

GAME 230 History of Computer Game Design
Fall 2017 – Section 003
Thursday 1:30 – 4:10 PM, Art and Design Room 2002

Instructor and Contact Info

- Instructor: Josiah Lebowitz
- Office: Art and Design, Room 2015
- Office Phone: 703-993-8823
- E-Mail: jlebowi2@gmu.edu
- Office Hours: Monday & Thursday: 12:00 – 1:30 PM and On Request
- General Notes: Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns, or just to chat about the course, games, and the like. **The best contact method is e-mail.** I will normally reply to all course related e-mails with 24 hours (48 hours during weekends and holidays). I am generally available for phone calls and in-person visits during my office hours, but it's still best to check ahead of time and let me know when you want to come by. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be arranged at other times if necessary.

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive survey of the history of video games. The class begins by exploring ancient games, early mechanical novelty machines, pinball and computers. The bulk of the class examines arcade games, modern console games, and game hardware. This class will detail the people, the technology, and the companies that have made video games the multibillion dollar industry that it is today. Hands-on study and analysis will include writing about, discussing, and playing games past and present.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will:

- A. Have a broad understanding of the significant early video games
- B. Be able to identify the advances in the technologies that shaped the games industry
- C. Be able to write effectively about the history of computer games/video games
- D. Be able to identify and discuss key persons in computer gaming history
- E. Understand the lineage of notable companies and games in the game industry

Requirements and Evaluation

Students should come to class prepared to discuss any and all material covered in the assigned readings. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, videos, hands-on gameplay, and group activities.

Students will show their knowledge and mastery of the material via tests and a set of short research papers focused on important games, hardware, and industry figures. These assignments will be spread evenly throughout the semester. A schedule and assignment list is included in this syllabus. Further details can be found on Blackboard.

All references and quotations used in writing assignments must be cited in APA format.

Students' final grades are calculated by comparing their scores to the maximum possible score. The breakdown is as follows:

- 70% - Projects and Assignments
- 20% - Tests
- 10% - Attendance / Class Participation

A: 90–100 B: 80–89.9 C:70–79.9 D: 60–69.9 F: 0–59.9

Course Schedule and Assignments

Start Date	Section Name	Due Date
8/28	Before Video Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment 	9/3
9/4	The Beginning of the Industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment • Early Game Assignment 	9/17
9/18	The Rise and Fall of Atari <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment • Industry Icon Assignment 	10/1
10/2	A Plumber Saves the Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment • Franchise Comparison Assignment • Game History Quiz 1 	10/15
10/16	Mario vs. Sonic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment • 16-bit Era Console Assignment 	10/29
10/30	Enter Sony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment • Influential Game Assignment 	11/12
11/13	A Four Way Battle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment • Console Wars Assignment 	11/26
11/27	The Expanding Industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Future of the Industry Assignment • Game History Quiz 2 	12/10

University Holidays

9/4 (Mon) Labor Day

10/9 (Mon) Columbus Day

11/22 – 26 (Wed – Sun) Thanksgiving Break

Required Texts and Materials

The Ultimate History of Video Games: From Pong to Pokemon

By Steven L. Kent

ISBN: 0761536434

Assumptions

It is assumed that students are familiar with APA formatting or resources that contain such guidelines for writing assignments. It is also assumed that students have regular access to email and the Internet. Any issues with email or Blackboard access should be taken up with university ITU. Finally, it is assumed that students are familiar with and have regular access to Microsoft Word.

Late Work

Unless otherwise noted, all quizzes, assignments, and projects must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM on their due date. Anything submitted after this time will be considered late. They can still be turned in for credit, but for each day a quiz or assignment is late your score will be reduced by 5%. Unless otherwise noted, the final turn in date for late assignments and quizzes is one week after their original due date. After that, they will automatically receive a score of 0.

Late work will only be accepted without penalty in the case of a documented medical illness or another serious extenuating circumstance. In such cases, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

Class Participation

Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions and activities. While reading assignments and lecture notes will be made available online, in-class lectures and activities will contain additional information, allow students hand-on time with a wider variety of games, and also offer opportunities to earn bonus points via in-class assignments and challenges.

The use of laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc. is allowed in-class for the purposes of note taking, following along with the lecture material, and participating in certain activities. However, all devices must be in silent mode and used in a way that does not disrupt the class or otherwise disturb fellow students.

Online Participation

All course assignments and due dates can be found on Blackboard, along with announcements, lecture notes, and other important information. Many of the assignments must also be submitted via Blackboard. Therefore, it is recommended that students familiarize themselves with Blackboard at the start of the semester and check it regularly. If you have any non-technical questions about Blackboard and how it's utilized as part of the course, don't hesitate to ask.

E-Mail Policy

Students must use their MasonLIVE or gm.u.edu email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Students With Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the professor and contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Honor Code

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Students are expected to follow all University policies and guidelines. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

University Catalog

Students are to be aware of the policies listed in the University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>.

GMU Add/Drop Policy

It is the student's responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled as no credit will be awarded to students who are not. University dates concerning withdrawal can be found in the academic calendar and are not negotiable by the professor.