Hostos Media Design Programs'
GD101 Introduction to Games – Fall 2018

Tuesdays 5:00 – 8:15pm Rm C-456

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Course Description

This course introduces students to game culture, theory, design and development. Principles from traditional board games, sports games, and party games will be analyzed and this analysis will then be applied to designing two paper-based games over the course of the semester. Students will analyze several readings focusing on game history and theory. They will also play, make and analyze several games in order to build a common and more extensive vocabulary to both discuss and understand what game development is all about.

Prerequisites: None

Credits: 3 units

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will have learned:

- An introduction to game theory
- A brief history of games
- The principles of user testing
- Better methods of iterative design
- Methodologies for designing interaction
- How to develop and write a rule set

Required Readings:

- Shad. **Einstein & The Honeybee**. The Hive Cooperative, 2012.
  ISBN-13: 978-1479113576
  ISBN-10: 1479113573
  $17.99 at Amazon.com
  http://a.co/2YufbGV
  SEVERAL COPIES OF THIS ARE IN THE LIBRARY, SO WHILE ON ORDER ARE TO BE READINGS DONE.
- Hunicke, LeBlanc, Zubek. **MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research**
  Does not need to be bought - a PDF will be provided

Expectations:

While this class has not been designed as '*web-enhanced*,' it is expected that students wishing to take full advantage of the class have:

- Familiarity with the internet
- Access to the internet from home or elsewhere
- An active email (preferably Gmail) account, which they **check daily**

Student Services:

Students with documented disabilities should contact Ms. Salazar (psalazar@hostos.cuny.edu) in the Savoy Building.

Students wishing counseling for any reason should contact the Hostos Counseling Center (also in the Savoy Building) at 718/518-4319 (email: infocounseling@hostos.cuny.edu).

Math tutoring is available at the Hostos Academic Learning Center (C-596), Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. through 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. through 3 p.m.

Online tutoring is available at http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/halc/.

Due dates:

Late assignments will get only partial credit.

Grading:

Reviews:	5
Game Projects	85
Participation	10
Total	100

Grades:

95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
75-79	C+
70-75	C
60-69	D
0-60	F

Introduction to Games (IG) assignments:

This is a studio course involving a combination of lecture, project activities, and discussion of assigned readings. Staying on top of the reading assignments is essential in order to be informed and make contributions during in-class discussions and activities. These readings will reference and introduce concepts and vocabulary that may at times be unfamiliar and so require students to do independent research. This will be expected.

10% of the grade will be based on engagement and consistent attendance. The balance of the grade will be determined by several projects undertaken over the 15-week course.

Assignment	Type	Points
Rules Exercise		1
Designer Bio		1
Game Analysis 1		2
Game Analysis 2		2
Game 1 – Overview & Initial GDD		5
Game 1 – Progress Report, with Playable Version & Updated GDD		5
Game 1 – Final Presentation & GDD		10
Game 2 – Overview & Initial GDD		5
Game 2 – Progress Report, with Playable Version & Updated GDD		5
Game 2 – Playtest Report & Updated GDD		5
Game 2 – Final Presentation & GDD		15
Game 3 – Overview & Initial GDD		5
Game 3 – Progress Report, with Playable Version & Updated GDD		5
Game 3 – Playtest Report & Updated GDD		5
Game 3 – Final Presentation & GDD		20
+ Attendance		9
Total		100

Notes on the grading criteria:

Work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Understanding and interpretation of readings
- Research and Analysis of related issues
- Creative Problem Solving
- Originality of work
- Contribution to in-class discussion

The assignments:

What follows are brief descriptions of the course assignments students will be doing over the course of the term. Detailed instructions will be provided in-class. Without a physician or counselor's note, late assignments will not be accepted and so will receive a grade of 0.

Rules Exercise

In the first class, a game will be explained to and played by the group. Create a clear and functional instruction set for the in-class game, from which another can learn how to play the game. Test these instructions on a friend or family member by having them learn the game from only your instruction set. Are the instructions clear? Can the friend or family member play the game properly without being prompted by the writer? Rewrite these rules based upon the results.

Before the start of the second class, post a PDF of both rulesets to the class blog, along with a writeup detailing what went wrong with the first ruleset, and how you addressed it in the second. As with all written assignments in this course, this paper should be typed and checked for grammatical mistakes and misspellings before being posted.

Designer Bio

Post to the Google Drive folder a brief outline of yourself, focusing on the question:

In what ways are you already a game designer? Include a clear photo of yourself.

Game Analysis Assignments

During the first third of the course we will be learning and reading about the foundation of game design. In class we will be playing games that illustrate these mechanics. Students will be expected to write response papers that relate this game play back to the lectures and readings. These papers should be typed using standard MLA format, and each assignment will address a particular audience. They should be posted as PDFs to the class blog at least a half hour before class begins.

Game Analysis 1

Good designers of anything from a game to a mousetrap must initiate their creative process by recognizing deficiencies and strengths of other similar or related designs. To this end it is important for an aspiring game designer to become a discerning game player, recognizing what works well in games while also noting things that are not as effective. It is important to be able to communicate these observations to others.

Take the information you have been given in the readings and apply it to the observation of a non-digital game played in class 2. Consider how well the game is designed in terms of its components and rules, the system these help create, and the outcomes and goals.

The audience for this analysis should be other game designers and game critics, and should be between 500 and 600 words. See textbook for examples.

Game Analysis 2

This analysis is intended to be read by other designers and must explore the second analog game played in class. It should consider the level of engagement that players have while playing the game. What is the structure of the game? How rigid is it and what sort of free movement is the player allowed? How does the game designer utilize this balance to create an engaging experience? Where does it fail?

Finally, the reviewer must recommend options for improvement by providing a detailed redesign statement outlining a means of making the game more engaging. This game analysis should be between 500 and 600 words. See textbook for examples.

Game Assignments

During the course of the semester you will be gathering into small groups in order to propose, develop, and test three separate analog games. The goal of these projects is to exercise some of the design approaches we will learn about in class and to gain firsthand knowledge of game development and testing. Every week, students are expected to present the status of their project, and every presentation should have accompanying and up-to-date game design documentation (GDD). These GDDs are worth half of the presentation's grade. Each project will have three elements:

Proposal

The objective of the game proposal is to pitch a game, not tell us the nitty gritty details. Get us excited, and tell us enough so that we have a sense of how it plays out, but do not worry about teaching it. For example, it is enough to say; "You receive points for completing [THING A], with an amount based upon your success," but telling us exact breakdowns would be too much. The team should also hand in a carefully written initial Game Design Document (GDD), as detailed in class.

Playtest Report

This presentation should, after a brief rundown of the game proposal presentation, provide the audience with an idea of your game's progress as measured by a series of playtests. It should follow logically from "this is

what we intend the game to be" to "this is what our results say the game is" to "this is how we intend to change it as a result." See class website for further details on what a Playtest Report should contain.

In addition, each group is expected to have the entire report documented in an updated GDD. Again, see the class website for details on what the GDD should include.

Final Presentation:
GDD, Rule Sets, and Assets The final project deliverable is two-part: The first is a short presentation encompassing an updated proposal, game outline, and playtest report, prepared for people who have never seen or heard about your game. Present your work as a finished game, rather than an iteration of an on-going project.

The second is a final GDD, complete with all components and updated according to any new developments, as well as incorporating all feedback provided to date.

Participation:

A student's participation grade is based primarily on their attendance and participation in class. Every student begins the term with 10 participation points. Attendance is mandatory for every single scheduled class. For each class missed, 3 participation points will be deducted. Tardy students will have 1 participation points deducted. More than three absences amount to a failure, as a student may not earn less than 0 participation points.

Academic policies (from Catalogue):

Hostos Community College believes that developing student's abilities to think through issues and problems by themselves is central to the educational process. Since the Hostos College degree signifies that the student knows the material s/he has studied, and the practice of academic dishonesty results in grades or scores that do not reflect how much or how well the student has learned, understood, or mastered the material, the College will investigate any form of academic dishonesty brought to its attention. If the charge of academic dishonesty is proved, the College will impose sanctions. The three most common forms of academic dishonesty are cheating, plagiarism, and bribery.

Cheating (from Catalogue):

In the collegiate setting, cheating is defined as the purposeful misrepresentation of another's work as one's own. Faculty and students alike are responsible for upholding the integrity of this institution by not participating either directly or indirectly in act of cheating and by discouraging others from doing so.

Plagiarism (from Catalogue):

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which occurs when persons, even if unintentionally, fail to acknowledge appropriately the sources for the ideas, language, concepts, inventions, etc. referred to in their own work. Thus, any attempt to claim another's intellectual or artistic work as one's own constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Bribery (from Catalogue):

In the collegiate setting, bribery involves the offering, promising, or giving of items of value, such as money or gifts, to a person in a position of authority, such as a teacher, administrator, or staff member, so as to influence his/her judgment or conduct in favor of the student. The offering of sexual favors in exchange for a grade, test score, or other academic favor, shall be considered attempted bribery. The matter of sexual favors, either requested or offered, in exchange for a grade, test score or other academic favor, shall also be handled as per the Sexual Harassment procedures of the College.

College attendance policy (from Catalogue):

Students are expected to attend all class meetings in the courses for which they are registered. Classes begin at the times indicated in the official schedule of classes. Arrival in class after the scheduled starting time constitutes lateness.

The maximum number of absences is limited to 15% of the number of scheduled class hours per semester and a student absent more than the indicated 15% is deemed excessively absent. Attendance is monitored from the first official day of classes. In the case of excessive absences or lateness, the instructor has the right to lower the grade, assign a failing grade, or assign additional written work or readings.

Absences due to late registration, change of program, or extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis by the instructor. Each department and program may specify in writing a different attendance policy. Instructors are required to keep an official record of student attendance and inform each class of the College's or department attendance policy.

NOTE:

- Any work missed during any period of absence must be made up by the student.
- To meet financial aid criteria, a student must attend class at least once in the first three weeks and once in either the fourth or fifth week of class.

Course schedule:

Readings must be completed for each class. Not all assigned texts will be discussed in class or covered in the class lectures.

Week	Project Due	ROOM	TOPIC	READ FOR TODAY
Class 1 08/28		C-456	Discussion: Class Introduction OUR EXPECTATIONS Instructions Exercise	No reading
Class 2 09/04	Rules Exercise 1	C-456	Discussion: What are Games? Play Vs. Games Ticket to Ride Play Test	Einstein & the Honeybee Introduction & Chapter 1 What is a Game?
Class 3 09/25	Game Review 1 Game 1 Proposal & Instructions	C-456	Discussion: Engagement Playtesting Product Play Test What is a GDD??	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 2: Engagement: Do I Get a Ring?
Class 4 10/02	Game Review 2 Game 1 Playtest report	C-456	Discussion: Rules Product Presentations Play Test Game 1	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 3: Laying Down the Law: Rules & the Ruling Rulers Who Rule Them
Class 5 10/09	Game 1 Presentation & GDD	C-456	Discussion: Iterative Design/Usability Product Play Test	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 4 Going Back to the Drawing Board & Why That Can Be a Good Thing
Turn Page				

Class 6 10/16	Game 2 Proposal & Assets	C-456	Discussion: Product Presentations Game 1 Presentation Play & Mechanics	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 5 Play It Like You Mean It, Mean It Like You Play It Chapter 6 Game Mechanics: So Many Pieces, So Little Time!
Class 7 10/23	Game 2 Testable version	C-456	Discussion: Narrative & Collaboration	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 7 Tell Me A Story: The Role of Narrative in Design Chapter 8: Collaboration: Pulling Together an Effective Team
Class 8 10/30	Game 2 Playtest document	C-456	Discussion: Playtests Social Interaction	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 9 Social Interaction: Tea Cups & Finger Sandwiches
Class 9 11/06	Game 2 Final Presentation & GDD	C-456	Discussion: Design Approach	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 10: How to Get Started: One Approach to Designing a Game
Class 10 11/13	Game 3 Initial Proposal	C-456	Discussion: Alternative Games	No Reading
Class 11 11/20	Game 3 Play-testable version 1	C-456	Discussion: Writing Better Rules Team Meetings	Einstein & the Honeybee Chapter 11 Alternative Play: Games That Teach
Class 12 11/27		C-456	Playtesting session	No Reading
Class 13 12/04	Game 3 Play Test Reports	C-456	Discussion: Play Testing	No Reading
Class 14 12/11		C-456	Discussion: Team conferences	No Reading
Class 15 12/18	Game 3 Presentation & GDD	C-456	Final Critique	No Reading

Appendix:

Proposal & Instructions

Short group presentation detailing the goal of the game, its target audience, rule sets, narrative, and precedents being referenced. The team should also hand in a carefully written initial Game Design Document (GDD).

The first stage GDD Should include the first iteration of the following elements in order to gain full credit:

1. Game Title
    a. Along with designers' names
2. High Concept – a brief paragraph describing the game
3. Pitch –
    a. Game's goals
    b. game's precedents & how it differs from these
    c. game's selling points, and potential profitability and/or impact.
4. Research Supporting the design concept
5. Target Audience & Description
    a. Personas
6. Heuristic Goals
7. Game Play Instructions
8. Assets
9. Scoring & Victory Conditions
10. Playtest Design Concept
    a. Playtest Strategies
    b. Playtest team roles
    c. Playtest questionnaires
11. Sources (MLA FORMAT)

Play Testing Reports

In class we will be play testing student games and for each play test its corresponding group is responsible for documenting the results. This documentation will become part of the larger GDD.

The second stage GDD Should include updated elements from the previous GDD along with the following additional elements in order to gain full credit:

1. Game art from initial prototype
2. Photos and/or links to video footage from tests
3. Playtest Outcomes (DATA)
4. Future Iterations
5. Sources (MLA FORMAT)

Final Presentation: GDD, Rule Sets, and Assets

Each group is responsible for turning in a final set of rules for their game and any and all assets after we have completed the play-testing phase along with a final GDD.

This final GDD Should include the elements in the following outline in order to gain full credit:

1. Game Title
    a. Along with designers' names
2. High Concept – a brief paragraph describing the game
3. Pitch –
    a. Game's goals
    b. game's precedents & how it differs from these
    c. game's selling points, and potential profitability and/or impact.
4. Research Supporting the design concept
5. Target Audience & Description
    a. Personas
6. Heuristic Goals
7. Game Play Overview
8. Assets
9. Scoring & Victory Conditions
10. Game Art
    a. From initial Prototypes
    b. From Most Recent Iteration
11. Playtest Design Concept
    a. Playtest Strategies
    b. Playtest team roles
    c. Playtest questionnaires
12. Playtest Outcomes (DATA)
13. Photos and/or links to video footage from tests
    a. Hopefully these illustrate the major takeaways from the playtest data
14. Future Iterations
15. Sources (MLA FORMAT)
16. Team Member Roles & Contributions
17. Team Contracts (once introduced)