USER-INTERFACE DESIGN

GAM 3442-01 FALL 2024 SYLLABUS AND COURSE CALENDAR
T/TH 9:45 AM – 11:25 AM NQSC 125C

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Historical and contemporary user input devices and UI are surveyed. Students will learn the importance of user-interface design and learn industry-standard techniques and approaches to designing user-interfaces. Students will prototype and design compelling UI schemes for a variety of game types. *Four credits*

Course Objectives	Assessment
Understand industry-standard concepts and practices for designing user-interfaces	All Production Assignments
Develop and demonstrate iterative design and prototyping skills for user-interface systems	In-Class Activities; All Production Assignments
Understand User-Interface concept of "feedback" to design and implement effective and compelling ways for games to communicate to the player.	All Production Assignments
Implement user-interface designs into playable prototypes AAA Game Engines	All Production Assignments
Understand and implement the software and tools involved in planning, designing, and implementing user-interface designs for digital video games.	All Production Assignments

TEXTBOOKS AND REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- **NO TEXTBOOK**—While there will be assigned readings and videos for this course, all materials are available online for no cost. Details for weekly readings will be hosted on blackboard.

- A **USB flash drive 16GB** (or higher). Every student's storage space will differ. Some students have used 10 GB, some students have used much more. If you are saving your builds for your game on a weekly basis, you may need a lot of storage space. Bring your data/game/assets to every class to work on and show me.

- **Software/Computer Labs** – There will be some use of digital software for this class, all of which are installed on the computers in NQSC 125 (The Game Lab). It is expected that you will have to organize your time accordingly to use this software, ensuring that you schedule time to work in the Game Lab when there is not another class going on.

HEAGNEY CONTACT

- Instructor: Brian Heagney
- Office: NQSC 341
- Cell phone: 336-456-2672
- Email: bheagney@highpoint.edu
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/brianheagney/

Professor Heagney's Student Hours				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1:00 – 2:00 PM	12:30 – 1:30 PM	1:00 – 2:00 PM	12:30 – 1:30 PM	9:40 – 10:40 AM

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

- **Start & Menu Screens (20% of grade) –** Students will learn to work with Unreal Engine's widget blueprints (sometimes referred to as their "UMG" system) to design a series of start / menu screens with meaning and purpose. Students will explore aspects of audio, animation, 2D vs. 3D, and controls.

- **Analysis (Diegetic / Non-Diegetic, Spatial, Meta) (10% of grade) –** Students will analyze a game of their choice and complete a written paper that applies User-Interface theories from course readings (specifically readings on diegetic, non-diegetic, spatial, and meta).

- **Game UI (Diegetic / Non-Diegetic, Spatial, Meta) (20% of grade)** – Students will design original concepts for gameplay UI elements and implement them into an Unreal Engine gameplay of their choice.

- **Feedback: JUICE (20% of grade) –** Students will learn about what makes games "juicy" and how to apply those concepts to an existing video game.

- **Participation (30% of grade) –** In this course, we will have in-class activities and other small assignments that will count toward participation. These activities will be based on the concepts and technology related to the course but will not necessarily be part of the student's current assignment submission.

  To clarify, during the module about multi-player level design, your major module assignment might be designing an arena death match, but our in-class activity for participation might be focused on designing a capture the flag map. Alternatively, during the same module, you may be asked to come prepared with a sketch for a couch-cooperative level.

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.

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 & Videos – approx. 46 hrs out of class
- Start / Menu screens – approx. 20 hrs out of class
- Analysis - approx. 14 hrs out of class
- Game UI Implementation – approx. 20 hrs out of class
- JUICE – approx. 20 hrs out of class

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.

Submissions for assignments:

All students must use blackboard to submit to every assignment. If a student does not submit to blackboard, then the professor will not be able to offer feedback, the student will receive a 0%, and the assignment will be counted as "late".

Most of the time the assignment will list what you will need to submit. If there is no official submission request from the professor, use best judgement based on knowing that the professor will review all of your work. You will very likely need to submit all files that you worked on which could include word documents, animation files, 3D modeling files, etc.

In the event that you are working on a class repository that everyone has access to and you think that you don't need to "submit" anything, remember that you MUST submit something to blackboard in order to receive a grade and feedback. If it is true that you do not "need" to submit an actual file, then you still must submit something to the blackboard assignment, such as a note of where to find your important game level, a short write-up of how your submission responds to the assignment, or at minimum a note saying "Hello, Heagney!"

Feedback

All students will receive feedback through blackboard rubrics.

Grade Availability

This class is based on 1000 points. Once assignments are graded and posted, your grade will automatically update and be available on blackboard. This grade will be based on the current number of points you've earned, divided by the number of points that have been available up to that point.

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 Chair of the Nido R. Qubein School of Communication's Game Design department.

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. Eltantawy, who serves as the Interim Dean of the Nido R. Qubein School of Communication.

4. Talk with Dr. Erb, who serves as the Provost of High Point University.

The decision of the Senior Vice President is final.

POLICIES FOR ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

Late work

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).

However, I have a new "72 hour" late policy that is more lenient yet harsher than I've been previously. See "Typical Heagney Policies" at the end of this document.

Makeup Exams

If this course has quizzes, then quiz due dates are final. Because the nature of my quizzes are that they are online and readily available, make-up exams will only be allowed due to typical reasons such as hospitalization or major accident or incident. Please discuss this with me in person.

Attendance Policy

After two unexcused absences you will receive a Starfish notice (because we care). After a SIXTH ABSENSE 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). Tardies are frowned upon. Be on time. Better yet, be early. Three tardies will equal one absence. Students will not be permitted to make up grades for work missed due to an absence or tardy.

COMMUNICATION

Email

Most of our out-of-class communication will be through email. Email is appropriate for any questions about assignments or grading. While I do give feedback for assignments through blackboard rubrics, if you're still confused or if you think I'm confused, please reach out through email.

Do NOT email me your assignments. Assignments should only be submitted through the blackboard interface.

My goal is to respond to emails within 24 hours during the weekdays. My other goal is to not work at all on the weekends, so I do not promise that I will respond at all during the weekends. Feel free to email me at any time of the day or night. I purposefully keep my work email OFF of my phone, so I will never be bothered by an email in the middle of the night.

Be informal. If you're writing me an email, just write what you need to write without beating around the bush.

Text

I always include my cell number in case you ever have a question that needs to be answered right away. I don't promise that I'll be awake or respond, but feel free to text me any time of the day for rare emergencies. My phone sound is off and it won't wake anyone up if I'm asleep. Seriously, if I'm awake up in my office for some reason, and you're experiencing a disaster in the computer lab, it will help if you text me!

Blackboard

As mentioned throughout this syllabus, all assignments must be submitted through the blackboard interface. Sometimes that means submitting a project file. Sometimes it means submitting a zip folder. Sometimes it means submitting a link to a SHAREABLE google drive.

DIVERSITY

The course encourages students to explore and integrate inclusive design practices, ensuring that their projects are not only visually appealing but also accessible to users of all abilities. By focusing on user-centered design, we emphasize the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs of end-users, from those with disabilities to those from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. We also encourage students to collaborate across disciplines and cultural experiences, learning from each other's unique insights to create more inclusive and accessible interfaces.

OARS ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

High Point University welcomes students with disabilities into our educational programs. HPU promotes efforts to provide equal access and a culture of inclusion without altering the essential elements of coursework. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers that may be due to disability, including but not limited to, chronic medical conditions, Deaf or hard of hearing, learning disability, mental health, or vision impairment, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services at 336-841-9026 or OARS@highpoint.edu. The OARS office is located on the 4th floor of Smith Library

If you have an OARS accommodation letter, you are required to do the following:

(A) Meet with me privately during office hours or a scheduled appointment as early in the semester as possible to discuss implementing your accommodations. I am here to help you, and I want to make sure we discuss how best to integrate your OARS approved accommodations in a way that helps make you successful. Your accommodations will be implemented only after we meet to discuss the best path for your success.

(B) Give me reasonable notice (at least three business days) to implement your accommodations.

(C) If you have testing accommodations and we determine together that it would be best for you to take exams in the OARS testing center, you must arrange through OARS with sufficient notice (3 business days for exams/quizzes and 6 business days for midterms and final). If you do not arrange your exam with OARS, I will not be able to provide extended time, assistive technology, or a distraction free environment, but you will be able to take the exam with the class.

(D) If you experience any access barriers in this course that are part of your OARS accommodations, such as with printed content, graphics, online materials, or any communication barriers; reach out to me or OARS right away.

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 assignments will be assessed.

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/or quiz that is assigned so you won't ever forget!

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.

Feedback: Feedback for ALL assignments (including final assignments) will be conducted through blackboard rubrics.

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.

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

All students in the school of Communication 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.

The work you do in this class can be placed in your online portfolio.

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. Having students learn multiple writing styles only confuses them.

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.

EXAM BLOCK

At High Point University, every course is expected to use its designated exam block. While I try to clearly mark the exam block date and time on this syllabus and on Blackboard, please note that if it is incorrect for any reason, it is expected that ALL STUDENTS verify the correct date and time using the Registrar's website.

In this course, we will use the exam block for a fun UI Design activity.

STARFISH SYLLABUS STATEMENT

High Point University cares about your success!

This course is part of a HPU initiative that utilizes Starfish Connect, a communication tool for students and faculty. Through Starfish, instructors, coaches, and advisors provide feedback to you about course progress by emailing you about your academic performance. The emails are designed to be helpful by identifying strategies that increase your success in courses. Be sure to open any emails you receive and follow the recommendations.

Your instructor, coach, or advisor may also recommend that you contact a specific campus resource, such as the Learning Lab or Counseling Center. If an instructor makes a referral, you may also be contacted directly by this campus service as a follow--up.

Starfish also allows you to schedule appointments with various offices and individuals across campus and request help on a variety of topics.

HEAGNEY ETIQUETTE

Email

I will return all emails within 24 hours. If you don't hear back from me, it is because I made a mistake so feel free to follow-up with me if I don't respond.

I purposefully do not have my work email on my phone so feel free to email any time of day and please do not apologize for sending emails.

When crafting an email to me, don't feel the need to include flowery or overly sophisticated language. Just tell me what's going on and how I can help you. Also, please include which class you're emailing about. I have many of you in multiple classes and I'll need that context to quickly help.

Clearly state the problem you have and how I can help. Use screenshots (PASTE INTO THE BODY DO NOT "ATTACH"). Too often in the past, students would just email that they were having problems, and I could not help them in my reply.

When crafting your email, if it's a question for class, please don't stress too much about typos. I'm here to be your advocate for learning the material and I'd rather you spend your time on the material, and not worrying about my judging typos (that we all make).

If you're emailing me for a recommendation then of course you'd want to spend time crafting it properly, but for general day-to-day class emails that sort of worry isn't necessary.

Example email:

> Hey Heagney,
>
> I have a question about the 3D Modeling course.
>
> I'm confused about one of the "missions" of the second assignment (Title of assignment) because my project may not be able to use that particular feature. My project is a _____ but the mission to _____ seems to not be compatible.
>
> Can you help me figure out a way that I can continue with my project but still get credit for that constraint? I'm pasting an image of my project so far.
>
> Thanks!

-Student

Texting

I offer my cell number in case there's an emergency but please don't abuse it. This is for moments when you might need a quick response from me right away and waiting 24 hours might be moot. For instance, maybe I'm up and able to answer a question about programming a game engine or 3D modeling. I'm always fine with a quick text if I can help.

Always include your name and class because I might have not stored your name in my phone. Even if I've texted with you before, I might have been lazy and not stored your name, or I have a good friend with that name and I don't want to make a mistake by thinking you're my friend.

My cell: 336-456-2672

Addressing Me

Please address me in any of the following ways, in order of my own preference:

1. Heagney
2. Professor Heagney
3. Mr. Heagney

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 / Module	To Do	Estimated Hours
1	Tuesday	8/20	Start / Menu Screens		Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Start / Menu Screens: 4 hrs
	Thursday	8/23			
2	Tuesday	8/27		Blog: Students show favorite starting screens, how they would change them	Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Start / Menu Screens: 4 hrs
	Thursday	8/29			
3	Tuesday	9/3			Readings / Videos: 2 hrs Start / Menu Screens: 6 hrs
	Thursday	9/5			
4	Tuesday	9/10			Readings / Videos: 2 hrs Start / Menu Screens: 6 hrs
	Thursday	9/12		Start Screens Due	
5	Tuesday	9/17	UI Elements: Diegetic, Non-Diegetic, Spatial, Meta (DNSM)		Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Analysis: 4 hrs
	Thursday	9/19			
6	Tuesday	9/24			Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Analysis: 4 hrs
	Thursday	9/26			
7	Tuesday	10/1			Readings / Videos: 2 hrs Analysis: 6 hrs
	Thursday	10/3		DNSM Analysis Due	
break	Tuesday	10/8			
	Thursday	10/10			

8	Tuesday	10/15	Game UI Implementation		Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Game UI: 4 hrs
	Thursday	10/17			
9	Tuesday	10/22			Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Game UI: 4 hrs
	Thursday	10/24			
10	Tuesday	10/29			Readings / Videos: 2 hrs Game UI: 6 hrs
	Thursday	10/31			
11	Tuesday	11/5			Readings / Videos: 2 hrs Game UI: 6 hrs
	Thursday	11/7		DNSM Game UI Due	
12	Tuesday	11/12	"Juice"		Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Juice: 4 hrs
	Thursday	11/14			
13	Tuesday	11/19			Readings / Videos: 4 hrs Juice: 4 hrs
	Thursday	11/21			
14	Tuesday	11/26			Readings / Videos: 2 hrs Juice: 6 hrs
	Thursday	11/28/2024 Thanksgiving Break			
15	Tuesday	12/3			Readings / Videos: 2 hrs Juice: 6 hrs
	Thursday	12/5			

The School of Communication <u>*Emphasizes*</u> *Analytical Thinking, Communication Skills, Interpretation of Converging Information, Technological Development, and Integration of Theory and Practice*

EXAM BLOCK	Monday	12/9 12 - 3 PM		"Juice" 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.

HEAGNEY POLICIES

Students are also expected to read, understand, and abide by the following policies:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/142Bg51BWzqot571f3BnPudUjcxeNvrq2YJWRcw0I-IQ/edit?usp=sharing