GAM 395: Game Development Project I

Winter 2019
Tue/Thurs, 10:10 PM—11:40 PM
Daley Building, Rm 505

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Overview

Students work in teams to design and develop a videogame that demonstrates their mastery of game design and development. Additionally, students will reflect on ethical decision making and professional ethics in the game industry. This course and its prerequisite, GAM 394, must be taken consecutively.

Objectives

By the end of the quarter, you will:

- Experience a full game development production cycle (from concept to asset production) within a collaborative context.
- Learn how to scope a game design idea based on available time, resources, and expertise.
- Gain experience working in cross-functional teams.
- Practice evaluating game design ideas, game prototypes, and demos in order to improve their quality.

Course Structure

Main Deliverable. *The main deliverable of the two-quarter course is to design and develop an original, fun, indie game.* Capstone I (winter quarter) students will deliver an alpha build of a game, defined as a demo that articulates the core gameplay, art, animation, and audio concept; in Capstone II (spring quarter) students will create a demo build, defined as 1-minute of awesome gameplay experience which includes exemplary animation, art, writing, and audio.

Milestones. Your team's work each quarter will consist of hitting several different milestones for the project. These represent important steps in the development process that every game needs to pass through. This quarter, you will be working with me in the first week to set two major milestones for Week 5 and Week 10. These will be detailed descriptions of what you plan to accomplish and will form the basis of your team and individual evaluations.

Best Practices. In the team contract you will outline the formal expectations that shape your team. Additionally, there are some best practices that will help you get the most out of your capstone experience both as an educational experience and working towards your career in the game industry.

Time: To create a polished game in such a short period requires dedicated work from the whole team. Most capstone students spend around 20 hours on their game each week.

Location: Working in the same space is crucial for some creative decisions, morale, and troubleshooting. Try to find somewhere at DePaul to work as a team for at least 6 hours each week.

Requesting Help & Feedback: It is easy to get myopic about a game you're working on and miss the sprite for the pixels. Ideally you should be asking for feedback from someone at least twice a day. You should try to vary the people you ask—your classmates are a huge resource, as are your friends and colleagues at DePaul. It is also important to give help to your classmates who ask, because it keeps you flexible and gives you perspective on your own game.

Constantly Update & Build: It is important that you remember to upload the work that you've done to your group's project. Each piece of development can have a big impact on other people, and you need to keep the group up to date. Also take the time to make regular builds that you can use to share and playtest.

Assessment
Your grade will be based on the following three elements:

Participation (10%)
Participation in this class looks a little different than most. It is based on two factors: whether you communicate regularly with your team members and the class through Slack or another tool; and a list of every part of the game you worked on that you'll keep updated and submit at the end of the quarter.

A	100-93
A-	92-88
B+	87-83
B	82-78
B-	77-73
C+	72-68
C	67-63
C-	62-58
D	57-50
F	49-0

Individual Milestones (2.5% *10)
In conversation with you and your producer, I will be doing individual check-ins about what your tasks are for the following week and whether you accomplished them. These will be marked on a pass/fail basis.

Group Milestones and Reflections(20% each)
You will have two milestone submissions this quarter with an in-class playtest day following each one. At the start of the quarter we will work together to list the criteria that your team should meet for each of these milestones. You will submit a working build to me, and your group will get a grade depending on how well you meet your goals.

In addition to the milestone, each team member will submit a 5 page design reflection the class after the milestone is due. These reflections will involve you taking a step back and trying to analyze your game as an outside observer, as well as commenting on your own process over the quarter. The two reflections will have slightly different prompts provided a week before the milestone is due.

Course Policies

D2L & Other Tools
We are using D2L (http://d2l.depaul.edu) as a platform for this course. All course materials including readings, weekly lecture slides, and class information (syllabus, lesson plan, assignment descriptions) are available through D2L under 'Contents.' Other important tools and resources are also available on D2L under the 'Resources' folder.

Participation & Attendance
This course is largely focused on the process of creation rather than the product. Attendance is crucial for giving feedback to your peers, receiving feedback from them, working through technical problems, and learning from each step. You are expected to attend every class. You are allowed up to three absences, excused or unexcused, throughout the quarter. A fourth absence will lower your grade by one whole letter (for example, A- to B-).

Attitude & Civil Discourse

In this class we will make a commitment towards creating an inclusive and just space for learning and working. A collaborative effort between the students and the teacher is the only way to create a supportive environment. If a class member says that something you have said or shared with the group is offensive, it is important to listen to them. This can be a valuable opportunity for everyone present to better understand our community and the values we hold through further discussion. All class members are encouraged to discuss such instances with the instructor so they can be addressed with greater care in the future.

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.

Tutoring and Tutorials
The College of Computing and Digital Media offers a tutoring center as an additional resource to students. Use the tutoring website to set up an appointment:
https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Student-Resources/Pages/TutoringProgram.aspx

DePaul also subscribes to the online tutorial service Lynda.com. For details on how to log in for free with your DePaul credentials, see:
https://offices.depaul.edu/information-services/services/technology-training/Pages/online-training.aspx

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.

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

Student Rights

You have rights as a student. 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

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name or gender pronoun of your choice. 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
http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332

Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center # 370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx for services and contact information.

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.

Important Dates

Students are encouraged to follow the official calendar at:
https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx

September 10th, Begin Fall Quarter Classes
September 17th, Last day to add (or swap) classes
September 24th, Last day to drop classes with no penalty
October 29th, Last day to withdraw from Fall classes
November 19th, End of Fall Quarter Classes
November 20th, Fall quarter exams begin
November 26th, End of Fall quarter 2019
December 5th, Fall grades due