



Game Design I

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fall 2022
Teacher Ed Building, Rm 215
Thurs 1:30-4:15PM

Course: Curric 357 (003)
Dr. Peter McDonald
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Office Hours: Tues 10-12
Vilas Hall 2106

Course Overview

Game Design I: Explores the fundamentals of game design. Students develop fundamental skills in designing interactive systems (much as art students develop fundamental skills through courses in figure drawing or color theory). Intended for students who plan to continue on in careers in educational game design or in design fields in related settings, such as museums, theme parks, and technology-mediated classrooms. This is the first of a two course sequence.

Canvas Site: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/323686>

Discord: <https://discord.gg/DVPr96JtPz>

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Build digital games using several common development tools.
- Design games that make use of affordances based on the tools, medium, and genre in which you are working.
- Deploy a repertoire of design strategies for creating specific game elements, including puzzles, branching narratives, core mechanics, and levels.
- Express a personal perspective and style and reflect on your own approach to design.
- Critically dissect games and offer constructive feedback to other designers.

Required Materials

There is no required textbook for this class. All assigned readings will be available as digital PDFs on our Canvas site. You will be regularly asked to play digital games and use multiple development tools, linked on Canvas Please test these early in the course to ensure that you do not have any technical issues.

Work Time & Assignments

There are a few different moving parts to this class, and each week you should expect to put in roughly 6 hours of work outside of lectures. You should be spending ~1 hour on reading, ~2 hours playing games and responding to them, and ~3 hours working on your own games or design reflections.

Games (7 x 8%).....	56%
Design Reflections (3 x 4%).....	12%
Responses (21 x 1%).....	21%
Participation.....	11%

Grade Scale

A.....	93-100%
AB.....	84-92%
B.....	76-83%
BC.....	68-75%
C.....	60-67%
F.....	<60%

Feedback

Everyone responds to feedback differently, and in this course you have the responsibility for deciding upon the kinds of feedback you would like to receive about each project. You will choose which projects and project elements you would like to receive commentary on from me.

Course Policies

Grading & Late Work

Every week in this course builds directly on work that you completed in the previous week, and that your peers need time to respond to. Additionally, one of the goals of this course is to get you into the habit of rapidly making work without becoming too attached to it. Therefore work will not be accepted after the weekly deadline. **The deadline is always midnight on Sunday.** If something comes up and you don't think you'll be able to meet your deadline, please talk with me before the due date and we can find a way to adjust or accommodate your needs.

Course Designations, Attributes, and Requisites:

Level - Intermediate

L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Sophomore Standing

Respect and Creativity

You will have a chance to make and play games about a wide range of topics in this course, and these games will often deal with very personal issues or complex public and political topics. Because games are a complex medium, doing a good job presenting these issues

can be a difficult task, and we should all be prepared to make mistakes, be a bit embarrassed, and listen to constructive feedback. We should also all feel the freedom to explore ideas and issues that matter to us.

Over the semester we will develop specific strategies for using games to represent ideas and responding to other people's work. However, there is no room in this course for games or feedback whose goal is to harm, denigrate, or insult specific people or groups. Any such work will receive an automatic zero.

Credit Hours

This is a 3-credit course. This course follows the traditional Carnegie definition – One hour (i.e. 50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty/instructor instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week over approximately 15 weeks, or an equivalent amount of engagement over a different number of weeks. This is the status quo and represents the traditional college credit format used for decades. If you have regular classroom meetings and assign homework, reading, writing, and preparation for quizzes and exams, make this choice.

Instructional Mode

This is a face-to-face class. Engagement with the class Canvas website and assigned games are also components however so internet access is required. I will have to miss two sessions to attend conferences, these sessions will have alternate modalities.

University Policies

Teaching & Learning Data Transparency Statement

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully evaluates and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through [learning analytics](#), and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university's full [teaching and learning data transparency statement](#).

Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

View [more information about FERPA](#).

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for

their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

How to Succeed in This Course

The University provides several resources that may be of help if you encounter difficulties beyond the course itself. Feel free to talk with me, and turn to the following offices:

- [University Health Services](#)
- [Undergraduate Academic Advising and Career Services](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Office of Student Financial Aid](#)
- [Dean of Students Office](#)

Course Evaluations

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your confidential feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

UW-Madison uses a digital course evaluation survey tool called [AEFIS](#). For this course, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available. In the email you will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID. Evaluations are anonymous. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

Diversity & Inclusion

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We

commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Academic Integrity Statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Statement

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

Academic Calendar & Religious Observances:

See <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances>

Course Schedule

Note: The course schedule is subject to change, please refer to the weekly course pages on the Canvas site for the most updated version.

Week 1 (Sept 8th): The Purposes of Game Design

Play:

Sean LeBlanc, Rain, <https://seansleblanc.itch.io/rain>

Linda ND, REM Scape, <https://linda-nd.itch.io/rem-scape>

Choose one to play from: <https://itch.io/games/made-with-bitsy>

Week 2 (Sept 15th): Basic Terms and Tools

Read:

Anthropy & Clark, “Verbs and Objects” (from A Game Design Vocabulary)

Play:

Pippin Barr, *Ancient Greek Punishment* <https://pippinbarr.github.io/lets-play-ancient-greek-punishment-bitsy-demake/>

Sophie Mallison, *The Crying Game*, <https://sophiemallinson.itch.io/the-crying-game>

Rosa Carbo-Mascarell, *Night Walk*, <https://moreelen.itch.io/a-night-walk>

Make:

Game Project 1—Bitsy

Week 3 (Sept 22nd): Rules and Levels

Read:

Anthropy & Clark, “Scenes” (35pp)

Play:

David Skinner, *Microban*, *Solve the first 10 puzzles*

<https://www.sokobanonline.com/play/web-archive/david-w-skinner/microban>

Make:

Record or write responses to 2 student games and 1 other game.

Week 4 (Sept 29th): Obstacles

Read:

Jesse Schell, “Game Mechanics Support Puzzles” (20pp)

Play:

Anna Anthropy, *Herding Cats*, <https://w.itch.io/herding-cats>

Increpare, *Slime Vat Filler*,

<https://www.puzzlescript.net/play.html?p=9cdc201537d09be139cfedca7789a29c>

Make:

Game 2 -- Puzzlescript

Week 5 (Oct 6th): Roleplaying

NB: I will be out of town for a conference this week.

Read:

Brian Upton, “Methods” & “Narrative” (30pp)

Play:

In preparation for class, watch Fiasco rules:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEPPzWvmBLo>

and playthrough: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXJxQ0NbFtk>

Make:

Design Reflection 1

Record or write responses to 2 student games and 1 other game.

Week 6 (Oct 13th): Narrative as Play

NB: I will be out of town for a conference this week.

Read:

Emily Short, “Anhedonia by Maddox Pratt played by Emily Short”

[CW Depression, Self-Harm]

Anna Anthropy, “scarfmemory by Michael Brough

Play:

Michael Lutz, *My Father’s Long Long Legs*,

<http://correlatedcontents.com/misc/Father.html>

Maddox Pratt, Anhedonia, <https://mr-joyboy.itch.io/anhedonia>

[CW Depression, Self-Harm]

Porpentine, *Cry\$tal Warrior Ke\$ha*, <http://slimedaughter.com/games/twine/kesha/>

Make:

Game 3 - Twine

Week 7 (Oct 20th): Spatial Stories

Read:

Henry Jenkins, “Game Design as Narrative Architecture”

Play:

Triennale Game Collection,

https://store.steampowered.com/app/538880/Triennale_Game_Collection/

The Year After, <https://anv.itch.io/the-year-after>

Make:

Record or write responses to 2 student games and 1 other game.

Week 8 (Oct 27th): Game Feel

Read: Steven Swink, “Super Mario Brothers.”

Play: Platformer Toolkit, <https://gmtk.itch.io/platformer-toolkit>

Fix My Heart, <https://filipe-bianchin.itch.io/fix-my-heart>

Super Jacked Up Tomato Face,

<https://itch.io/jam/game-boy-showdown/rate/1548077>

Make:

Game 4 - GBStudio

Week 9 (Nov 3rd): Uncertainty, Choice, and Feedback

Read:

Greg Costikyan, “Uncertainty” and a selection from “Analyzing Games” (20pp)

Play:

Game for Crows, Orchestrate <https://gamesforcrows.itch.io/orchestrate>

Sweaters, Lantern, <https://sweaters.itch.io/lantern>

Ninjett, How 2 Cook, <https://ninjett.itch.io/how2cook>

Make:

Record or write responses to 2 student games and 1 other game.

Week 10 (Nov 10th): Interplay

Read:

Richard Terrell, “Dialogue: The Mechanics of Language,” “Interplay I” and “Interplay II”

Play:

Antoine Zanuttini, Combo Pool - <https://nusan.itch.io/combo-pool>

Abdullah Alsayid, Pix Hop, <https://therockabdo.itch.io/pix-hop>

Make:

Game 5 – P5.js

Week 11 (Nov 17th): Games as Expressions

Read:

“What Should we Do with Our Games?” Stephanie Boluk & Patrick LeMieux

Doris Rusch, “Games as an Expressive Medium” (20pp)

Play:

Nina Freeman, How Do You Do It?

https://store.steampowered.com/app/353360/how_do_you_Do_It/

Mattie Brice, Mainichi <http://www.mattiebrice.com/mainichi/>
[CW: Depression]

Make:

Design Reflection 2

Record or write responses to 2 student games and 1 other game.

**Week 12 (Nov 24th): No Class
(Thanksgiving)**

Play:

Jimmy Andrews, *How to be a Tree*, <https://zaphos.itch.io/how-to-be-a-tree>

Andi McClure, *Become a Great Artist in Just 10 Seconds*,
<http://dryad.technology/artist/>

Week 13 (Dec 1st): Games for Learning

Read:

James Paul Gee, “Learning by Design”

Play:

Microscopya, <https://beatascienceart.itch.io/microscopya>

Elizabeth LaPensee, *When Rivers were Trails*,
<https://indianlandtenure.itch.io/when-rivers-were-trails>

Make:

Game 6 – P5.play

Week 14 (Dec 8th): Games as Persuasion

Read:

Ian Bogost, “The Rhetoric of Video Games”

Play:

Molleindustria, *The McDonald’s Game*, <https://www.molleindustria.org/mcdonalds/>
Spent, <https://playspent.org/html/>

Make:

Record or write responses to 2 student games and 1 other game.

Week 15 (Dec 15th): Study Day

Make:

Game 7 – Redux

Week 16 (Dec 22nd): Finals Week

Make:

Design Reflection 3

Record or write responses to 2 student games and 1 other game.