# **GAT212: Advanced Game Mechanics**

# **Roleplaying Games and Simulations**

# Spring 2015

**Prerequisites:** GAT211

**Schedule:** Tuesday 5:00pm – 8:20pm

**Classroom:** EUCLID

**Professor:** Chris Champagne

**Contact:** [cchampagne@digipen.edu](mailto:cchampagne@digipen.edu) (775) 233-2073

**Class Web Page:** The **GAT212** course at [distance.digipen.edu](http://distance.digipen.edu).

**Office Hours:** 8:30pm – 9:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

*always by appointment*

**Description**

This course focuses on the design of non-digital role-playing games and a variety of non-digital simulation games. Students will work to create an original small role-playing game, a simulation game of their choice, and an additional non-digital game of any kind. Topics may include skill systems, character advancement, equipment variety, realistic combat, strategic simulations, supply systems, economic simulations, vehicle simulations, and sport simulations.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

In this course, students will:

* Learn how to design a basic role-playing game.
* Learn how to design a game that simulates some aspect of the real world accurately.
* Learn how to design interesting skill systems.
* Learn how to design character advancement rules that are satisfying to the player.
* Learn how to design different types of equipment for a role-playing game.
* Learn how to design realistic combat, strategy, supply, and/or economic systems.
* Learn how to simulate sports and vehicles in a realistic way.

**Required Textbooks**

None. Course materials and online resources will be provided.

**Optional Textbooks**

None.

**Outline and Tentative Dates**

This class will roughly follow the outline below, although the order and/or content of the lectures are subject to change. The milestones will only be changed in extreme and unexpected circumstances (and will never be moved earlier).

**Week 1 (6 JAN)**

**Lecture:** Syllabus Overview; Intro to RPGs

**Homework:** Run or play and RPG. RPG Research Paper Assigned.

**Labs:** Live play 1 | Genre introduction

**Week 2 (13 JAN)**

**Lecture:** RPG Stats, Abilities, and Classes | World Building

**Homework:** Establish RPG project tone, title and type

**Labs:** Live Play 2

**Week 3 (20 JAN)**

**Lecture:** Character Building | Skill, Feat Systems

**Labs:** TBD

**Week 4 (27 JAN)**

**Lecture:** Simulation inside the RPG

**Homework:** RPG Paper DUE.

**Labs:** Workshop on the basic system thus far

**FOUNDERS Day Break on 3 FEB (No classes)**

**Week 5 (10 FEB)**

**Lecture:** Character Generation / Basic Combat Playtest

**Labs:** Playtest exercise 1 and 2

**Week 6 (17 FEB)**

**Lecture:** Weather, Sports, Vehicles in the RPG | Equipment in RPGs

**Homework: RPG Draft v1 Assigned**

**Labs:** Character generation, Combat system shake out

**Week 7 (24 FEB)**

**Lecture:** Narrative Arcs | Reward Systems | Character Advancement

**Homework:**

**Labs:**

**SPRING Break 2-6 MAR (No classes) & GDC**

**Week 8 (10 MAR)**

**Lecture:** RPG presentations

**Homework:** Presentations DUE. RPG Draft Due. Simulation Group Presentation Assigned.

**Labs:** Presentations and Q&A

**Week 9 (17 MAR)**

**Lecture: Adventure Building | Maps, Rewards, Rest and Pacing**

**Labs:** Simulations integration into Adventures and Game framework. Simulation Group Presentation Workshop

**Week 10 (24 MAR)**

**Lecture:** Serious games | Games for Learning | Training simulations

**Labs:** Simulations Group Presentation **Due**

**Week 11 (31 MAR) Adventure playtest**

**Lecture:** Adventure and Simulation integration play test

**Labs:** Student grading and feedback of draft

**Week 12 (7 APR)**

**Lecture:** Economic Systems

**Labs:** Economic game play test

**Homework:** Final Versions Playtests Due

**Week 13 (14 APR)**

**Lecture:** Simulations/Final Game Presentations begin (Player | GM | Adventure | Simulation)

**Labs:** Presentations Q&A

**Week 14 (21 APR) FINAL PROJECT DUE**

**Lecture:** Any final presentations

**Labs:** None

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**Grading Policy**

Grades for this class are primarily based on the submissions for the two projects. The student’s final grade is modified by attendance penalties and penalties for poor lab preparation and/or participation. A student can also get a bonus for exceptional lab preparation, analysis and testing.

**Overall Grade Weighting**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 15% | RPG Comparison Paper |
| 5% | RPG Presentation (Draft 1) |
| 5% | RPG Character Generation and Combat Play Test exercise |
| 5% | RPG SIM Playtest (Final Version) |
| 15% | Simulation Group Presentation |
| 15% | Final game/Simulation Presentation |
| 15% | RPG Draft v1 |
| 25% | Final game product and Simulation |
| -5% | Every unexcused absence from a lecture or lab |
| -2% | Every lab student is not prepared for analysis or testing |

**Mechanisms and Procedures**

There are a variety of procedures and mechanisms used in this class to make it run as smoothly as possible.

**Instructor Questions and Meetings**

You will undoubtedly have many questions for the instructors and will often wish to have individual meetings as well. In addition to asking questions through email, if you talk with an instructor in person (whether in class or otherwise) and there is some follow-up action the instructor has agreed to perform, you must email that instructor with a reminder. If you don’t send a follow-up email, whatever you talked about will be forgotten and not followed up on (regardless of what the instructor said at the time). Making follow-up emails a habit is excellent practice for the real-world of working with busy bosses, producers, executives, etc.

**Attendance**

Attendance at all labs and lectures is required, although if you email the instructor about any absences, they might be excused (especially if you send the email beforehand, but send one regardless). Poor attendance will result in a -5% penalty to your final grade for each absence. You will also be considered absent if you show up more than a few minutes late to class. Note that absences are counted by the number of attendance sheets that you have not signed. Even if you have photographic proof that you were in class, it does not count if you do not sign the attendance sheet, as this is an accreditation requirement (email the instructor right away if you forget to do so).

**Late Policy**

All late projects have their final grade cut in half. Projects can be improved and resubmitted after they are initially turned in, in which case the new grade is averaged with the old one.

**Last Day to Withdraw**

In order to withdraw from a course it is not sufficient simply to stop attending class or to inform the instructor. In accordance with the policy, contact your advisor or the registrar to begin the withdrawal process. The last day for withdrawal from this course is cited in the official catalog.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

Cheating, or academic dishonesty in any form, will not be tolerated in this course. Penalties for cheating may include receiving a zero on an assignment, or a failing grade in the course, or even expulsion from DigiPen. For further details, please consult the *DigiPen Academic Integrity Policy*.

**Disabled Student Services**

Students with physical, psychological or learning disabilities that affect their ability to perform major life activities associated with this class may be eligible for reasonable accommodations under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. If you have a documented disability please contact the Disability Support Services office to arrange for accommodations.