

COM 3362-01

PUZZLE, OBSTACLE, AND LEVEL DESIGN

MWF 3:25 – 4:35 PM

SPRING 2021 SYLLABUS AND COURSE CALENDAR

Classroom: NQSC 125 A & C

Instructor: Brian Heagney

Office: NQSC 331

Professor Heagney's Fall 2020 Office Hours Virtual drop-in link will be posted on Blackboard (preferred).				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 - 2 PM	10 - 11:30 AM	1 - 2 PM	10 - 11:30 AM	

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Email: bheagney@highpoint.edu

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/brianheagney/

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduces principles and practices involved in creating compelling interactive experiences. Students will craft a series of puzzles and scenarios for non-digital games and design multiple levels for a digital game using commercial game modifying software and scripting language. Prerequisite: COM 2252. Four credits.

FLEX-CLAUSE

Due to the nature of holding University classes during a national pandemic, I am reserving the right for any part of this course to change based on pressures from anything related to COVID-19. This includes any issues faced by students in this course, but also issues faced by myself, the instructor.

I am making it my mission to deliver the content to you, the student, and if we need to be flexible in the face of a pandemic, we will do what it takes to get through any obstacles thrown in our way.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Student Learning Outcomes:	By the end of the course, students should be able to:	Method for Assessing this Learning Outcome
	1. Apply level design theories to develop original and novel approaches to maps and genres	Puzzle, One-Sheets, Final Project
	2. Present professionally	One-Sheets, Portfolio
	3. Develop media technology skills	All projects
	4. Develop professional quality game content in AAA game engines.	All projects
	5. Apply programming skills to develop basic gameplay functionality in AAA game engines.	All projects

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Totten, C. (2019). An architectural approach to level design: 2nd edition. A K Peters/CRC Press.
- External drive (such as a flash drive or thunderbolt external hard drive) – 8GB or higher (16GB USB 2.0 recommended). Every student's storage space will differ.

For this class, some students have used 4 GB of data, some have used less, some may use more. If you are going to be using an external drive for this class only, then using an 8GB or higher will ensure that you have plenty of space. However, if you intend to use the same external drive for other classes, ensure that you will have roughly 8GB set aside for this class.

Bring this drive to every class. Flash drives are available for purchase in the university bookstore or at any store that sells electronics (Best Buy, Target, Staples, Office Depot, etc.)

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

- Sketchbook. We will be planning and creating 2D and 3D levels, so you will probably be sketching out concepts and ideas. Some people draw digitally, some people draw on paper, so I am not mandating you purchase a particular kind of medium to sketch with. However, I may have some assignments that ask you to sketch ideas and put onto a blog post.
- Unreal Engine, which is available for free from Epic Games. It is installed on the NQSC 125 computers, though you may wish to install it on your own computers as well. If you install it, ensure that it is the SAME version that is installed on school computers.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

- **Blogs / One-Sheets (40% of grade)** – Throughout the semester, students will be submitting one-sheet responses to readings and videos. While the submission will be a single sheet of 8.5” x 11” paper, the sheet will consist of preliminary sketches, analysis of the readings, and images from a digital level built using Unreal Engine (details will be on the assignment in blackboard)
- **Portfolio (10% of grade)** – In addition to maintaining a LinkedIn profile showing examples of their work as a student, all students will build a portfolio example piece from one of their level designs.
- **Puzzle (25% of grade)** – Based on readings of puzzle design, students will design a puzzle to open a door, and the fully develop and implement the puzzle within Unreal Engine.
- **Final Project (25% of grade)** – Using concepts discussed throughout the semester, students will use Unreal Engine to develop a working level of their choice of genre.

EXPECTATIONS FOR OUT-OF-CLASS WORK

Out-of-Class Work:	In addition to attending class and completing all course requirements, students are expected to spend at least 2 hours each week engaged in out-of class work (i.e., reading, studying, doing homework, working on projects, etc.) for every hour of credit earned in this course.
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According to HPU’s accreditation guidelines, for every 1 hour of credit earned in a course, students are expected to spend at least 2 hours each week engaged in out-of-class work (i.e., reading, studying, doing homework, working on projects, etc.). Therefore, in a 4-credit course, students are expected to commit an average of at least eight hours per week outside of class. (In a 2-credit course that meets for half of the semester, you are still expected to commit to an average of eight hours per week.) The estimates listed below reflect the out-of-class time expectations for a typical student – some students might need more or less time on these assignments.

- Assigned readings and videos (approx. 44 hours throughout the semester)
- Blog / One-Sheets – approx 4 hours per post (approx. 36 hours outside of class throughout the semester)
- Portfolio – approx. 8 hrs out of class
- Puzzle – approx. 16 hrs out of class
- Final Project – approx. 16 hrs out of class

DEADLINES

See School of Communication policy at end of this document (short version = late work loses one letter grade per day; no late work is accepted after three days).

GRADING

Grades are assigned as follows (there is no “rounding” of grades):

A (superior) – superior quality (90-100%)	B (excellent) – clearly above average (80-89%)	C (average) satisfactory work (70-79%)	D (inferior) – good enough to credit (60-69%)	F (failure) –work fails to meet the minimum expectations (0-59.9%)
A+ (97 - 100)	B+ (87 - 89.9)	C+ (77 - 79.9)	D+ (67 - 69.9)	F (0-59.9%)
A (93 - 96.9)	B (83 - 86.9)	C (73 - 76.9)	D (63 - 66.9)	
A-(90 - 92.9)	B-(80 - 82.9)	C-(70 - 72.9)	D-(60 - 62.9)	

Please note that simply completing all required elements of an assignment does not entitle you to an A. Acceptable work of average quality earns a C. You must go above average expectations to receive an above average grade. This mimics the professional world of communication, where basic proficiency might get you in the door at the entry level, but creative thinking and a willingness to go beyond the minimum expectations are necessary to get noticed and advance.

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

All COM students are required to develop a digital portfolio on their LinkedIn page. The digital portfolio is an online collection of the work you've done during your time at High Point University. In this class, you will produce projects that could be suitable for your digital portfolio. If you are proud of your work, then consider posting it to your LinkedIn page to show a potential employer and colleagues what you are capable of.

Also in this class, a percentage of your grade will be dependent on building a LinkedIn profile page that includes showcasing your best student work, as well as the production of a page that showcases a level design project of your choice (which will not be required to be publicly available).

WRITING STYLES

Professional work should be written in the latest revisions of the Associated Press (AP) Style Manuals for print and broadcast. (Yes, AP also has a style manual for broadcast.) The School requires academic papers to be written in the latest revision of the American Psychological Association (APA) style. If you're unfamiliar with this style, please see the Chair or the Dean. Other academic styles are not accepted unless the student work is written for a publication or event that requires a different format.

ABSENCES AND TARDIES

After two unexcused absences you will receive a Probation Notice. After a third absence you will be dropped from the class. Exceptions will only be granted for university-sanctioned events (with prior notice) or hospitalization (with a doctor's note). Two tardies will equal an absence. Students will not be permitted to make up grades for work missed due to an unexcused absence or tardy.

COPYRIGHT, PLAGIARISM, AND CHEATING

Each of you signed the HPU Honor Code and it is your responsibility to abide by it. Cheating or plagiarism can result in failure for the course. Theft of intellectual property (such as images, audio, or video) is equivalent to plagiarism. See the School of Communication policies on plagiarism and copyright at the end of this document.

On occasion, the professor will provide media/materials for use in class. These materials may include photos, video/audio files, scripts, and design templates. These items are copyrighted (by the professor and others) and may only be used in classroom exercises as specified by the professor. Consequently, students may not use media supplied by the professor in their projects unless they have been given permission to do so. Student projects containing unauthorized material provided by the professor may be penalized or disqualified. Students also may not share, distribute, or post online any media that contains media elements provided by the professor.

In addition, the professor holds the copyright on all course materials including lectures, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, video/audio media, etc. Consequently, course sessions and materials cannot be recorded, copied, or distributed in any form without the written permission of the professor.

Plagiarism involves copying the work of others and/or representing it as your own without attribution. Students should not use any media created by another student or outside entity (e.g. downloaded online) in their assignments without prior permission from the professor. In addition, students should not copy edited sequences, documents, sessions, or projects and represent them as their own. Incidents of copyright infringement and plagiarism will be treated as University Honor Code violations.

GRADE APPEAL

If a student has a complaint or concern about a faculty member regarding a grade, they should first try to resolve it with the instructor in question. If the complaint is not resolved through this interaction, the student should then go to the Department Chair. If the instructor of the course also serves as a Chair, then the student should approach the Dean as the first step in the process.

For this course, a student should pursue the following process:

1. Talk with the instructor of the course,
2. Talk with Dr. Stefan Hall who serves as the Core Courses Coordinator of the Nido R. Qubein School of Communication.

The decision of the Chair/Dean is final.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a student has a complaint or concern about a faculty member regarding any matter other than a grade, they should first try to resolve it with the instructor in question. If the complaint is not resolved through this interaction, the student should then go to:

1. the Department Chair;
2. the Dean of the School of Communication; then
3. the Senior Vice-President of Academic Affairs, which is the final step in the grievance process.

Bypassing any of these steps—going directly to the president, for example—will not resolve the issue and will only delay resolution. Senior administration will not deal with grievance issue unless it has been discussed at the appropriate level.

For this course, a student should pursue the following process:

1. Talk with the instructor of the course.
2. Talk with Dr. Stefan Hall who serves as the Core Courses Coordinator of the Nido R. Qubein School of Communication.
3. Talk with Dr. McDermott, who serves as the Dean of the Nido R. Qubein School of Communication.
4. Talk with Dr. Erb, who serves as the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs of High Point University.

The decision of the Senior Vice President is final.

BLACKBOARD **BLACKBOARD** **BLACKBOARD** **BLACKBOARD** **BLACKBOARD**

I am a self-avowed blackboard nut and evangelist. I use blackboard for all of my class administration, and therefore you **MUST** use blackboard as well. If you have never used Blackboard before, it will become your friend. If Blackboard is already your friend, you will become BFFs. If you dislike Blackboard, then please come see me and I will evangelize to you appropriately. The following is how I use Blackboard:

Assignments: All assignments will be hosted and explained in Blackboard. Every major assignment will have a rubric attached to it in Blackboard, which will help you understand how I will grade your submissions.

For every assignment, you **MUST** submit something through Blackboard. If you complete an assignment and do not submit it to Blackboard, it is as if you have not completed it and it will be counted as late.

Assignment Calendar: Blackboard has an amazing assignment calendar associated with it. When you go to the Blackboard assignment calendar, you will be able to see EVERY assignment and quiz that is assigned so you won't ever forget!

Quizzes: All quizzes (if applicable) will be administered through Blackboard.

Reading / Video Assignments: All assigned readings and videos will be linked from blackboard.

Blog / Forum / Participation: All blog / forum / participation assignments (whichever is applicable) must be completed and then posted to the appropriate blackboard forum or assignment.

Syllabus: This syllabus will also be hosted on Blackboard.

Blackboard is Master: Blackboard assignment dates and descriptions take precedence over all dates/descriptions on this syllabus.

Problems with Blackboard: Please contact IT IMMEDIATELY if you do not have access to our class blackboard page. I cannot help you, only IT can help you. It is your responsibility to remedy the problem ASAP so you can participate in the course.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This is a tentative schedule that is subject to change. Details for each week's assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

Week	Day	Date	Topic	To Do	Estimated Hours
1	Monday	1/11	INTRO TO UE4 INTRO TO UE4		Readings: 6 hrs One-Sheets: 2 hrs
	Wednesday	1/13			
	Friday	1/15		Post 1: Door idea submission due	
2	Monday 1/18: NO CLASS MLK DAY OF SERVICE		INTRO TO UE4 INTRO TO UE4		Readings: 6 hrs One-Sheets: 2 hrs
	Wednesday	1/20			
	Friday	1/22			
3	Monday	1/25		Blog Post 02: Working door submission due	Readings: 2 hrs One-Sheets: 2 hrs Topic Project: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	1/27			
	Friday	1/29			
4	Monday	2/1	PUZZLES	Blog Post 03: Puzzle / Door design submission due Come to class with physical puzzle	Topic Project: 8 hrs
	Wednesday	2/3			
	Friday	2/5			
5	Monday	2/8			Readings: 4 hrs Topic Project: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	2/10			
	Friday	2/12		Final Puzzle map due	
6	Monday	2/15	GAME SPACES		Readings: 4 hrs One-Sheets: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	2/17			
	Friday	2/19			

7	Monday	2/22			Readings: 4 hrs One-Sheets: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	2/24			
	Friday	2/26		Post 4: One-Sheet game space submission due	
8	Monday	3/1	TEACHING THROUGH LEVEL DESIGN		Readings: 4 hrs One-Sheets: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	3/3			
	Friday	3/5			
BREAK	Monday	3/8	Break (no class)		
	Wednesday	3/10			
	Friday	3/12			
9	Monday	3/15	TEACHING THROUGH LEVEL DESIGN		Readings: 4 hrs One-Sheets: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	3/17			
	Friday	3/19		Post 5: One-Sheet teaching submission due	
10	Monday	3/22	REWARDS		Readings: 4 hrs One-Sheets: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	3/24			
	Friday	3/26		Post 6: One-Sheet rewards submission due	
11	Monday	3/29	NARRATIVE		Readings: 4 hrs One-Sheets: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	3/31			
	Friday 4/2 EASTER NO CLASS				
12	Monday 4/5 EASTER NO CLASS		SOUND		Readings: 4 hrs One-Sheets: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	4/7		Post 7: One-Sheet final project proposal due	
	Friday	4/9			

13	Monday	4/12	FINAL PROJECT		Topic Project: 8 hrs
	Wednesday	4/14		Post 8: One-Sheet narrative & sound submission due	
	Friday	4/16			
14	Monday	4/19			Portfolio: 4 hrs Topic Project: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	4/21			
	Friday	4/23			
15	Monday	4/26			Portfolio: 4 hrs Topic Project: 4 hrs
	Wednesday	4/28		Final Project Due	
Exam Block	EXAM BLOCK Monday, May 3 3:30 – 6:30PM		Exam Block	Portfolio Due	

School of Communication Policies, Practices and Expectations

Students are expected to adhere to all standards outlined in the School of Communication's Policies, Practices, and Expectations (located at http://www.highpoint.edu/communication/files/nqsc_syllabus_policies.pdf) unless alternate standards are specifically outlined elsewhere in this syllabus.