



## Course Information

### **MART342.50 – *The Art and Science of Interactive Games***

@ The School of Visual and Media Arts

College of the Arts and Media, University of Montana

**Meeting Times:** Fully Online Course (3 cr.), Fall Semester 2022

**Pre-Reqs:** None

**Description:** “Offered every term. Online course. This class is an introduction to the technological achievements and artistic and social impacts involved with the design and development of interactive games. It will cover the evolution of the gaming profile and the advanced visual, sonic, and narrative properties that make interactive games the explosive growth industry that is today. This class is for all students (including beginners and non-majors) with the intent of preparing them for future technical game development courses.”

## Instructor Information

### **Instructor Details**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Justine Evans
<b>Location:</b>	McGill Hall, Rm 225
<b>Biography:</b>	“A design adventurer, technical tinkerer, and media enthusiast, Justine’s research is in web technologies and learning tool interoperability, game design, and play theories. She has worked professionally in videography, illustration, graphic and web design, and her hobbies include watching <i>Godzilla</i> films, code experimenting, and baking.”

### **Instructor Contact**

E-Mail:	<a href="mailto:justine.evans@umontana.edu">justine.evans@umontana.edu</a>
Office Hours:	Online, By Appointment, Zoom
Office Room:	<a href="https://umontana.zoom.us/j/4062434540">https://umontana.zoom.us/j/4062434540</a>

## Course Overview

**Format:** This course is fully online, as are all materials (presented as text, lecture and external videos, digital games, and other interactive activities). Content is delivered asynchronously, and assignments are given 5-7 days ahead of due dates.

**Materials:** The following are required for this course:

- **Reading:** There is no required textbook for this class.
- **Course Games:** Games will need to be purchased for this class, and students are expected to spend between \$60-\$100 on these materials, all of which are available for Mac/PC via [Steam](#) (a free-to-download platform where games can be purchased and played instantly across multiple devices.)  
*Note: Students may play any required course game on any technology they chose. They are free to purchase discs or digital copies for consoles or other available devices.*
- **Course Films:** Students are required to watch 1 or 2 films or program episodes. These titles will be watched outside of class so it is the responsibility of the student to procure and watch them when they are assigned. Access to a Netflix account may be necessary.

**Content:** This course is broken up into three areas of academic exploration, and will be assessed accordingly:

- *Game Design (50%)* - Methods, aesthetics, processes of production, concepts, builds, art styles. Assignments will be pulled from this area of study.
- *Theory (25%)* - Psychological interpretation, sociological reference, and the role of the player. Discussions will mostly deal with these topics.
- *History and Trends (25%)* - The past, present, and future of this industry. This material is utilized throughout all lessons, forums, and assignments.

There are **100 points possible** across 15 topics and divided into 5 categories:

1. 3 Term Exercises (30pts) - At the beginning, middle, and end of the semester students will need to complete 3 exercises. While listed under individual topics on the main page, they are expected to complete them alongside normal topic content. The final is the GDD described below.
2. 15 Game Quizzes (30pts) - Each topic includes a core game. Some games are free and provided, others need to be purchased. These games will take between 15 minutes to 3 hours to complete, with easy quizzes and 1-paragraph prompts to follow.
3. 10 Design Assignments (20pts) - By the end of this course, students will have a basic game proposal completed, called a "10-Page Game Design Document" (GDD) which will be broken-up into assignments during the semester. Assignments will be graded and given feedback, which students can choose to take into account to raise their grade for that portion in the final turn-in.

4. 5 Module Discussions (10pts) - Every three topics, students are expected to participate in a forum citing their experience with the previous core games in relation to the discussion topic.
5. Participation (10pts) - Each section of the course has a collection of subtopics containing learning materials related to a specific concept. These subtopics contain small activities students can choose to participate in. There are 100 in the course, and students must successfully complete (i.e. get 100%) on at least 80 for full participation points.

**Course Learning Objectives:** The purpose of this course is to introduce students to critically thinking about 3 components of the video game experience: the art (or design elements), the science (the technical and production processes involved in creating a game), and the interactive (what differentiates video and computer games from other forms of visual media). This course looks at 60 years of video game production, as well as explores the early elements which contributed to the medium's inception.

On the broader scope, this course will guide students through the surface properties of the games they enjoy and delve deeper into the design and mechanics behind what makes a "successful" and engaging product. This class should help you expand a student's ability to:

- **Conceptual:** Think critically and apply concepts while dissecting past, analyzing current, and contributing to future developments in the games industry.
- **Contributive:** Develop ideas and interact with fellow students, contributing to group discussion as well as creating individual game-based projects and accomplishments.
- **Communicative:** Articulate meaning and concepts behind a student's own likes and dislikes towards interactive gaming, forming personal- and research-based opinions.
- **Contextual:** Understand the place that video and computer gaming has within social, ethical, and contextual spheres.

**College Learning Outcomes:** This course meets the following learning outcomes as set by the mission of the College of Arts and Media (CAM) and School of Visual and Media Arts (SVMA):

- **Creative Thinking:** Knowledge and competence in creative problem-solving as it relates to meaningful visual, audio, and narrative communication.
- **Critical Analysis:** Knowledge and competence in the ability to analyze creative content from the past and present, and articulate the cultural and social impacts.
- **Creative Literacy/Language/Informed Aesthetic:** Demonstrate knowledge of audio, visual, and/or narrative language in both creation and analysis of creative work, which include stylistic, comparative, historical, and formal analysis.
- **Professional Application:** Demonstrate the ability to apply artistic and technical skill sets in a professional environment. Demonstrate skills necessary to organize, manage and promote a professional identity.

## Course Resources

### Educational Resources:

**Moodle 101 for Students:** Feel free to complete the tutorial, [Moodle 101 for Students](#). (When you click on the link, it will ask you to enroll in the course.) This tutorial will go through how to edit your profile, submit assignments, participate in discussion forums and take quizzes within Moodle. Upon completion of the tutorial (approximately 20-30 minutes), you will take a short quiz. When you have passed the quiz, you will receive a certificate indicating that you have successfully completed the tutorial.

### School of Visual and Media Arts (SVMA) Resources:

**Social Media:** Please join SVMA social media to stay informed about events and happenings in our school. Check out our [SVMA Instagram](#).

**Student Art Collective:** The collective is a student–organized and student-led group that sponsors art related workshops, events, and the Annual Juried Student Art Show. Look for informational posters around campus and see [the latest SVMA news](#) for upcoming shows.

### Student Support Resources:

**Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code:** “The Student Conduct Code at the University of Montana embodies and promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights, and responsibilities associated with constructive citizenship in our academic community. This Code describes expected standards of behavior for all students, including academic conduct and general conduct, and it outlines students' rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations.” An [interim version of the Student Conduct Code](#) will take effect on August 1, 2021.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting the ODE office. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Office for Disability Equity (ODE). For more information, please consult the [Office for Disability Equity](#).

**Writing Help:** “The Writing and Public Speaking Center provides one-on-one tutoring to students at all levels and at any time in the writing process. Visit early. Visit often. [The Writing and Public Speaking Center](#) is ready when you are.”

**Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy:** The University of Montana is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, visit the [UM Diversity's Mental Health Resources](#) page.