GAM 420: Creative Computation

Wed 5:45PM - 9:00PM
14 East Jackson, Room 212

Instructor: Dr. Bobby Schweizer
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Overview

You will be introduced to the affordances of computers and digital technology as a medium using foundational texts from the discipline of digital media while being introduced to programming. The course will teach you to discover how to effectively and creatively communicate their ideas using accessible coding environments and engines while challenging them to build playful, interactive applications.

The class schedule is available on D2L

Course Objectives

- Interpret and discuss foundational theoretical texts of digital media.
- Brainstorm original visions for games in scope with available resources.
- Leverage the affordances of computers to intentionally evoke specific emotions, experiences, and purposefully communicate ideas.
- Develop computational literacy by building playable artifacts using a variety of digital platforms.
- Relate readings from the topic area to computational ways of thinking.

The theme of the course this term is "Decoding the City." Readings will pair foundational texts from the history of digital media with essays and chapters on urban studies and architecture. The goal is to explore how the computer as an expressive medium allows us to interpret and present the world. We will learn the affordances of computers, strategies of representation, and gain insight into the history of computing as an expressive medium.

Classes last for three hours. Meetings will consist of readings/discussions, pre-production, and sharing Readings will inform the game-like project being designed for, each of which will be built using a new platform.

Materials

Readings for the course will be provided as PDFs on D2L. You are expected to take notes, prepare questions for discussion, and bring the readings to class each week. Make sure to research the authors, find out when the text was written, and think about the context of its publication.

Additionally, you will be asked to bring artifacts to class that illustrate ideas from the readings which we will examine as a group.

The platforms we will be using support both Windows and MacOS. You will need a reliable way of bringing projects to class, whether on your own laptop, cloud storage, or a Windows-compatible USB drive. We will be using P5.Play, HTML5/Canvas, Twitter, and Pico-8. It's not expected that you have any experience with these platforms—we'll be learning as we go along. Projects will be supported by an artist statement that relates it to the readings.

Grading

The four projects are worth 10%, 20%, 20%, and 30%. The remaining 20% of your grade will be assessed based on class participation. The grading scale for final grades is as follows:

94 – 100	A
90 – 93	A-
87 – 89	B+
84 – 86	B
80 – 83	B-
76 – 79	C+
72 – 75	C
68 – 71	C-
65 – 67	D+
61 – 64	D
0-60	F

COURSE POLICIES

Participation & Attendance: Your participation will be measured during discussions, critiques, studios, and on Discord. During discussion, you are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to make up the work. Lectures are video recorded and posted to D2L. Excused absences must go through the Office of the Dean of Students.

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 personal devices.

COLLEGE POLICIES

Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be 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: 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/cs