Ch. 1 “The Role of the Game Designer” (Monday)  [GDW] Ch. 2 “The Structure of Games” & Ch. 6 “Conceptualization” (Wednesday)	<b>Due Monday:</b> Game Review
3: Sept 21, 23	Elements	Atari Games	[GDW] Ch. 3 “Formal Elements” & Ch. 4 “Dramatic Elements” (Monday)	<b>Due Wednesday:</b> Modded Game
4: Sept 28, 30	Dynamics and Systems	Paper Prototyping	[GDW] Ch. 5 “System Dynamics” (Monday)  [GDW] Ch. 7 “Prototyping” & Salen/Zimmerman “Games as Systems of Uncertainty” (Wednesday)	<b>Due Monday:</b> Game Analysis
5: Oct 5, 7	Balance	BattleBattle	Garfield “The Design Evolution of Magic the Gathering” & Sirlin “Multiplayer Game Balance” (Monday)	<b>Due Wednesday:</b> BattleBattle Cards
6: Oct 12, 14	Meaning	Abstraction	Bogost “Procedural Rhetoric” & [GDW]  Juul “A Certain Level of Abstraction”  One more reading TBD	<b>Due Wednesday:</b> Abstraction Pitch

7: Oct 19, 21	Values	Playtest  Grow-A-Game	[GDW] Ch. 9 Playtesting (Monday)  Flanagan/Nissenbaum Ch. 1 & Ch. 2 (Wednesday)	<b>Due Monday:</b> Abstraction Prototype
8: Oct 26, 27	Socializing	Play Projects  Negotiations	[GDW] Ch. 12: “Team Structures” & Ch. 13: “ Stages of Development”	<b>Due Monday:</b> Abstraction Final  <b>Due Wednesday:</b> Cooperative Game Brainstorm
9: Nov 2, 4	Players	Studio	Bartle “Alice and Dorothy Play Together”	<b>Due Monday:</b> Co-op Game Pitch
10: Nov 9, 11	Co-op	Playtesting and Studio	[GDW] Ch. 10 “Functionality, Completeness, and Balance” (Wednesday)	<b>Due Monday:</b> Co-op Game Prototype
11: Nov 16	Co-op			<b>Due Monday:</b> Co-op Game Iteration
Exam: Nov 18	Present and Play Co-op Games  (Note: Exam period is 8:45AM-11:00AM)			