GAME 210: **Basic Game Design**
Instructor: Professor Boris Willis

Office: Art and Design 2024
Office Hours: MW 11:30-1:00
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Credit Hours: 3
Lectures: 210-004 M 4:30-7:10 PM
210-005 M/W 1:30-2:45 PM
Room: Art and Design, Room 1018
Term: Fall Semester 2017
Phone: (703) 993-3163
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NOTE: The process and content of this class is subject to change.

Course description:
Through the detailed study of historical and current games, students will learn the language and structure needed to develop their own game ideas. Students will learn the many aspects of game development and learn how different development roles contribute to a game's overall design. The elements of game design and process will support class projects.

Objectives:
Students who complete this course will:
A) Be able to evaluate the video game industry and market
B) Have a solid grasp of the game design process
C) Understand elements related to game strategy, theory and design
D) Learn the roles and responsibilities within a game development team
E) Analyze and develop game concepts and proposals
F) Be able to build a video game of their own design using a computer

Requirements and Evaluation:
1. At the beginning of each class meeting, students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, assigned work and game examples. In addition, students should be prepared to discuss with their groups the status and stage of their project(s).

2. Students will learn the concepts and terminology of game development and game studies and be able to write and speak about games in both technical and formal ways. Students should explore and understand games as a form of art but also as a form of persuasive play.

3. The mid-term project shall contain an original game concept developed by the students, to be accompanied by a prototype of the game, along with the appropriate material to define the concept, the core mechanics, the visual look and feel and the intended market for their game. This project will begin early in the semester and build upon itself leading up to the mid-term.

4. For the final, student teams will submit and present a game design document and a working prototype of a team developed game built with an established game engine. Student teams will be self-evaluated as part of the project grade for work contributed, communication and excellence.

5. A series of projects and readings will be assigned to complement most lectures.

6. Some assignments cannot be made up after the due date. Please follow the course outline, Blackboard and email to see when assignments are due.
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7. Frequently save multiple versions of your assignments. Save As to online file sharing sites and to your portable drives so you always have more than one copy. Use the following naming convention for every project, boriswillis_roomdoor_v4 = yourname_project-name_version-number. Do not use spaces when you name your files. I will not accept projects that are not named properly! Older versions of your files may be useful when the latest file gets corrupted and cannot be opened or when you mess things up and want to go back to what you had before.

8. Attending class is crucial when working in a team environment. Missing class means your team members must discuss and make decisions without your input. It often means they don't get updates on your progress as well. Please attend every class and keep your team informed about your progress. Much, if not most of your work will be done outside of class as the creative process demands a lot of trial and error. Please be mindful of this and don't leave your work to the last minute.

9. Bring and use headphones every class.

Required Materials:
1. Games, Design and Play: A Detailed Approach to Iterative Game Design, Macklin, Colleen, Sharp, John. 2016, Addison-Wesley.

2. Notebook with gridlines

3. USB Flash Drive and online file sharing account: For saving/transporting project data

4. Headphones (also invest in a Y connector so more than one person can listen at a time)

5. Construct 3 (free version-limited)

6. PC Desktop/Laptop (for working on projects outside of class)

Recommended Materials:
Unreal Engine 4 (free)

Grading: Level	Name	XP	Letter Grade
25	Choreographer	1860-2000	A+
24	Dancer	1800	A
23	Dragon	1740	A-
22	Unicorn	1660	B+
21	Shape Shifter	1600	B
20	Warden	1540	B-
19	Healer	1460	C+
18	Ranger	1400	C
17	Mage	1340	C-
16	Rogue	1260	D+
15	Ghost	1200	D
14	Novice	1140	F
13	Meta	1040	F
12	Synergy	900	F
11	Gestalt	840	F
10	Trope	760	F
09	Flow	600	F
08	MDA	540	F
07	Script	460	F
06	Polygon	300	F
05	Pixel	240	F
04	Plane	160	F
03	Int	100	F
02	Float	60	F
01	Noob	0-40	F

You will begin as a level one with 0 XP. The highest level you can reach is level 25. Levels are determined by XP. **Experience Points: Total: 2000XP available for the class.**

Participation- 500 XP
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Mid-term 440XP

Class Projects 400XP

Final presentation and project 460XP
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GMU Add/Drop Policy: The last day to drop this class with no tuition liability is September 5th. Last day to drop is September 29th. 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.

Academic Integrity:
Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

GMU Honor Code: http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=22&navoid=4792 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***.

Mason Email Accounts
Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information. All digital communication with the professor must be made using your "masonlive" email account. Please make sure you are not sending me email through your Gmail or Yahoo or other commercial account!

Office of Disability Services
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. Students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, and the specific accommodation will be arranged through the Disability Resource Center. http://ods.gmu.edu

Writing Center: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200 http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

University Libraries http://library.gmu.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; http://caps.gmu.edu

University Policies
The University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

Sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website https://alert.gmu.edu, and an emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises; emergency procedures exists on http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert.
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NOTE: Cell phones, pagers and alarms must be turned off in class. No exceptions.

Course Outline Fall 2016 (Subject to Change)

Week 1

Aug 28: Pixel Art-Space Shooter/Pong Mod
Class requirements and projects. Construct 3 Overview

Aug 30: High Concept/Pong
Class Project: Construct 3
Assignment Due: Pixel Art Projects

Week 2

Sept 4: Labor Day: No classes

Sept 6: Playtest Pong Mod/GDD
Assignment Due: High Concept Doc- Post to Blackboard
Class Project Due- Game 1- Pong Mod

Week 3

Sept 11 Play Solar Fox- Make Moon Wolf or Play slither.io /Make Agario Clone
Assignment Due: (Mid-Term) GDD Draft- Post to Blackboard
Class Project- Game 2- Moon Wolf or Agario Clone in class

Sept 13 Moon Wolf or Agario Clone in Class
Class Project Due: Game 2 Moon Wolf/Agario Clone

Week 4

Sept 8 Class Project- Begin Midterm Game

Sept 20 Class Project- Midterm Game

Week 5

Sept 25
Class Project- Game 3 Midterm Game
Assignment Due: (Mid-Term) GDD Final

Sept 27: Work on Midterm game
Class Project- Midterm Game

Week 6

Oct 2 Work on Midterm game
Class Project- Midterm Game

Oct 4 Marketing, Social Media, Playtesting 1
Assignment Due: Game 4 Midterm Game

Week 7

Oct 9: Columbus Day- No Classes

Oct 10: Mid-Term Project Presentations/ Game Trailer, Poster, Social Media

Oct 11: Mid-Term Game Presentations/Playtesting/Feedback/Game Jam

Week 8

Oct 16: Unreal Engine 4
Create Final Teams (Final game in Construct 2/3)

Oct 18: Kaltura Media
Class Project Due -Unreal Engine 4 Video Screen Capture Kaltura
Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -1-4
Assignment Due: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -1-4

Week 9

Oct 23: Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -5-8
Assignment Due: Games, Design and Play Chapters -5-8

Oct 25: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time

Week 10

Oct 30: Assignment: Team Final GDD Due
Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -9-10

Nov 1: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time
Assignment Due: Final Team GDD

Week 11

Nov 6: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time
Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -11-13

Nov 8: Team Game Progress (Alpha Presentations) Playtest/Feedback

Week 12

Nov 13: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time
Assignment Due: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -11-13

Nov 15: Team Game Progress (Art Lock) Playtest/Feedback

Week 13

Nov 20: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time 8
Team Game Progress (Beta Presentations) Playtest/Feedback

Nov 22: No Classes, Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

Nov 27: Team Game Progress (Code Lock) Playtest/Feedback
Class Project- Final Team Game Lab Time

Nov 29: Class Project- Team Game PowerPoint Due (post to discussion board)

Week 15

Dec 4: Final Team Game Lab Time

Dec 6: Team Project Presentations, Social Media, Marketing Due (Attendance Mandatory)
Assignment Due: Final Team GDD **Updated**
Final Sprint

Final Game Presentation

210-005 1:30 Class
Dec 13 1:30-4:15 Final Game Presentations (Attendance Mandatory)
Assignment Due: Final Team Game
Assignment Due: Final Game Feedback

210-004 4:30 Class
Dec 18 4:30-7:15 Final Game Presentations (Attendance Mandatory)
Assignment Due: Final Team Game
Assignment Due: Final Game Feedback