GAM 365 Advanced Game Design

Instructor: Dr. Bobby Schweizer
Term: Winter 2018
Meeting time: Mon/Wed 11:50am–1:20pm
Location: 14EAS (Daley) 505 at Loop Campus

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Office Hours: Mon & Wed 2:30—4:00

Overview

This is a studio course in which students work in teams to design and develop slices of polished, small-scale gameplay experiences. The focus is on developing team-based creative and technical processes to produce innovative, engaging, and playable games. Over the course of the quarter, each team will build two different short gameplay experiences using Unity. Each game will demonstrate an understanding of the role of game mechanics, game art, audio, and technology platform in creating a cohesive and compelling gameplay sequence. Team roles will include game design, producing, game art/animation, and programming. Teams will iterate on projects until they can show through playtests that they have met their gameplay goals.

Students will…

- use previously acquired game design principles and technical skills in the creation of short, polished projects,
- learn to execute methods and workflows for rapidly prototyping and iterating game designs,
- understand how to divide and share the tasks and responsibilities of a complete game development project,
- recognize the role that themes and constraints play when designing games
- learn to constructively critique each other's work

The class schedule can be found on D2L.

Work Ethic

Expect to work 20 hours a week on projects to do well. Do not rely on teammates to be told what to do. Be proactive and always think about how YOU could improve the game experience to meet the project's goals. Then run your ideas by your team before you do them. Seek and use DAILY feedback on your work. Get it from me, classmate, outside playtesters, roommates—anyone who'll be honest, critical, and who understands the project's goal. All members of the team must use Unity 2017 because this is the version available in the computer labs.

Team Studio Culture

For each project, students will form a game studio and will have to figure out how to divide the labor. Teams do not have just one programmer or one artist. **Everyone will be responsible for multiple roles**. Communication is key to fostering and maintaining a healthy team dynamic. You must meet in person with your team TWICE A WEEK OUTSIDE OF CLASS. Find a regular time and stick with it. You will also be joining a Trello board and Discord group for each project to facilitate rapid and fluid communication. Use these to communicate on a daily basis. Post something you made / changed in game (screenshots / builds are good) or comment on a teammate's post.

Each student will be responsible for producing **quality work in at least two** of the following job fields:

Art
Artists can work in either 2D or 3D depending on the needs of the game. Artists create character sprites or models, level and environment objects, textures, UI elements, and are responsible for lighting, rigging, and animation. A close working relationship with the programmer will be key to creating assets that will work well in the game engine.

_____ Design
Designers should spend at least 80% of their time WORKING IN UNITY. Designers will develop and program prototypes, devise and implement in code, and strategically structure playtests to solicit the most meaningful feedback. Designers must keep a Google Drive folder shared with the group and the professor. A close working relationship with the programmer will be key to designing a game that has the intended play experience. Design roles include gameplay design, level design, difficulty and balance, feel and polish.

Programming
Programmers will work with the designer to develop the game mechanics and implement the game levels, and will work with the artists to develop the GUI and HUD. Programmers, with the help of designers, will prototype game concepts in order to test their technical feasibility, playability and fun. NOTE: Messy code that that works imperfectly is infinitely better than beautiful code that takes a long time to write—holding out the empty promise of working perfectly.

Sound Design and Music Composition
Sound designers/composers will work with the game designers to create sound effects and music that serves the narrative and theme of the game design. Downloading sound effects from the internet and remixing them into new sound effects is encouraged.

Production Management
Team members will designate a person to serve as their Producer. In addition to their other responsibilities, the producer will be responsible for project scheduling, weekly Itch.io developer diaries, organizing meetings, and always ensuring that the big picture of the project is being served.

Grading

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

Vertical Slice #1 Comedy Games
- Polished Vertical Slice 35%
- Individual Contributions 15%

Vertical Slice #2 Affection Games
- Polished Vertical Slice 35%
- Individual Contributions 15%

Throughout the projects, you will receive in-class feedback to help you improve your game and to give you an indication of where you stand in terms of progress toward the final assessment.

The "Individual Contributions" is intended to ensure the workload is equitable between teammates.

Participation & Attendance: Your participation in class will be measured during discussions, critiques, and playtests. Participation allows me to get to know you, which will give me insight into your assignments. **Your individual contributions grade is a measure of your efforts toward your project as evaluated by your peers.**

You are expected to attend all classes and participate in class activities as scheduled**. If you're going to miss a class for any reason, you must notify the producer of your team**. Missing class without notifying your producer counts doubly against your participation grade. Excused absences must go through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Late Assignments: Because weekly feedback is a critical part of the iterative process, there will be no grace period for late assignments in this course. Always bring in whatever you have.

Incomplete: An Incomplete grade is given only for exceptions approved by the Office of the Dean of Students. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be submitted at least two weeks before the final exam. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

RESOURCES

Labs: As a student in the class, you have access to the CDM Gaming and computer 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, please leave the room in an undisruptive 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.

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.

COLLEGE POLICIES

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. 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.

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. [More Information]

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.

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)   Phone: (312) 362-8002
Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.   Fax: (312) 362-6544
www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/csd   TTY: (773) 325.7296
csd@depaul.edu