**Game Studio**

LMC 4710

**Overview**

This course functions as a capstone to the Games thread in the CM degree or the Media thread in the LMC degree. Students will have the opportunity to integrate the skills and analytical tools that they have acquired in other courses in game and interactive design. These skills and tools include an understanding of game mechanics and flow as well as the analysis of the cultural and social context of the game they intend to create.

The course is a prototype-intensive game design studio. Students will play and evaluate popular/successful and unpopular/unsuccessful games and discuss these games in class. In response to themes in and observations of these games, students will also make prototypes of their own, new games, which they will show, critique, and revise for class studio critiques. Students will also revise and produce a near-complete “shippable” game from prototypes. They will work through the whole process of putting together a game, from early ideation and brainstorming to narrowing and refining ideas, to iterative design and testing of the mechanics of gameplay to polishing the prototype.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will:

* Be able to understand and critique games of various mainstream and indie genres;
* Apply established principles and techniques of game design to the making of a game;
* Demonstrate their ability to employ appropriate techniques and technologies for programming and content creation;
* Work in a team to realize and polish a video game prototype.

**T-Square**

In addition to this syllabus, resources (readings) and assignments will be available on t-square.

**Assignments and class activity**

The major activity of the class (from week 5 to the end of the semester) will be the group project of designing and implementing a significant game prototype. Classes will alternate between discussion mode and studio mode (in which students work with their teams and have their work critiqued by the instructor). Students will also have preliminary individual or two-person assignments in preparation for the main group project. The goal of these assignments is to ensure everyone in the class has the requisite skills for participation the group project. Each student will also analyze and present a critique of one or more current videogames during critique sessions in latter phases of the course.

**Readings**

These are foundational texts in game design, some of which you may have read in earlier courses. These text will be resources for the critique and game design parts of the course.

* Jesse Schell. *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*, Second Edition
* Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman. *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*
* Tracy Fullerton, *Game Design Workshop*
* Selected articles (pdfs in the Resource folder in t-square).

**Games**

Students will play various popular and successful examples from mainstream genres as well as “indie” games as part of the process of learning to critique and deconstruct games and their mechanics.

**Project Wiki Page**

Each project team is expected to maintain a t-square wiki page for their game project.  This page should be linked of the wiki group page where you list the group members. The wiki should have a summary of the game design concept, links to all the turn-ins and presentations, including the final video and demo of the game. All elements must be clearly documented and accessible from your project page.

**Grading**

Your grade for the class will be determined based on the following:

20% Short preliminary exercises   
 25% Group Progress Report (presentation and delivery of mid-term prototype)

10% Final group presentation

35% Final Submission (game prototype and design document)

10% Presentation/discussion of game critiques

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend class and participate in the discussions and presentations.

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/.

**Disability Statement**

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.

## 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.

**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.

**Schedule**

**Week 1**

•Course Introduction: Statement of course goals

• Review of game design literature and prevailing strategies for game design

**Week 2**

• Review of game design tools: Unity

• Presentation and critique of individual exercise 1 (sketch game design)

**Week 3**

• Review of game design tools: tools for web-based and casual games (including javascript, nodejs, etc.)

* Presentation and critique of individual exercise 2 (sketch game design)

**Week 4**

• Team building in-class exercise: game pitches

• Presentation and critique of exercise 3 (two-person team game design)

**Week 5**

• Team formation and brainstorming

• Milestone 1: Teams present ideas for class critique

**Week 6**

* Individual game presentation and critique
* Work day for teams with instructor critique

**Week 7**

* Individual game presentation and critique
* Work day for teams with instructor critique

**Week 8**

• Work day for teams with instructor critique

• Milestone 2: Teams present game mockups for class critique

**Week 9**

* Individual game presentation and critique
* Work day for teams with instructor critique

**Week 10**

• Individual game presentation and critique

• Progress report**:** Students present working prototypes

**11 SPRING BREAK**

**Week 12**

• Individual game presentation and critique

• Milestone 3: Teams present first working game demos

**Week 13**

* Individual game presentation and critique
* Work day for teams with instructor critique

**Week 14**

• Work day for teams with instructor critique

• Milestone 4: Tune-up for final presentations

**Week 15:**

• Work day for teams with instructor critique

• Final Presentations

**Week 16:**

• Final Presentations and final discussion of course goals