# LMC 2410 - Intro to Game Studies

## Overview

In this course, students will be introduced to the critical study and design of games. Through a combination of projects, assigned reading/playing, and discussions, the course provides a technical and conceptual foundation for further work in the CM program’s Games thread.

## Learning Objectives

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| **Course Learning Objective**  **(“Students will be able to…”)** | **Assessment** | **Addresses CM LOs...** |
| Identify, classify, and analyze a breadth of games from both conventional and experimental game designers, from a number of eras and genres. | In-class activities; homework. | Students can create digital artifacts with an awareness of history, audience, and context.  Students can appreciate and evaluate future trends in the development of digital media. |
| Describe and analyze games using an informed, critical vocabulary. | In-class activities; homework; written components of various projects. | Students can create digital artifacts with an awareness of history, audience, and context.  Students can appreciate and evaluate future trends in the development of digital media. |
| Apply computational thinking to the design and analysis of games. | Homework; projects. | Students understand and apply the mathematical principles and computational affordances appropriate to creative digital expression. |
| Design small games using accessible tools, while utilizing processes of playtesting and iteration. | Projects. | Students understand and apply the mathematical principles and computational affordances appropriate to creative digital expression.  Students can create digital artifacts with an awareness of history, audience, and context.  Students can work effectively in teams to accomplish a common goal. |

## Required Materials

Students will need to acquire a copy—print or electronic—of Jesse Schell’s *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lense*s (2nd edition). Students should also download the “Art of Game Design: Lenses” app (available for iOS or Android).

## Assignments

## Attendance (15% of final grade)

Students’ regular, punctual attendance is expected. As such, students are each allowed only three unexcused absences for the semester. Each additional unexcused absence incurs a five-point penalty to a student’s Attendance grade (which starts the semester at full credit, 15 points). Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. See information at <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/class-attendance>. You may also consult the Institute Attendance policy at http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/.

Scratch Prototype (15% of final grade)

Students will make game prototypes in Scratch, an accessible drag-and-drop game development tool, in order to practice the fundamentals of game design and digital game development.

## Twine Prototype (15% of final grade)

By creating hypertext fiction games in Twine, students will gain experience in puzzle design, world-building, and other story-oriented aspects of game design.

## “Prototype Portfolio” (15% of final grade)

Students will make revisions to their original Scratch and Twine prototypes, as well as produce at least one new prototype (using a tool of their choice) that begins to explore some games-relevant skill(s) that they wish to contribute to a group final project.

## Final Project (25% of final grade)

In groups of two to four, students will collaborate to design and develop a small, finished game. Expectations will scale with group size, and each student must have a clearly defined role to play on their team. Students will be graded individually based on their contribution.

## Retrospective Essay (6% of final grade)

Students will write a short retrospective essay on their trajectory, successes, and challenges from throughout the semester.

## Miscellaneous Homework/Labs (9% of final grade)

As the semester progresses, a variety of small assignments will be necessary to facilitate our other activities.

## **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/ or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

**Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, you are encouraged to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

## Final Letter Grades

90-100% ………....... A

80-89%..................... B

70-79%..................... C

60-69%..................... D

0-59%........……….... F

## Preliminary Weekly Schedule

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| **Week of...** | **Tuesday** | **Thursday** | **Main Activities (more TBA)** |
| 8/22 | Syllabus | Skills and Interests | Buy Schell book, read “Hello” & ch. 1; take survey. Optional: read Schell chs. 32, 33, 34. |
| 8/29 | Games as Experiences | Psychology of Games | Read Schell chs. 2, 4, 9, 10, & 11. |
| 9/5 | Analyzing Games (Theme) | Analyzing Games (Mechanics) | Read Schell chs. 5, 6, & 12. State machine diagrams. |
| 9/12 | Scratch Intro; Generating Ideas | Scratch Lab | Read Schell chs. 7, 13, & 23. Develop Scratch prototypes. |
| 9/19 | Scratch Playtesting | Twine Introduction | Read Schell chs. 14, 17, 19, & 27. Playtest Scratch prototypes. Introduce Twine. |
| 9/26 | Twine Lab | Twine Playtesting | Read Schell chs. 20, 21. Develop & playtest Twine prototypes. |
| 10/3 | Iteration; Prototyping | Prototyping | Read Schell ch. 22. Optional: read Schell ch. 8. |
| 10/10 | School Holiday | Prototyping | “Prototype Portfolios” |
| 10/17 | Final Project (FP) Prep | FP Prep | Read Schell chs. 3, 15, 16, 18, & 28. |
| 10/24 | FP Lab | FP Lab | Read Schell chs. 25, 26, 30. Draft FP proposals. |
| 10/31 | FP Lab/Playtest | FP Lab | FP proposal deadline. |
| 11/7 | Playtesting | FP Lab | First playable FP prototype. |
| 11/14 | Playtesting | FP Lab | Second playable FP prototype. |
| 11/21 | Playtesting | School Holiday | Third playable FP prototype. Minor proposal revisions. |
| 11/28 | FP Lab | FP presentations | Deadline for all FP materials. |
| 12/5 | FP presentations | Reading Day, No Class | Read Schell chs. 32, 33, 34. Retrospective essay. Optional: read Schell chs. 24, 29, 31. |