

## **SYLLABUS: GAM 229: Presentation & Communication**

### **Class Meeting Time & Location**

Tuesday & Thursday 10:10am – 11:40am  
CDM 220

### **Instructor**

Mischa Hiessboeck

Office: CDM 430

Office hours: M, W 1:20pm - 3:00pm  
                  Tu 9:00am - 10:10am

[mhiessbo@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mhiessbo@cdm.depaul.edu)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

GAM 229 focuses on effective oral communication for designers in the professional world and beyond. While teaching various presentation formats and techniques, GAM 229 aims to raise students' awareness for the "human" aspects of becoming an effective communicator and offers experimental, creative solutions to communication problems, such as team or client issues. Based on psychology research and playful methodologies, this course offers insights on what it takes to "hear others" and "be heard" as well as experiments with creating constructive, productive, playful work environments and team relationships. This course targets all design disciplines and deliberately avoids any domain specific subjects.

PREREQUISITE(S): none

### **LEARNING GOALS:**

In this course, students learn to

- Break down and communicate design ideas
- Prepare and give compelling oral presentations in various formats
- Develop an identity as a presenter / designer
- Become an effective, compassionate communicator
- Acquire a toolbox of creative techniques to improve "presence" and address and resolve communication and collaboration issues

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

No required textbook.

Useful books and other resources will be suggested throughout the course. Complementary reading and other supportive materials will also be posted on D2L under contents.

### **D2L**

We are using D2L (<http://d2l.depaul.edu>) as the supporting learning platform for this course. All course materials including weekly lecture slides and class info (i.e. syllabus, lesson plan, assignment descriptions etc.) are available through D2L under "contents".

Assignments are submitted to its dedicated submission folder on D2L. This is also where you will get written feedback to your assignments from me.

## POLICIES

- **Participation and Attendance:** You are expected to attend all classes and participate in class activities as scheduled. Do not underestimate the importance of attendance and participation in this class. Showing up, after all, is a core ingredient of communicating and presenting effectively. Further, presentations are a community endeavor. No audience, no presentation – you are only talking to yourself. Do your colleagues the courtesy of being a supportive audience. Your contribution is crucial not only to your performance as an individual, but also to the outcome of the class as a whole. As stated below, 20% of your grade depends on participation. You should not assume that these points are “a given”. On the contrary, participation must be earned by showing up on time to every class, displaying full engagement in all discussions and activities, completing all assignments, and listening actively and attentively to the instructor and your peers.

Regarding attendance, 1/3 of a letter grade will be docked from your final grade in the course for each absence beyond two (2). For example, if you end the class with an A-, but have missed 4 classes in total. Your final grade would be a B. Think of the two “free” absences as sick days or emergency days. If you use them for other reasons early in the term, you may find yourself in a bind if you get sick later on, or need to miss class for a family emergency. Because it is impossible for me to determine fairly what constitutes a compelling reason to miss class, there are no excused absences beyond these two. In all cases, please make every effort to contact me and explain the circumstances of your absence before you miss class. Always check with me about any work or assignments you may have missed.

Please be aware that being absent on a day you are assigned to present will result in a grade of zero for that presentation assignment. You will know your presentation date for each assignment at least one week before the presentations begin. Since you will be aware of your schedule well in advance, no unforeseen conflicts should arise and thus no make-up presentations will be permitted. Should dire circumstances render you physically unable to present on the agreed-upon day, you must make every effort to contact me and explain your circumstances prior to the class. Examples of circumstances that would make you physically unable to present include a highly contagious illness, accidents, or deaths in the family. Of you have a cold or other minor illness, you will still be expected to present. The presentation grade will account for the fact that you were not at your physical best.

**Tardiness:** please arrive to class on time! Tardiness under any circumstances is disruptive to the class as a whole. Habitual lateness, however, is a sure sign of disrespect to your classmates. As such, it will be factored into your participation grade as the instructor sees fit. If for some reason you have a class schedule that makes it physically impossible for you to arrive by 10:10am, please let me know by the end of the first week of classes so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Otherwise, all students are expected to be ready to begin class at 10:10am.

- **Late assignments:** very few assignments can actually be turned in late in this class (see next point). For those that could theoretically be turned in late, I will accept them ONLY if you (1) contact me at least 6 hours before the due date and (2) turn in the assignment within three days of the due date. Each day the assignment is late will decrease the possible point value by 10%.
- Please note that some of the main assignments for this class require your presence in class on the due date or provide the basis for in-class exercises. Extensions on these assignments cannot be granted. If you do not manage to deliver these assignments on time, you receive 0 points for them.
- All documents delivered in this class are expected to be clear, spell-checked, and demonstrate a high proficiency in written English. The University Center for Writing-based Learning offers free one-on-one professional advice from published writers about all types of academic, creative, and professional writing and oral presentations. Go to

<http://condor.depaul.edu/writing/> for more information and to set up appointments.

- Email: Email is the preferred means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. My email is [mhiessbo@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mhiessbo@cdm.depaul.edu).
- 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: <https://offices.depaul.edu/academic-affairs/faculty-resources/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/student-faqs.aspx>
- 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 <https://www.depaul.edu/university-catalog/academic-handbooks/code-of-student-responsibility/general-information/Pages/student-rights.aspx>
- 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 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 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  
<https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx>  
[csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)

### **Important Dates AQ 2018**

Jan 18<sup>th</sup>: Last day to drop classes with no penalty

Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>: Last day to withdraw from WQ2019 classes

Mar 29<sup>th</sup>: Final Grades Due

### **ORGANIZATION and ASSESSMENT**

GAM 229 meets twice a week. Class sessions combine lectures on design writing and presentation, effective communication, as well as hands-on exercises to strengthen team and client relationships, resolve communication issues, and several individual student and team presentations. This course pursues three goals: A) to create a safe environment in which students can get comfortable and practice expressing their ideas in front of an audience of their peers and B) to get a taste for what it means to communicate design ideas “in the real world” for various purposes. C) promote an authentic, playful and creative approach towards building productive relationships and prevent / resolve communication and collaboration issues.

All exercises and assignments are meant to help students develop and effectively convey their ideas by emphasizing often overlooked aspects of communication and collaboration such as the importance of

deep listening, observation, active constructive response, paying attention, etiquette, authenticity and improvisation. GAM 229 aims to help students to strengthen their relationships through effective and compassionate communication and develop a strong identity and a point of view as designer and presenter. The class will strongly emulate “real life” scenarios, so be prepared for some surprises.

All original IP for the designs belong to the students of the class. Passing off existing IPs as your own, even in the context of this class, counts as plagiarism. Declare openly where you are using somebody else’s ideas.

## **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

### **Individual assignments:**

Participation – 20%

Presentations:

- identity presentation - 10%
- pecha kucha on inspiration - 10%
- pecha kucha on company - 10%
- final presentation or do over presentation - 20%

Reflections:

- 5 self-observation blurbs à 4% each
- 1 progress reflection – 5%

Unplugged gathering observation blurb: 5%

Detailed descriptions of assignments incl. their grading rubrics are posted week by week under “contents” on D2L, at least one week before assignments are due.

**LESSON PLAN:** please note that this lesson plan and the assignments are not part of the syllabus anymore and liable to change:

Session 01 Jan 8	<b>LECTURE</b>  TOPIC: INTRO - WELCOME TO THE PLAYSPACE  Introductions and course overview (syllabus, lesson plan) Lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what is “playspace”? Why should we have one?</li> <li>• What is improv? Why use it in a presentation &amp; communication class?</li> </ul> In class exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warm up, paying attention, listening, impromptu presentation</li> </ul>	Session 02 Jan 10	<b>LECTURE</b>  TOPIC: DEALING WITH JITTERS & PRESENTATION AS CONVERSATION  Assign: #1 Self-observation blurb 1 (due 01/10)  # 2: Identity Presentation (due 01/17)
Session 03 Jan 15	<b>LECTURE</b>  TOPIC: AUTHENTICITY, POINT of VIEW, PURPOSE  Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authenticity and purpose</li> <li>• <a href="#">TED talk: Simon Sinek: how great leaders inspire action</a></li> <li>• Stanford: purpose learning: <a href="http://www.stanford2025.com/purpose-learning/">http://www.stanford2025.com/purpose-learning/</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">TED talk: Tony Robbins: Why we do what we do</a></li> </ul>	Session 04 Jan 17	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: IDENTITY / PURPOSE PRESENTATIONS, part 1  2 min (Designer) Identity speeches, part 1  <i>Due: Assignment 2</i>  Assign: #3 Self-observation blurb 2 (due 01/24)
Session 05 Jan 22	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: IDENTITY / PURPOSE PRESENTATIONS, part 2  2 min (Designer) Identity speeches, part 2	Session 06 Jan 24	<b>LECTURE</b>  TOPIC: THE POWER OF STORY  Lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Resonate”</li> <li>• <a href="#">TED talk: Nancy Duarte: the structure of great speeches</a></li> </ul> <i>Due: Assignment 3</i>  Assign: #4 Pecha Kucha on Design Inspiration DRAFT (due 01/31)
Session 07 Jan 29	<b>LECTURE</b>  TOPIC: PREPARATION  Assign: #5 Pecha Kucha on Design Inspiration (due 02/05)	Session 08 Jan 31	<b>OUT OF TOWN WORKSHOP</b>  Pecha Kucha on Design Inspiration  <i>Due: Assignment 4</i>

Session 09 Feb 5	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: PECHA KUCHA on DESIGN INSPIRATION, Part I  <i>Due: Assignment 5</i>  Assign: #6 Self-observation blurb 3 (due 02/12)	Session 10 Feb 7	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: PECHA KUCHA on DESIGN INSPIRATION, Part II
Session 11 Feb 12	<b>LECTURE</b>  DESIGNING THE PRESENTATION; VISUAL AIDS  Lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tom Phillips</a> (3:56min)</li> <li>• Presentation Design</li> </ul> In class: critique Pecha Kucha visuals from week before  <i>Due: Assignment 6</i>  Assign: #7 Unplugged social gathering blurb (due 02/19)  # 8 Pecha Kucha on Company DRAFT (due 02/19)  #9 Pecha Kucha on Company (due 02/21)	Session 12 Feb 14	<b>LECTURE</b>  TOPIC: DELIVERY, STAR MOMENTS, BODY LANGUAGE  Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Art of Being Completely Present</li> <li>• TED talk: Amy Cuddy: <a href="#">Your body language may shape who you are</a></li> </ul> Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morgan, Nick. "<a href="#">How to Become an Authentic Speaker</a>." <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, November 2008.</li> </ul>
Session 13 Feb 19	<b>WORKSHOP</b>  Workshop your Pecha Kuchas in class  <i>Due: Assignment 7 &amp; 8</i>	Session 14 Feb 21	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: PECHA KUCHA JOB / COMPANY PITCH, Part I  <i>Due: Assignment 9</i>  Assign: #10 Self-observation blurb 4 (due 02/28)
Session 15 Feb 26	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: PECHA KUCHA JOB / COMPANY PITCH, Part II	Session 16 Feb 28	<b>LECTURE</b>  TOPIC: WRITING A GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT  <i>Due: Assignment 10</i>  Assign: #11 Final / Do Over Presentation DRAFT (due 03/07)  #12 Final / Do Over Presentation (due 03/12)

Session 17 Mar 5	<b>WORKSHOP</b>  GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT	Session 18 Mar 7	<b>WORKSHOP / Open Work Session</b>  <i>Due: Assignment 11</i>
Session 19 Mar 12	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: (DO OVER) PRESENTATION, Part I  <i>Due: Assignment 12</i>  Assign: #13 Self-observation blurb 5 (due 03/21)  #14 Progress reflection (due 03/21)	Session 20 Mar 14	<b>APPLICATION</b>  TOPIC: (DO OVER) PRESENTATION, Part II
Mar 19	<b>NO CLASS</b>	Session 21 Mar 21	<i>FINAL - but we don't have a final!</i>  <b>IF NEED BE:</b> TOPIC: (DO OVER) PRESENTATION, Part III  <i>Due:</i> <i>Assignment 13 &amp; 14</i>

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