

**SYLLABUS  
GAM 3333-01 SL  
MEANINGFUL GAME STUDIO**

Spring 2024

T/Th 9:45 Am – 11:25 Am

Classroom: NQSC 125C

Instructor: Brian Heagney

Office: NQSC 341

Cell phone: 336-456-2672

Email: bheagney@highpoint.edu

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/brianheagney/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/brianheagney/)

Professor Heagney's Office Hours				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
12 - 2 PM		12 - 2 PM		10 – 11 AM

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Students will work with a client to design and develop a video game or interactive media to help promote or communicate the client's message or agenda. Students will meet with a client to understand a complex problem, research the problem systemically through academic research and site visits with appropriate community members, and design an engaging game or interactive media experience to meet the client's needs. No prior knowledge of game design or development is necessary or expected. Four Credits.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING DESCRIPTION: CREATIVE WRITING CENTER**

### **The Client**

This year our client is the Creative Writing Center. HPU students will work with students from Kirkman Park Elementary School (KP). Specifically, HPU students will be working with KP students to craft short interactive games based on their own creative writing and design.

Each week, HPU students will help KP students develop stories, narratives, character designs, environment designs, etc. The professor of this course will take care of all the coding, but the HPU students will work with KP students to create the stand-in and final assets that will be used in the game itself, depending on the abilities of the HPU or KP students.

## **Research**

This course is designed for students to study societal systemic issues or problems. While our work with our client will be centered around working with elementary school aged students to develop interactive media, students in this course will be conducting their own research for a hypothetical client of their own.

Students in this course will decide on a societal problem with system causes and affects, and then find a potential client in the area to pretend to work for. Students will then study 1) the numerous types of serious games, 2) low-fidelity prototyping (such as using cardboard cutouts), and 3) the systemic issues or problems that they want to work on. Students will use all three areas of research as fodder for in-class design sessions as we work toward potential games or simulations to present to our clients.

## **FINAL DELIVERABLES**

### **CWC**

The final deliverable to the CWC will be in the form of an interactive Google Doodle styled game. The instructor of the course (Prof. Heagney) will be responsible for developing the doodle. But HPU students in the course will be responsible for working with KP students to design and make any assets that will be required to make the game work, such as character drawings, environment drawings, etc.

By the end of the semester, students will have helped KP students design and develop short games or interactive media experiences similar to an interactive google doodle, that the client (CWC) can easily host on their own website.

### **Serious Game**

For their individual topic of research, students will design, paper-prototype, and playtest their games every couple of weeks. By the end of the semester, students will have designed and developed a playable paper prototype representing a short game or interactive media experience similar to an interactive google doodle, that the hypothetical client could easily host on their own website.

## **SERVICE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS**

All students in the course are required to spend 25 hours in service to the organization with which they are paired in the course. Before beginning your service hours, you will be introduced to representatives of the organization, receive an orientation to service learning as a pedagogy, agree to the Service Learning Code of Professional and Ethical Behavior, and sign a Partnership Agreement. You must begin your service-learning experience by the beginning of the third week of class, as it is necessary for your first reflection.

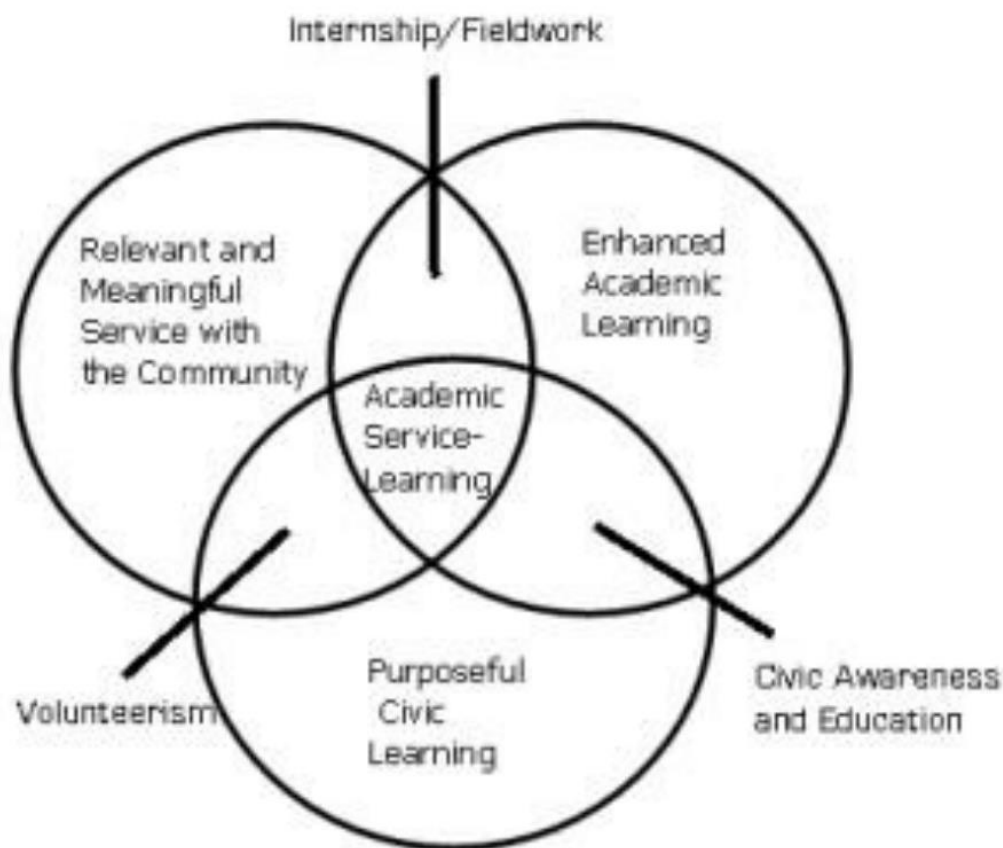
All students in the course will be required to abide by the policies set forth by the HPU Service Learning Program in its Service Learning Code of Professional and Ethical Behavior and Partnership Agreement. Failure to abide by these policies will be treated

as a breach of the University's Honor Code and you may be referred to the Honor Council for punishment.

You are expected to take the initiative to complete your required service hours and you are responsible for the penalties to your grade if you do not complete the hours.

Service learning is not an internship or simply volunteering – it is a pedagogical model that will deepen your understanding of the course material by exposing you first-hand to the ethical issues we discuss in class. You will perform service work that aids our local community and that service work will advance your thinking about ethics and education.

The following Venn Diagram illustrates the three central components of a service learning pedagogy and how it is different from other activities. The Diagram is a synthesis of two sources: [http://www.csus.edu/cec/director\\_msg.stm](http://www.csus.edu/cec/director_msg.stm) and [http://mgmoses.com/Jumpstart/SectionII/Chap1%20Overview%20SL/Defining\\_SL.html](http://mgmoses.com/Jumpstart/SectionII/Chap1%20Overview%20SL/Defining_SL.html)



## **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:	<b>By the end of the course, students should be able to:</b>	<b>Method for Assessing this Learning Outcome</b>
	Engage in relevant research to understand a problem systemically and by using an interdisciplinary approach.	Issue Analysis & Pitch; Weekly Reflections
	Communicate appropriately to effectively understand problems and present a range of solutions.	Issue Analysis & Pitch
	Apply game design theories to break down and communicate complex problems.	Prototype assignment
	Engage in iterative game design through paper prototyping and presentation.	Serious Game Prototypes 1 & 2

Service Learning Outcomes:	Integrate the course material and service experience and apply it through the creation of some product.	Assessed by Prototype assignments; Final Game Assets assignment
	Identify complex ethical issues pertaining to a problem that our local community faces, entertain different perspectives on them, and evaluate one's own position.	Assessed by Weekly Reflections
	Develop students' compassion for others or an understanding of differences through engagement with people from different situations.	Assessed by Weekly Reflections

## COURSE MATERIALS

### Text

Fullerton, T. (2019). *Game Design Workshop: A playcentric approach to creating innovative games*. CRC Press.

### Articles:

All articles will be accessible through High Point's library system and will be linked from blackboard.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

- **Issue Analysis & Pitch (20% of grade)** – Students will choose a societal issue to study, research causes and effects of the societal issue, and develop a pitch for a gamified interactive Google Doodle that will help illuminate some aspect of that problem to a specific demographic. **Deliverable:** Write-up & oral pitch with slides.
- **Serious Game Prototype I (15% of grade)** – Students will form groups and work together to develop a low-fidelity paper prototype. The paper prototype will be a chance for students to playtest the game concept in a low-stakes environment, without worrying about computer programming. **Deliverable:** Group Project - paper prototype experience.
- **Serious Game Prototype II (15% of grade)** – Still in groups, students will have iterated their serious game, so that it is fundamentally different (this could be either more advanced, simpler, or expanded, or something else!) **Deliverable:** Group Project - paper prototype experience.
- **CWC Stand-In Game Assets (10% of grade)** – Students will either create or help KP students create stand-in assets (this means the images can be of poor quality) for the digital interactive Google Doodle. **Deliverable:** Individual Assignment - assets for final playable game.
- **CWC Final Game Assets (10% of grade)** – Students will either create or help KP students create final game assets for the digital interactive Google Doodle. It's possible that the KP students will do all of this using markers or even computers, it's possible HPU students work on them as to their abilities, or it's possible the Professor of the course can help as well. It is not expected that the HPU students will work out of their comfort zone or abilities to CREATE the final assets. **Deliverable:** Individual Assignment - assets for final playable game (Google Doodle).
- **Weekly Reflections (30% of grade)** – Students will write short blog posts where they reflect meaningfully on a prompt provided by the Instructor. **Deliverable:** Individual Assignment – blog post responses.

### 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.

- Readings & Videos & Games – approx. 28 hours out of class
- Weekly Reflections – approx. 15 hrs. out of class
- Issue Analysis & Pitch – approx. 12 hrs. out of class
- Paper Prototype I – approx. 16 hrs. out of class
- Paper Prototype 2 - approx. 20 hrs. out of class
- Stand-In Game Assets - approx. 9 hrs. out of class
- Final Game Assets – approx. 20 hrs. out of class

## **GRADING**

### Grading Scale

A (Amazing!) –superior quality (90-100%)	B (Beautiful) – clearly above average (80-89%)	C (Coasting) satisfactory work (70-79%)	D (Deficient) – good enough to credit (60-69%)	F (Flubbed) –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!"

See "Typical Heagney Policies" at the end of this document.

### 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. McDermott, who serves as the Dean of the Nido R. Qubein School of Communication.
4. Talk with Dr. Bauer, who serves as the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs of High Point University.

The decision of the Senior Vice President is final.

## **POLICIES FOR ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS**

### Late work

The official School of Communication policy is 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 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 also unacceptable. Be on time. Better yet, be early. Three tardies will equal an absence. Students will not be permitted to make up grades for work missed due to an unexcused 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**

This course relies on students considering the diverse nature of players as they design for differing skills and abilities. This course also encouraging students to understand the

diverse nature of their game design group, in terms of skills and backgrounds, and how to manage iterating a game successfully amidst that diversity.

## **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 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!

**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.

## **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.

## 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
<b>1</b>	Tuesday	1/9	Serious Game Design Strategies		Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hrs Issue Analysis / Pitch: 4 hrs
	Thursday	1/11			
<b>2</b>	Tuesday	1/16		Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hrs Issue Analysis / Pitch: 4 hrs
	Thursday	1/18			
<b>3</b>	Tuesday	1/23		Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hrs Issue Analysis / Pitch: 4 hrs
	Thursday	1/25			
<b>4</b>	Tuesday	1/30	Design Studio (Paper Prototyping)	Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hrs Serious Game Prototype I: 4 hrs
	Thursday	2/1		Analysis / Pitch Due	
<b>5</b>	Tuesday	2/6		Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hrs Serious Game Prototype I: 4 hrs
	Thursday	2/8			
<b>6</b>	Tuesday	2/13		Reading Response Due	Serious Game Prototype I: 4 hrs Stand-in Game Assets (site): 4 hrs
	Thursday	2/15			
<b>7</b>	Tuesday	2/20		Prototype Due (Serious Game)	Serious Game Prototype I: 4 hrs Stand-in Game Assets (site): 4 hrs
	Thursday	2/22		Stand-in Assets Due (Site)	
<b>break</b>	Tuesday	2/27			
	Thursday	2/29			

<b>8</b>	Tuesday	3/5	Assets for Site Work		Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hr Final Game Assets (Site): 4 hrs
	Thursday	3/7			
<b>9</b>	Tuesday	3/12		Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hr Final Game Assets (Site): 4 hrs
	Thursday	3/14			
<b>10</b>	Tuesday	3/19		Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hr Final Game Assets (Site): 4 hrs
	Thursday	3/21			
<b>11</b>	Tuesday	3/26		Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hr Final Game Assets (Site): 4 hrs
	Thursday	3/28			
<b>12</b>	Tuesday	4/2	Iterative Design	Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hr Serious Game Prototype 2: 4 hrs
	Thursday	4/4		Final Game Assets Due (Site) (Tentative)	
<b>13</b>	Tuesday	4/9		Reading Response Due	Readings / Videos / Games: 2 hrs Weekly Reflection: 2 hr Serious Game Prototype 2: 4 hrs
	Thursday	4/11			
<b>14</b>	Tuesday	4/16			Serious Game Prototype 2: 8 hrs
	Thursday	4/18			
<b>15</b>	Tuesday	4/23			Serious Game Prototype 2: 8 hrs
	Thursday	4/25			
<b>Final Exam Block</b>	Monday	4/29/23	8-11 AM	Prototype 2 Due (Serious Game)  In-Class Activity for participation points	

## **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](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/142Bg51BWzqot571f3BnPudUjcxNvrq2YJWRcw0I-IQ/edit?usp=sharing>