GAM 224: Game Design for Non-Majors

Class Time: Wednesday 5:45PM to 9:00PM
Location: Lewis 1007
Instructor: JJ Bakken

Office: CDM building, room 434
Office hours: Thursday: 5:30-7:00pm
Email: jbakken@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

LEARNING DOMAIN DESCRIPTION

GAM 224, Intro to Videogame Design, 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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced.

2. Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.

3. Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.

4. Students will be able to contextualize a work of art. They will be able to do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre. They will also be able to contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work's reception and how that reception might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 2,400 words of writing for this course. It should be proofread and clear. Consult DePaul's Writing Center if you require assistance.

D2L

We are using D2L (http://d2l.depaul.edu) and all course materials including weekly lecture slides and class info are available through D2L under "contents". Assignments are submitted to through Submissions on D2L

REQUIRED MATERIALS

• Fullerton, Tracy. *Game Design Workshop: A Playcentric Approach to Creating Innovative Games*, Fourth Edition. CRC Press. 2018 ISBN 9781138098770

• Other relevant readings will be made available on D2L under "contents" throughout the term.

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

• Late Work: Late work of any kind is not accepted. Assignments are to be turned in on their due dates. If an assignment is not turned in by the due date, it will not be accepted and is given a zero.

• 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.

• 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.

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.

ORGANIZATION AND ASSESSMENT

GAM 224 will meet once 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 and do the assigned reading and homework before class time.

Student progress will be assessed through a combination of homework assignments, game analysis papers on a game of student's choice, a group game design project, and class participation.

- Game Analysis Papers – 30%
- Design Project – 30%
- Participation (including in-class activities) – 20%
- Assignments – 20%

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

GAME ANALYSIS PAPERS

Each student will perform an in-depth analysis of a single video game title of their 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 2 game analysis papers. Each paper needs to be **1,200 words long** and each have a different analysis focus. 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 PROJECT

Students will work in teams on a game design project. 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".

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.

- 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#aiPlagarism

- 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.

- 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 CDM, the School of Computing and Digital Media. 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 the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

   DePaul University
   Center for Students with Disabilities - Lewis Center 1420
   25 East Jackson Boulevard
   Chicago, IL 60604-2287
   312.362.8002 main phone

Important Dates:
Jan 5: Begin All Classes
Jan 18: Last day to drop classes with no penalty.
Feb 22: Last day to withdraw from classes
Mar 16: Begin Day & Evening classes final exams
Mar 22: End Day & Evening final exams
Mar 29: Grades Due

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE
Please note that some of these sessions and readings may change during the course. Please check the schedule on D2L for updates.

Class	Overview
Week 1	**Lecture**: Course and Syllabus Overview | What's a Game Designer? **Assignment** Reading: Game Design Workshop Chapter 1 and 3 Reading: Doug Church: formal, abstract design tools (article on D2L) Game Analysis Papers and Thesis | One Page Game Idea #1
Week 2	**Lecture:** Games, What are they Made of? | All You Need is Verbs **Assignment** Reading: GDW Chapter 5 and 6 One Page Game Design #2
Week 3	**Lecture:** Meaningful Play | Roots of Games | Themes and Meaning **Assignment** Reading: Soren Johnson: Theme is not Meaning (article on D2L) Modify a broken game
Week 4	**Lecture:** The Experience of Play | Core Mechanic Types **Assignment** Reading: GDW Chapter 4 and 10 Experience Game Design | Game Analysis Thesis 2 **DUE: Game Analysis Paper 1**
Week 5	**Lecture:** Story and Games **Assignment** Reading: GDW Chapter 12 and 13 Team formation & Schedule document | One sentence pitch
Week 6	**Lecture:** Teamwork | Analog Prototyping **Assignment** Reading: GDW Chapter 7 and 9 Game Analysis Paper #2 | Final game One pager description
Week 7	**Lecture:** Playtesting | The Development Cycle **Assignment** - Rules of Play Ch 26 Game design pillars | Project progress report #2 | **Bring prototype to class** **DUE: Game Analysis Paper 2**

Class	Overview
Week 8	**Lecture:** Pitch Presentations | Purposeful Game Design **Assignment** Final Project presentation content
Week	**Lecture:** Game Culture **Assignment** Rules of Play CH 29, 31, 33 Progress Report #3
Week 10	Student Game Pitch Presentations | In-class work-session for final project **Assignment** Final board game prototype
Week 11	Final Game Showcase