

GAME 210: Basic Game Design
Instructor: Professor Boris Willis

Office: Art and Design 2024
Office Hours: MW 3:00-4:00
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Credit Hours: 3
Lectures: 210-003 M/W 10:30-11:45 PM
210-005 M/W 1:30-2:45 PM
Room: Art and Design, Room 1018
Term: Fall Semester 2016
Phone: (703) 993-3163
Save Early, Save Often, Save Versions

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. A strong focus on 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 have to 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.

Required Materials:

1. Learning Construct 2, Edition 2014, Subagio, Aryadi Perwira, 2014, Packt Publishing.

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

Recommended Materials:

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

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

Construct 2 (limited free version) Windows Only

Unity

Unreal Engine 4

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

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- 600 XP

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Mid-term 440XP

Class Projects 400XP

Final presentation and project 460XP

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Extra Credit Quizzes 100XP

You must get 100% on each quiz to receive XP. All quizzes are open book however you may not work together.

GMU Add/Drop Policy: The last day to drop this class with no tuition liability is September 6th. Last day to drop is September 30th. 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 29: Class requirements and projects. Photoshop- Pixel Art, Construct 2 Overview

Aug 31: Class Project: Construct 2

Assignment Due: Pixel Art Projects

Reading Assignment: Learning Construct 2: Chapter 1

Week 2

Sept 5: Labor Day: No classes

Sept 7: Reading Assignment: Learning Construct 2: Chapters 2 and 3

Assignment Due: High Concept Doc- Post to Blackboard

Quiz 1 Due: Syllabus

Class Project Due- Game 1

Week 3

Sept 12 Reading Assignment: Learning Construct 2: Chapter 4

Assignment Due: (Mid-Term) Game Document Draft- Post to Blackboard

Class Project- Game 2

Sept 14

Class Project Due: Game 2

Week 4

Sept 19 Reading Assignment: Learning Construct 2: Chapter 5

Sept 21 Class Project- Game 3

Assignment Due: Game 3

Week 5

Sept 26 Reading Assignment: Learning Construct 2: Chapter 6

Class Project- Game 4

Sept 28: Reading Assignment: Learning Construct 2: Chapter 7

Week 6

Oct 3 Learning Construct 2: Chapters 8-10

Assignment Due: (Mid-Term) Pitch Doc Final

Class Project- Game 4

Oct 5 Assignment Due: Game 4

Week 7

Oct 11: Mid-Term Project Presentations

Oct 12: Mid-Term Game Presentations

Week 8

Oct 17: Class Project -Unity

Form Final Teams (Final game in Construct 2)

Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -1-4

Oct 19: Class Project -Unreal Engine 4

Week 9

Oct 24: Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -5-8

Oct 26: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time

Week 10

Oct 31: Assignment: Team Final GDD Due

Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -9-10

Nov 2: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time

Week 11

Nov 7: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time

Reading Assignment: Games, Design and Play- Chapters -11-13

Nov 9: Team Game Progress (Alpha Presentations)

Week 12

Nov 14: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time

Nov 16: Team Game Progress (Art Lock)

Week 13

Nov 21: Class Project- Team Game Lab Time 8

Team Game Progress (Beta Presentations)

Nov 23: No Classes, Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

Nov 28: Team Game Progress (Code Lock)

Class Project- Final Team Game Lab Time

Nov 30: Class Project- Team Game PowerPoint Due (post to discussion board)

Week 15

Dec 5: Final Team Game Lab Time

Dec 7: Team Project Presentations (Attendance Mandatory)

Final Sprint

Assignment Due: Final Team GDD

Final Game Presentation

210-003 Dec 14 10:30-1:15 Final Game Presentations (Attendance Mandatory)

210-005 Dec 14 1:30-4:15 Final Game Presentations (Attendance Mandatory)

Assignment Due: Final Team Game

Assignment Due: Final Game Feedback