



GAM 530: Game Studies Pro-Seminar

AU 2023 :: Tue 5:45-9 PM, Daley 505 & online synchronous



Instructor Info

Dr. Michael A. DeAnda

Call me "Dr. Mike"

Email: mdeanda@depaul.edu

Pronouns: any human-related pronouns
are acceptable (i.e. not "it")

Office Hours

F2F Daley 205B: MW 1-3PM; 4:40-4:55 PM

If you need to meet online during this time,
email me.

Regarding email communication

I will usually respond to emails within a few hours between 9AM and 5 PM Monday through Friday. **I do not check email on weekends or evenings.**



Course Description

This class introduces students to a broad range of historical and current topics in game studies. It aims to support creative practice by expanding the theoretical foundation established in Game Design Proseminar with additional, deep insight into disciplines that relate to games, play, players, learning, activism, and art.

What is play? What makes players follow rules or subvert them? How are play and games imbricated within cultural politics and structures of power? These are some of the (many) questions posed by game studies that also matter to game designers, but which cannot be answered with design. In this course we will survey several of the major questions and

methods of game studies for how they can challenge, complicate, and expand the kinds of games that we design. We will start by looking at some of the foundational texts focused on play and games. Then, we will focus on different intersections between games and culture such as gender, race, and technology and look at the different things we can learn by framing games as historical artifacts, meaningful systems, and expressions of power. Each of these perspectives will challenge the authority of the game designer over a game, but will also give us more tools to design with. This course provides students with the tools to understand and analyze academic arguments about games, and use these arguments to imagine new approaches to design. **PREREQUISITE: GAM 520**



Course Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will:

- Read academic articles about games in order to summarize their main arguments and hone your understanding of those arguments through discussion with your peers.
- Apply a method from game studies to an individual game in order to gain a new perspective on some aspect of its design and player experience.
- Produce oral and written discourse based on scholarly arguments about games and from the unexpected application of game studies methods.
- Employ game design and play as unique methods for pursuing scholarly work in the social sciences and humanities.
- Engage in methods of peer review.



Required Materials

All **reading materials** for this course will be available to students through D2L (d2l.depaul.edu) or through the DePaul Library. Use your DePaul credentials to gain access to the library materials

Selected games will be made available to students on D2L and through the Game Play Lab.



Course Structure

Flex Synchronous Class

This class will be operating in a Flex Modality, meaning we will have a section of students joining synchronously online via Zoom.

Students registered for the online synchronous version of the class **MAY NOT** attend in person.

If you are registered for the face-to-face version of the class and plan to join online due to illness, please email the instructor by 4:00 PM.



Grading Breakdown

Class sessions will combine lectures on game design topics, with analysis of particular games and in-class design and play activities. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading, homework, and gameplay before class time.

Assignment Component	%
Participation	20%
Student-facilitated Discussion	10%
Annotated Concept Document	10%
Game Prototype	10%
Final Game Project	15%
Postmortem Report	15%
Weekly reading worksheets	20%

Contesting Grades

Students wishing to contest a grade may do so during office hours or by appointment a minimum of 24 hours and a maximum of a week after assignments have been returned.

GAM 530	
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	89
B	81-88
B-	80
C+	79
C	71-78
C-	70
D+	69
D	61-69
D-	60
F	0-59

GAM 397	
A	90-100
A-	87-89
B+	84-86
B	80-83
B-	77-79
C+	74-76
C	70-73
C-	67-69
D+	64-66
D	60-63
D-	57-59
F	0-56

Assessment Policies

"[Games are] art, and art is subjective. What [I am grading] you on is your [design] as it relates to this [course]."

-Paraphrased from The Boulet Brothers, *Dragula* season 3.

This class is about exploring the relationship between theory and practice, which can be difficult, murky, and confusing. I understand we all come to games with our own talents and visions for design, and theories we explore will probably challenge our creativity and make us confront difficult things. As such, I understand that we will make mistakes, mess up, and fail.

What I am looking for in these moments is **what you learned in the process** of wrestling with theory and design. To this extent, there will be moments that you will be self-assessing your work.



Assignment Policies

No mini-game games! These are deceptively involved and are out of scope for this class. It's better to make 1 thoroughly considered and designed game than 3 "meh" ones.

All assignments are due on the indicated date at the beginning of class. Detailed assignment sheets and rubrics will be posted on D2L.

Unless there are unforeseen circumstances, assignments will usually be graded and returned within one week of the due date.

Important note on crediting work

Submitting projects or exercises with assets, including code, that is not written by the submitter and does not include credit for the original source is plagiarism and will result in an Academic Integrity Policy violation (see Academic Integrity and Plagiarism section). Your work will be evaluated based on your own original work. **You must credit/cite anything content, code, image, writing, or idea that is not your own.**



Late Work, Absences, Make-Ups, and Extra Credit

Students submitting **late work** should not expect feedback in the same timeframe as assignments submitted on time. *Exception:* Students with extreme circumstances should contact the Dean of Students Office who will then contact your instructors (including me) and we will work out an alternative approach.

Makeup Work: Students are allowed to resubmit work for regrading. The student will submit a brief document addressing how they incorporated feedback from the initial assignment along with the iterated assignment. All work considered for regrading must be submitted by the beginning of Week 10. If the original submission was late, the resubmission will only be eligible for the number of total points possible minus any late penalties (if an assignment was submitted 2 course meetings late, a resubmission may receive up to 80%).

Extra credit will be given at the instructor's discretion, this usually involves attending a design or games related lecture and writing a reflection.



Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as

responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.



Resources for Students

Writing Center

I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit www.depaul.edu/writing for more information.

Idea Realization Lab (IRL)

The Idea Realization Lab is a resource available to the entire DePaul University community, from students to alumni, faculty, and staff. They provide machines, tools, and materials at no cost, and offer workshops to teach visitors how to use the equipment safely. Their goal is to foster a spirit of collaboration and to promote creativity across the campus and throughout the city of Chicago.

I encourage you to make use of the IRL, including prototyping your design and getting a consultation from the staff there. This space is a great resource for all levels of the design and development process. Visit <http://irl.depaul.edu/> for more information.

Contact Info:

Email: idearealizationlabdpu@gmail.com

Phone: (312) 362-1451

Location:

Room 310

14 E Jackson Blvd

The Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) is primarily responsible for meeting the urgent needs of students by providing clear and critical support structures in times of need. Additionally, the department helps develop and maintain community standards in order to facilitate a safe and healthy campus environment for our students. The Dean of Students Office provides the administrative withdrawal and absence notification processes, and can help students identify campus and community resources in times of personal and/or family crises and medical emergencies.

The Dean of Students Office at DePaul University promotes student learning and ethical decision making in an inclusive and student-centered environment. Utilizing a

comprehensive approach to student advocacy that is informed by DePaul's Catholic, Vincentian, and urban mission, the office collaborates with students, staff, faculty, parents and community partners to support students in reaching their academic and personal success.

Contact Info:

Phone: 773-325-7290

Email: deanofstudents@depaul.edu

Or visit their [Website](#)

Location:

Lincoln Park Campus

Student Center, Suite 307

2250 N. Sheffield Ave.



DePaul and College-Specific Policies

NAME & GENDER PRONOUNS

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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) by emailing csd@depaul.edu and/or visiting one of the locations below.

Loop Campus

Lewis Center Suite 1420

25 East Jackson Blvd

phone: (312) 362-8002

fax: (312) 362-6544

tty: (773) 325-7296

Lincoln Park Campus

Student Center, Suite #370

2250 N Sheffield Ave

phone: (773) 325-1677

fax: (773) 325-3720

tty: (773) 325-7296

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.depaul.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PLAGIARISM

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found on DePaul's [academic integrity website](#). If you have any questions, be sure to consult with your professor.

SEXUAL AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

As a DePaul community, we share a commitment to take care of one another. Classroom relationships are based on trust and communication. Sometimes, material raised in class may bring up issues for students related to sexual and relationship violence. In other instances, students may reach out to faculty as a source of help and support. It is important for students to know that faculty are required to report information reported to them about experiences with sexual or relationship violence to DePaul's Title IX Coordinator. Students should also know that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence in course assignments or discussion does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response.

Students seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7777; Loop: 312-362-8400) or the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7290; Loop: 312-362-8066 or titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu).

Students seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or hpw@depaul.edu). More information is available at the [Office of Health Promotion and Wellness website](#). Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services and to seek help around sexual and relationship violence for themselves as well as their peers who may be in need of support.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL AND OTHER 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 registration policies can be found at [DePaul Central](#).

WITHDRAWAL

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (campusconnect.depaul.edu). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL

Administrative Withdrawal Appeals are submitted to and processed by the Dean of Students Office, and allow students to be retroactively withdrawn from classes for medical, mental health or personal crises even after the term has ended. More information is available on the [Division of Student Affairs](#) website.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the [Absence Notification form](#) through the [Dean of Students office](#). Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

SYLLABUS CHANGES AND ERRORS

The instructor may make changes and updates to the course syllabus and schedule as needed. Students will be notified of any changes. If you find any broken links, outdated information, or other content that just seems “off” somehow, please let me know so I can fix it. I really do appreciate students helping me find and fix mistakes or confusing wording in my materials.



Resources for Students in Need of Support

Safety and Mental health safety are important. If you find yourself in a state of distress, depression, or unsafe circumstances, please make use of any of the following resources should you seek counseling.

DEPAUL STUDENT COUNSELING

Full time and Part time DePaul students may schedule appointments with the University Counseling Service Info here:

<https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/counseling/Pages/default.aspx>

The front desk staff is working remotely and will answer your call directly. If they are taking another call, please leave a message and your call will be returned within a business day. **If you would like to be contacted by a counselor please call (773) 325-7779 or (312) 362-6923.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES EXTERNAL TO DEPAUL

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Phone: 1-800-273-8255

Online chat feature: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Available 24/7. Offers help in more than 200 languages. All calls are free and confidential.

Phone: 1-800-799-7233

Chat online with someone: <https://www.thehotline.org/>

The Trevor Project

For young LGBTQ persons in crisis or in need of someone to talk to:

Phone: 1-866-488-7386

Text START to 678678

Chat online by visiting: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/>

Trans Lifeline

A peer support hotline managed by trans people for trans people.

Phone: 877-565-8860