Ideation: My primary inspiration for the card game design challenge was the “game within a game” called *Joustus* from *Shovel Knight: King of Cards*. That game is a card game, but it is heavily aided by the fact that it is also a video game. In the exact state that it exists in *Shovel Knight*, it would inherently be unplayable in real life. Because of this, I decided that I wanted to adapt the game to a context that *could* be played in real life. I also wanted to avoid using trading cards, since there would frankly be way too many *Joustus* cards to create. For accessibility sake, I wanted to make the game work with traditional playing cards. When designing games, I find it extremely difficult to come up with ideas out of thin air. My thought process tends to be “What if we had *blank* with *blank?”* For example, my design pitch is going to be “What if there was a *Star Wars* game that played exactly like *Fire Emblem: Three Houses?”* My “dream game” idea is essentially “What if we made a Sci-Fi Metroidvania with *Mega Man X4*’s artstyle, movement and combat like *Shovel Knight: Plague of Shadows,* with a heavy emphasis on speedrunning*?”* I find that I’m not very good at creating ideas, but I am very good at taking ideas and running with them. When people tell me about their stories, games, or business ideas, I tend to ask the “hard” questions that they later admit helped them really develop their idea. This tendency means I’m great at designing games in groups over a long period of time, but not on my own or in a short amount of time.

Production: I created my submission by playing *Joustus* for an extended period of time and taking notes of all the rules and behaviors of each card, as well as general game rules. The deeper rules of *Joustus* are often never really properly explained in-game because players can infer automatic behaviors due to the fact that the computer acts as a game master/referee. Because of this, I had to make many cuts, changes, and adaptations. For revisions, I generally just tried to make sure everything made sense. I wanted the game to be 100% playable, start to finish, by two people who had never seen or heard of *Joustus* before in their lives. I don’t think I succeeded in that first draft because frankly I don’t think I’m a very good writer. I also didn’t get any feedback before submitting, I just iterated on what I had.

Possible Iteration: My submission would work significantly better as a full board game rather than just a card-based game. My idea of using cards to create a makeshift game board generally is awful when actually playing the game. Much of the satisfaction of *Joustus* comes from physically pushing your opponent’s cards out of the way, which is visually and auditorily satisfying thanks to Yacht Club Games’ excellent art and sound design. I like the idea of designing a play space for the game, but I think it sucks with cards. Rather, it should be played with semi-transparent tiles on a wooden board that has some kind of track or rail system, so that players can get that satisfaction of physically pushing the opponent’s cards (or now, pieces), and to deal with the issue of having to pick up the “gems” (substituted with quarters in my original submission). Basically, in *Joustus*, you want to push your card into spaces that contain gems, and your card will show up “under” the gem in that space. This doesn’t translate well to playing with just cards, since you have to physically pick up the gem and the card. This is why I propose that the pieces should be semi-transparent, so you can see the gem under your card rather than having to lift your card and the gem then place the card down with the gem on top of it. While my game may be at least ok strategically, it is not fun to play on the physical side at all. My instructions and rules also need a lot of iteration and restructuring to be easily understandable to those who have never played *Joustus*.