

Introduction to Game Studies Section 01

ART 108

Fall 2023 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2023 to 12/06/2023 Modified 08/13/2023

Combined Section 01 and Section 80

Contact Information

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|------------------|-----------------------|
| Instructor: | James Morgan |
| Office Location: | Art 325 |
| Email: | james.morgan@sjsu.edu |
| Office Hours: | M 1230 - 1430 |
| Class Days/Time: | M/W 6:00 pm- 7:15 pm |
| Classroom: | Art 135 |

Course Description and Requisites

Introduction to the systems, design, history, and cultural analysis of games with emphasis on critical studies, development, technological literacy, markets and impact on society.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing or instructor consent.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Student Responsibilities

- Students are responsible for all information presented in lectures and demonstrations, and through assigned readings and web related research.
- Students will present and critique their projects, drafts and proposals in class and on-line.
- Students are responsible for actively engaging in the course material by completing all course assignments and readings.
- In the course of the semester we will undoubtedly talk about things, which are not in the mainstream and may be controversial. If at any time you find the subject or content of this course objectionable you are encouraged bring that into the discussion. If however you find a presentation offensive you are permitted to quietly, without disrupting the class, excuse yourself. It is then your responsibility to contact the instructor for make-up work.
- Additionally students are responsible for their own well-being. If you need help, it is your responsibility to ask for it.

Late Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on time and complete. An assignment will not be considered complete until all elements are uploaded and fully working. Assignments that are turned in on time may be redone for full credit until the last week of class. It is most important to present your work publicly. Note that project presentation days are mandatory, if a project is not presented on a critique day it may be considered late. Late assignments may receive a one time 10% penalty.

Program Information

Department Name: Art and Art History
Department Office: ART 116
Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/art
Department Email: art@sjsu.edu
Department phone number: 408-924-4325

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

LO1 Demonstrate an appreciation for the cultural value of the technologies and strategies used in games through writing and projects;

LO2 Investigate and research user experiences of their own games and those of others;

LO3 Apply researched information to improve player experience;

LO4 Speak and write clearly about their own and others' work;

LO5 Demonstrate and apply technological and information literacy;

LO6 Translate different kinds of subject matter into gaming environments;

LO7 Create original and creative content through the medium of games.

Course Materials

Textbook

Introduction to Game Design, Prototyping, and Development: From Concept to Playable Game with Unity and C#, 2nd Edition, Jeremy Gibson Bond, eText ISBN 9780134659886, print text ISBN 9780134659862

This book is available to you for free through Safari Online books, you need to sign in with your sjsu email and then do:

<https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/introduction-to-game/9780134659909/> I do not have control over this and there is a small possibility that access may be cut off during the semester.

Please also be aware that the library has tremendous resources relating to games and game studies. We have a lib guide at <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/GameStudies>

Other technology requirements

Major software products are listed here so that you may make the decision now whether you are willing to sign up for these accounts. Generally, these software packages have been vetted and are considered safe, however many of them involve online connections and content that is not controlled by the faculty member or school. This is considered fair notice, before the drop date and that there is no penalty for withdrawing from the course at this point.

ADOBE CC - this is provided free to students; you must sign up for an adobe account using your sjsu email and log in via the enterprise option. You can then download the Adobe Cloud Manager and continue to download any of the suite of programs.

<https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/adobe/students/index.html>

Discord - this communication tool requires you to create an account. You can then join our semi-private server. You will have control

over what handle we see and will be able to easily communicate with your group and the class.

Github - you will need to create an account but are then able to host projects and collaborate with others as well as host public web pages. This is where our portfolios will live.

Trello – you will need to make an account to be able to share project management with your team.

Unity – you will need to make an account to be able to download and run Unity. This is required for the digital prototype in Unity.

Piskelapp.com - you may need to make an account or download this 2D art tool. This tool makes animations MUCH easier.

Blog software wordpress.com or medium.com, in order to post your blog publicly, you will need an account. You may use other software, but the requirement is that all of your posts are public, that you can link directly to each post, and that previous posts are easily findable from an existing post.

jackbox.tv – online game play, if you want to host games, you will need to have purchased the game.

Various online game sites, likely flash too (this is the last semester for this). You are always encouraged to question the security of your data and be conservative in creating accounts, but we shall be doing this several times during the semester.

☰ Course Requirements and Assignments

Game labs- 20%

Game labs are structured play or design sessions often followed by brief reflective writing, and in-class discussion. These sessions are done as a group and are very difficult to make up. LO2, LO3.

Blog - 20%

Students will be asked to maintain a weblog to publicly post writings and responses to readings. Students will write no less than 200 words (approximately one 'typed' page and include images). Points will be given for both postings and peer review. LO1, LO4, LO5.

Participation - 10%

Active participation within groups and in discussion is expected. Performance can be tracked in CANVAS beginning the second week of class. LO4

Game 1: paper prototype – 10%

Design, play test and turn in a paper-based game using the readings and your group as a development guide. Games will be evaluated according to the game rubric. LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7.

Game 2: videogame prototype - 10%

Design, play test and turn in a digital game using the readings and your group as a development guide. We shall use Unity for this prototype so that we can see the advantages of a toolkit. Games will be evaluated according to the game rubric. LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7.

Exam -10%

The Exam will cover essential vocabulary and concepts. The class will work on a study guide throughout the semester. LO1.

Final - Paper, Presentation, or Game– 20%

The final project of this course will be negotiated between the individual and the instructor. It may be a formal paper, presentation (video or in person), or third game. This form will be determined by the midterm. LO7.

✓ Grading Information

Each project will be evaluated per the following formula:

Technical Skill (33%) + Aesthetics (33%) + Conceptual Depth (33) = 100% (multiply by points for project)

| | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|------------|--|--|---|
| technical | Project exhibits considerable skill, innovation or extraordinary improvement in skill level and handling of the techniques compared to drafts and previous projects. | Project exhibits some skill or moderate improvement in skill level and handling of the techniques as measured from the drafts and previous projects. | Project is sloppy, rushed or doesn't use techniques learned in class. |
| aesthetic | Project exhibits considerable or extraordinary understanding of color, format, visual quality, composition and other elements appropriate for project. Formal elements support conceptual theme of project. | Project exhibits a working understanding of color, format, print quality, composition and other formal elements appropriate for project. Formal elements partially supports conceptual theme of project. | Little or no consideration for the visual qualities of the work. |
| conceptual | Project exhibits a depth of knowledge and theme. Extraordinary relevancy and knowledge of subject. Visual elements support an idea. | Ideas represented in project are not clear or not realized. | Project is shallow and shows no consideration for a central idea. |

Determination of Grades

- Grades will be determined based on the sum of the areas listed above according to the chart below.
- Extra credit options may be offered or requested.
- Late work may be graded down if submitted within a reasonable time, or not accepted if submitted too late.

Late assignments will only be accepted under unusual, extenuating, or emergency circumstances.

Numeric grade equivalents:

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| 93% and above | A |
| 92% - 90% | A minus |
| 89% - 88% | B plus |
| 87% - 83% | B |
| 82% - 80% | B minus |
| 79% - 78% | C plus |
| 77% - 73% | C |
| 72% - 70% | C minus |
| 69% - 68% | D plus |
| 67% - 63% | D |
| 62% - 60% | D minus |
| below 60% | F |

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Schedule operates by week this will give you an idea of the materials covered, look to CANVAS for actual deadlines.

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|------|--------|---|
| 1 | Aug 21 | Adopt a classic arcade game: https://archive.org/details/internetarcade |
| 1 | Aug 23 | DUE: Blogpost 1: Description of Play: Arcade Game Due (IGDPD) CH 1: Thinking like a designer. Game Lab 0: Race to the Finish |
| 2 | Aug 28 | ludology (what is a game, what is play, how is it related to culture?) playing games, writing that is useful to designers – (Session Reports) Due: (IGDPD) CH 7: Acting like a designer |
| 2 | Aug 30 | EXERCISE: game lab 1 (card game/board game/ physical game) Due (IGDPD) CH 8 design goals |
| 3 | Sep 4 | Labor Day (no class) |
| 3 | Sep 6 | Blogpost 2 Due: Boardgame/Cardgame Lab (IGDPD) CH 9 paper prototyping |
| 4 | Sep 11 | Board Games / Card Games game design 1 |
| 4 | Sep 13 | (IGDPD) CH 10 game testing Rules writing workshop (paper prototype) |
| 5 | Sep 18 | Game Analysis: MDA; DUE: Reading: MDA Framework: http://www.zubek.net/robert/publications/MDA.pdf (IGDPD) CH 2 |

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|------|--------|---|
| 5 | Sep 20 | Paper prototype playtest Blog 3 (Paper Prototype) |
| 6 | Sep 25 | video game engines/ toolkits (IGDPD) CH 11 math and balance &(IGDPD) CH 12 guiding the player |
| 6 | Sep 27 | EXERCISE: game lab 2 – video game play Blog 4 (Video Games Played) |
| 7 | Oct 2 | Unity Platformer Demo |
| 7 | Oct 4 | game design 2 Level Design |
| 8 | Oct 9 | Video Game Design Document (IGDPD) CH 14 agile & (IGDPD) CH 15 industry |
| 8 | Oct 11 | virtual worlds / MMORPG History of Video Games |
| 9 | Oct 16 | (IGDPD) CH 13 puzzle design |
| 9 | Oct 18 | (IGDPD) CH 3 the layered tetrad ludology vs. narratology Jenkins: games as narrative architecture |
| 10 | Oct 23 | Videogame First Playable Blog 5 (first playable) |
| 10 | Oct 25 | casual games / everybody games Super Serious Games / Ineffable |
| 11 | Oct 30 | DUE: Video Game Prototype Blog 6 (video game prototype) |
| 11 | Nov 1 | rpg / larp (IGDPD) CH 4 the inscribed layer Proposal for Final Project Due |

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|--------|--|--|
| 12* | Nov 6 | Game Dev Workshop Week |
| 12* | Nov 8 | Game Dev Workshop Week |
| 12* | Nov 9 | 7pm Game Dev Club in Lower Level of Library |
| 12* | Nov 10 | Veterans day (no class Friday) |
| 13 | Nov 13 | (IGDPD) CH 5 the dynamic layer (IGDPD) CH 6 the cultural layer Modded Gameplay / game mods |
| 13 | Nov 15 | game lab 3 – Jackbox Games blog 7 (technology based non-video games) |
| 14 | Nov 20 | exam Week launches Nov 17 Due Nov 27 |
| 14 | Nov 22-24 | Thanksgiving |
| 15 | Nov 27 | Draft of Final Blog 8 (final project) games as art/ art as games / game art |
| 15 | Nov 29 | Game Criticism and popular media |
| 16 | Dec 4 | Makeup Day |
| | | |
| Final | Dec 6 6-715 Art 135 | Final Presentations (Presentations & Papers) |
| Finals | s1: Art 135 - Mon Dec 11 515-730 s2: Online - Wed Dec 13 1215-230 | (Final Presentations / Final Play) Blog 9 (course reflection) Presentations take place the Dec 2 (online), 5 (in person), 9 (online) & 12 (in person). Students will be asked to attend two of the four sessions and to present their final for one and provide peer review on both days to satisfy the final requirement. |