**Game Design Day 1**

**Course Outcome:**

* Understand why we play games
* Learn about the formal elements of games (design theory)
* Create better experiences
* Communicate & present your designs/analysis
* Think like a game designer

**Topics:**

* Formal elements of games
* Design documentation
* Iterative design
* Narrative & world design
* Design tricks
* Presentation & communication skills

**Evaluation:**

* 20% class activities & participation
* 10% from lectures
* 10% from tutorials
* 15% individual assignments
* 20% midterm
* 25% group assignments
* 20% GDW prototypes
* No ﬁnal exam

**Reﬂective Learning Journal**

* 8 entries in total throughout the semester
* Approximately one per week (there’s leeway)
* 400-600 words each Part 1 (4 entries) due October 11
* More details in course outline

**Origin of Games:**

* Games have been played for thousands of years
* 5,000 years old board games
* Games let us practice our skills in a safe environment
  + To escape the real world
  + Helps basic needs in humanity

**Digital Games:**

* Started out as academic projects/demos
* Commercialized in the 1970s
* Explosive industry growth over the past few decades
* Lots of books/media on the history of video games
* (You’ll never be tested on history in this class)

**Perspective:**

* Games as a collection of parts
  + Objective, formal, academic
  + Systems-oriented perspective
  + Understand how different parts connect
  + Common language for comparing different games
    - Lots of jargon, but necessary to establish common ground
  + Starting point for creating your own games
* Games as an experience
  + User-oriented Perspective
  + Objective and subjective questions
  + Important for understanding why games are enjoyable/successful
  + Understanding players:
    - Their motivations
    - Why they play in the first place
    - Why they do certain things in the game
    - What their reactions are
    - Why they feel they way they do

**MIDTERM QUESTION**

* Game development isn’t linear
* Design is cyclic in nature
  + Come up with ideas
  + Prototype them
  + Implement them
  + Get feedback
  + Come up with ideas for changes…
* Core Definition: Iterative Design

**Communication & Management**

* Gamedev is heavily collaborative
* Need to communicate your ideas efficiently & effectively
* Internal (to your team) and external (to players, investors, storefronts, etc.)
* Need to speak your team’s language - programming, art, design, etc.
* Presentation is vitally important
* Showmanship matters!

**Recap**

* Game experiences have evolved rapidly over the last 50 years or so
* People play games for lots of different reasons
* Games are both systems and experiences
* Becoming a designer is about learning to think and play differently
* Game development is an iterative process

**Mechanics**

What actions are available to players?

**Narrative**

What story is being told?

What happens to the characters and the game world?

**Controls**

How do players input their actions to the game?

**User Interface**

How is information communicated to the player?

**Usability**

Do players understand what they need to do? Do they have trouble doing it?

**Tutorialization**

How do players learn what they need to do?

**Challenge**

How difficult is the game? Does the difficulty suit the players?

**Emotion**

How does playing the game make players feel?