

# GAM 520: Game Design Proseminar

Wednesday 5:45PM–9:00PM  
CDM Room 920

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## Overview

In this foundational seminar course, students are exposed to significant written works that examine the medium of games in historical, cultural, and social contexts. Students analyze and interpret games in classroom discussions and written explorations that reveal the meaning and values of games as cultural artifacts. In doing so, they learn to situate their own critical practice within the history of the medium.

*The class schedule is available on D2L*

## Course Objectives

- Define the medium of games in terms of its technical, sensual, and conventional affordances
- Situate creative practice within historical, aesthetic, and social contexts;
- Critique games from a variety of perspectives including historical, aesthetic, and social.
- Synthesize perspectives from written texts into arguments about game design
- Recognize the diverse possibilities of games as an expressive medium

## Materials

You will need to purchase three books for this class. Physical or digital are both fine.

- *Introduction to Game Analysis* by Clara Fernandez-Vara (available for rent on Amazon)
- *Play Matters* by Miguel Sicart
- *How Games Move Us: Emotion by Design* by Katherine Isbister

Additional readings for the course will be provided as PDFs on D2L or as links. You are expected to take notes, prepare questions for discussion, and bring the readings to class each week. As usual, make sure to research the authors and think about the context of its publication.

This semester will rely heavily on our ability to talk about games and play them together. Some weeks, we will be meeting in the Gameplay Lab to look at console games. Other weeks, we'll play games on our own laptops or lab PCs or phones or whatever the heck games are on these days.

You should take this semester as an opportunity to play a variety of games, watch videos, and seek out new experiences that will inform your perspective as a designer. Games may also be assigned as homework.

## Grading

There is one project in this class worth 75% of your grade: a video essay consisting of gameplay video you have captured narrated with script you have written. There will be drafts due during the term which we will review at together to prepare you for the final project.

The remaining 25% of your grade will be assessed based on your preparation for class and participation in discussions.

The grading scale 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, play sessions, and on Slack. 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, texting/messaging, 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/](http://www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/)