Eugenio María de Hostos Community College - Humanities Dept.

# Game Design 210 //

# **Game Studio**

Spring 2021 Syllabus

**This course is founded on trust and communication**. You deserve my trust and I deserve yours.

**I am trusting you** to honestly assess yourselves throughout the semester using the honor system.

**I am trusting you** to work together as a community to solve problems.

**I am trusting you** to attend every class possible. If you cannot make class for what you believe is a legitimate reason, all you need to do is message me before the class begins and it will be excused for any reason. You don't need to tell me what the reason is, because I'm trusting you to use your best judgment as to whether the reason is valid.

**I am trusting you** to not abuse the system, because I know you deserve my trust.

**I am trusting you** to stay informed and engaged in the class, logging into Ryver at least every other day.

**I am trusting you** to engage in mutual aid, taking responsibility for caring for one another. This includes providing each other with feedback, support, respect and camaraderie. When everyone helps each other, no one loses.

**I ask that you trust me** to do the best I can to help you succeed, given the circumstances.

I ask that you trust one another.

\*\* In order to continue in this class beyond the first week, all enrolled students must complete the <u>Course</u>
<u>Intro & Agreement Form</u> before the start of class in the second week of the semester. \*\*







### **GD210 Game Studio**

Basic Course Game Design 210: Game Studio

Info 4.0 credit hours

Class Section GD210-410A (29919) // Spring 2021

Wednesdays 12:30-4:05pm on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (go to the course on Blackboard and click "Collaborate ( Live Session)" and then enter the Course Room before class starts and Ryver:

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hostosmdp.ryver.com (Private Team: S21 - GD210 Game Studio)

[IMPORTANT] New users should register using this <u>hyperlink</u>. Students with existing Ryver accounts should send a message to @Juno requesting to be added to the course team. <u>Full instructions for how to use Ryver</u>.

Course Description

This course focuses first on introducing students to how small and large scale game development takes place in the games industry. Students study the different career paths within a company, the development cycle, game marketing and peripheral game markets. Then students develop a group project to create a game from initial concept to final production. Over the course of the semester students are introduced to the principles of developing a project using iterative design methodologies.

**Prerequisites** 

GD105 Code for Art & Design (formerly known as Game Programming I), GD201 Digital Games

Course

By the end of the course, students will have accomplished the following:

Objectives

- Learned about different career paths available within the games industry
- Gained practical experience with game production process and development cycle
- Developed a small, very polished game to act as a portfolio piece
- Strengthened their collaborative design practices
- Learned about important game design methodologies, concepts and development

Required

Schell, Jessie. The Art of Game Design, Third Edition. CRC Press, 2019.

**Textbooks** 

Required Materials

- Stable broadband internet access
- Regular access to a computer during class sessions and outside of class
- A working microphone and camera for video conferencing

Required Time Commitment This is a **4-credit**, **4-hour capstone course** and will require up to ~3.5 hours spent in class each week, and as little as 2 hours and as much as 20+ hours per week outside of class to be successful (don't worry, the average is around 3).

Instructor

Prof. Juno Morrow (she/her)

Email: imorrow@hostos.cuny.edu

Emergency Email: <a href="mailto:juno.morrow@gmail.com">juno.morrow@gmail.com</a>

Office Phone: (718) 518 6682 (voicemails sent to my

email)

Office Hrs: Tue 2-4pm, Thu 1-2pm

(send me a message on Ryver and then meet here)

Web: junomorrow.com // junomorrow.itch.io



#### Intro:

Hey folks! My name's **Juno Morrow**. You can call me Juno, Morrow, Prof. Juno Morrow, Prof. Morrow, Prof. Juno, etc. I'm not picky as long as it's respectful. You can use <u>she/her</u> pronouns for me. I'm the Game Design Program Coordinator here at Hostos and this is my 11th time teaching this course at Hostos.

If you need to reach me, you can send me a message on Ryver (@Juno), which is the preferred means of communication. Feel free to message me at any time day or night. I usually respond within 24-hours on weekdays. If you don't hear from me within 24-hours, feel free to message again as I may have missed your message. For questions about classwork, I also recommend asking your peers in the classroom chat since many people have the same questions and others may be able to respond more quickly than I can.

#### Biography:

Juno Morrow is a multidisciplinary artist, independent game designer, photographer and educator living in Brooklyn, New York. She is an Assistant Professor of Game Design and Unit Coordinator at the City University of New York's Eugenio María de Hostos Community College. At Hostos, she has been developing the game design program, the first public degree program of its kind in New York City, since 2015. Prior to that, Morrow earned an MFA in Design and Technology from Parsons School of Design and a BA in Media Production from the University of Houston. As an internationally exhibiting artist and designer, Morrow has presented games and spoken at sites such as SXSW, GDC, MAGFest and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. With over 10 years of experience as an award-winning photographer, she's had work featured in *The Guardian, Dwell* 

magazine and released 3 monographs of urban photography.

Her unusual games, often infused with dark humor, feature distinctive aesthetics and novel premises. Examples include *Oral Perspectives*, a VR game taking place inside the player's mouth, and *Mastering Tedium*, an existentialist laundry simulator played inside a text terminal. Recent work includes *Pruuds vs. Sloots*, a "dumb versus game," *Blood Broker*, a consent-based human sacrifice management simulator, and *Marginalia*, a memoir examining intersections of mixed-race and transgender identities.

# to Diversity and Safer Spaces (source)

We understand the classroom as a space for practicing freedom; where one may challenge psychic, social, and cultural borders and create meaningful artistic expressions. To do so we must acknowledge and embrace the different identities and backgrounds we inhabit. This means that we will use preferred pronouns, respect self-identifications, and be mindful of special needs. Disagreement is encouraged and supported, however our differences affect our conceptualization and experience of reality, and it is extremely important to remember that certain gender, race, sex, and class identities are more privileged while others are undermined and marginalized. Consequently, this makes some people feel more protected or vulnerable during debates and discussions. A collaborative effort between the students and instructor is needed to create a supportive learning environment. While everyone should feel free to experiment creatively and conceptually, if a class member points out that something you have said or shared with the group is offensive, avoid being defensive; instead approach the discussion as a valuable opportunity for us to grow and learn from one another. Alternatively if you feel that something said in discussion or included in a piece of work is harmful, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor.

#### **Assignments**

This is a studio course involving a combination of lectures and project activities. Staying on top of the weekly assignments is essential in order to keep up with quickly moving course content. In assignments, students are expected to integrate the weekly lesson content, as well as researching and applying additional tools and techniques found outside of class.

#### Assignment Submission/ Class Ryver

Assignments are required to be turned in as a post on the class team topic at least an hour before the start of class. The instructor will be reviewing that week's posted assignments during this pre-class period. If a student has not posted the assignment by the expiration date/time, it will be marked with a grade of 0 points. Students that have a display name not matching their preferred name and last name will not be able to receive credit.

We will plan on ensuring access to Ryver and the class team on the first day of class. Please email me or see me during office hours for any technical problems you may be having.

#### Extra Credit

Throughout the semester, there may be opportunities for extra credit to be earned. In order to receive the extra credit, students must complete the assignment in full

and post it to the team by the deadline. Extra credit opportunities will be listed in the Extra Credit team on Ryver.

#### **Participation**

Every student begins the term with 20 participation points. Regular attendance is required in order to maintain a proper grasp of the material, participate in discussions and class activities, as well as maintain a good participation grade. Every student is required to check Ryver at least 3 times per week for important messages and updates. They are also required to submit at least 5 public chat messages in the class chat and/or one of the public forums. These messages are not evaluated for quality and can be anything that shows regular activity. It's vital that everyone contribute to keeping our community active and engaged, especially against a backdrop of remote learning.

Attendance will be recorded for every class session. Students are allowed 1 unexcused absence. The second unexcused absence will result in a grade penalty. The third unexcused absence will result in an automatic failure of the course. Unexcused tardies will be considered a third of an unexcused absence. In order for an absence to be excused, the student must contact the professor or class team chat on Ryver <a href="mailto:before">before</a> the scheduled class indicating the day and how much of the class they will be missing. Students should only excuse their absences for unavoidable reasons outside their control, such as a medical emergency. However, it is up to the student to decide whether their absence is excusable or not.

## Grading Policies

Students who miss the first week of class are required to contact the professor before the second week of class or risk earning an automatic F and being asked to withdraw from the class. Nearly 40% of students who miss the first week of class will ultimately fail the course (see the image towards the end of the syllabus for more info).

By default, students earning a grade between 60 and 69 will receive an F grade with the opportunity to retake the class to replace the 0.0 GPA with a higher one. If a student would instead prefer to receive a D grade, they must answer the question on the Course Intro and Agreement Form indicating this preference before the second week of class.

Ghosting is a term used to refer to students who miss more than 3 consecutive classes with no communication with the professor. Students at Hostos who ghost a class will receive a WU (unofficial withdrawal) grade at the end of the semester, which will negatively impact their financial aid (i.e. they will be presented with a bill). It is strongly recommended for students to officially withdraw from courses rather than ghosting to continue their education without accruing excessive bills which must be paid before they can enroll in future classes.

Assignment grades will be based on self-assessed progress reports issued throughout the semester in consultation with other students in the class. Progress

reports will open up and close automatically. Unless instructed otherwise, missing progress reports will not earn a grade (0 in the gradebook). The instructor reserves the right to increase final grades, but will not decrease them.

#### **Assignments**

Assignment	Description
Reading/game Responses (RR)	During the first half of the class students will be observing lectures on and reading about game production methodologies. The first four assignments will be to record responses that relate the concepts covered in the lectures with those in the readings. These recordings should be no longer than two minutes in length and each assignment will address particular topics.
Design Profile Presentation* (DPP)	For this project each student will be required to create a presentation that profiles one important indie game or designer from a design perspective and its contribution to the field. The presentation should focus on the game's design using an MDA lens. Students will be required to cite at least two primary sources, such as interviews with the designer(s) or development team, provide at least three secondary sources, and a mechanical diagram representing core gameplay systems.
Capstone Project*:  Game Pitch & One-Sheet (GP)	Each student will prepare a game proposal one-sheet and short pitch presentation. These proposals will detail the goal of a game that they have devised, its core mechanics, narrative, and what assets will be needed to build it. In addition it will be important for students to outline and describe influential precedents being referenced. The entire class will review the proposals in order to select two or more games, which they will form into groups in order to build over the course of the remainder of the semester.
Capstone Project:  Game Design Document	Accompanying their final game, each team will be responsible for producing an industry-quality 10-page Game Design Document that outlines the Narrative, Mechanics, Game Flow, Assets, and Industry Competition. Each game will also need a public/live webpage. A

(GDD) & Documentation (Webpage)	promotional video is highly recommended and may be included as extra credit.
Capstone: Weekly Devlogs (3, WDL)	After the initial start of the semester the class will break down into production teams with the task of designing, building, testing and launching a game. Each group will be broken down into members representing traditional industry development roles.  Students will be responsible for developing their games hitting a series of different milestones. The user testing will be documented by the group in a series of devlog reports that will be publicly posted and evaluated. The structure and documentation for these tests will be covered in class.
Capstone: Final Game*	At the end of the 13 week development cycle, each group will be expected to have a final playable game and will be asked to put together a short presentation documenting their development process for critique.

<sup>\*</sup> indicates that this assignment <u>must</u> be submitted for a passing grade to be accepted

#### Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Description	Grade
Progress Reports (2)	Self-reporting and reflection forms in which students assess their course progress	80 (40 each)
Attendance & Participation	This portion is based primarily on attendance and participation in class. Every student begins the term with 20 participation points. Attendance is mandatory for every single scheduled class. Students are required to participate in the class chat on Ryver outside of class each week of the semester. See Participation for more info.	20
TOTAL		100

Please note that the professor reserves the right to increase progress report grades as they see fit, but will not decrease them.

**Tentative** Please note that this schedule is tentative and subject to change

**Schedule** Please check the class page for the most recent assignment descriptions

Week / Unit	Topic(s) / Objectives	Due		
1 Game Studio 02/03	<ul> <li>Introduction to GD210</li> <li>Introduce Design Profile Presentation (DPP)</li> <li>Stages of Game Development (lecture)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Ryver and Blackboard Collaborate access before class begins.</li> </ul>		
2 02/10	<ul> <li>Watch Design Profile Presentations</li> <li>Introduce <u>Capstone Project</u>, <u>CP</u> <u>grading rubric</u> and select constraints</li> <li>Iron Designer Challenge</li> <li>Assign Reading Response 1 (RR1)</li> </ul>	DPP video		
3 02/17	Design Jam activity	<ul><li>RR1</li><li>Reflection 1</li></ul>		
<b>4 Conceptualization</b> 02/24	<ul> <li>Watch pitch videos</li> <li>Assign teams based on preferences</li> <li>Discuss tips for working in groups</li> <li>Assign RR2</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Read Ch. 6</li> <li>Watch 30 Things I hate         About Your Game Pitch     </li> <li>Pitch video and one-sheet</li> </ul>		
5 03/03	<ul><li>Studio time (conceptualization)</li><li>Assign RR3</li></ul>	<ul> <li>RR2</li> <li>Analog/core mechanic prototype</li> <li>Watch <u>Freeplay 2019</u> <u>keynote</u></li> <li>Team contribution contracts</li> <li>Itch shell</li> </ul>		
6 03/10	<ul> <li>Games Industry (lecture)</li> <li>Studio time (conceptualization)</li> <li>Discuss Weekly Devlogs (WDL)</li> <li>Assign RR4</li> </ul>	<ul><li>RR3</li><li>Reflection 2</li></ul>		
<b>7 Pre-production</b> 03/17	Studio time (pre-production)	<ul><li>WDL1 (including playtesting report)</li><li>RR4</li></ul>		
8 03/24	Studio time (pre-production)	<ul> <li>WDL2 (including playtesting report)</li> </ul>		

<b>9 Production</b> 03/31 04/07	<ul> <li>Mandatory individual meetings and Midterm Evaluation (40% of your grade you cannot miss this day and pass)</li> <li>Studio time (production)</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Game Design Document</li><li>Reflection 3</li></ul>
10 04/14	Studio time (production)	<ul> <li>WDL3 (including playtesting report)</li> </ul>
11 04/21	Studio time (production)	<ul> <li>Working alpha build (feature complete)</li> </ul>
12 04/28	Studio time (production)	<ul> <li>Working beta build (content complete)</li> </ul>
<b>13 Post-production</b> 05/05	Studio time (post-production)	• Reflection 4
14 05/12	<ul> <li>Final showcase event including presentations</li> <li>Mandatory individual meetings and Final Evaluation (40% of your grade you cannot miss this day and pass)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Final game and all documentation</li> <li>Reflection 5</li> </ul>
15 TBA	Make-up day (final exam period)	

#### **Tips for Working Successfully in a Group**

From the Building Virtual Worlds class at Carnegie Mellon's ETC Program

**Meet people properly.** It all starts with the introduction. Then, exchange contact information, and make sure you know how to pronounce everyone's names. Exchange phone #s, and find out what hours are acceptable to call during.

**Find things you have in common.** You can almost always find something in common with another person, and starting from that baseline, it's much easier to then address issues where you have differences. This is why cities like professional sports teams, which are socially galvanizing forces that cut across boundaries of race and wealth. If nothing else, you probably have in common things like the weather.

**Make meeting conditions good.** Have a large surface to write on, make sure the room is quiet and warm enough, and that there aren't lots of distractions. Make sure no one is hungry, cold, or tired. Meet over a meal if you can; food softens a meeting. That's why they "do lunch" in Hollywood.

**Let everyone talk.** Even if you think what they're saying is stupid. Cutting someone off is rude, and not worth whatever small time gain you might make. Don't finish someone's sentences for him or her; they can do it for themselves. And remember: talking louder or faster doesn't make your idea any better. Check your egos at the door. When you discuss ideas, immediately label them and write them down.

The labels should be descriptive of the idea, not the originator: "the troll bridge story," not "Jane's story."

**Praise each other.** Find something nice to say, even if it's a stretch. Even the worst of ideas has a silver lining inside it, if you just look hard enough. Focus on the good, praise it, and then raise any objections or concerns you have about the rest of it.

**Put it in writing.** Always write down who is responsible for what, by when. Be concrete. Arrange meetings by email, and establish accountability. Never assume that someone's roommate will deliver a phone message. Also, remember that "politics is when you have more than 2 people" – with that in mind, always CC (carbon copy) any piece of email within the group, or to me, to all members of the group. This rule should never be violated; don't try to guess what your group mates might or might not want to hear about.

**Be open and honest.** Talk with your group members if there's a problem, and talk with me if you think you need help. The whole point of this course is that it's tough to work across cultures. If we all go into it knowing that's an issue, we should be comfortable discussing problems when they arise ---- after all, that's what this course is really about. Be forgiving when people make mistakes, but don't be afraid to raise the issues when they come up.

**Avoid conflict at all costs.** When stress occurs and tempers flare, take a short break. Clear your heads, apologize, and take another stab at it. Apologize for upsetting your peers, even if you think someone else was primarily at fault; the goal is to work together, not start a legal battle over whose transgressions were worse. It takes two to have an argument, so be the peacemaker.

**Phrase alternatives as questions.** Instead of "I think we should do A, not B," try "What if we did A, instead of B?" That allows people to offer comments, rather than defend one choice.

**Withdraw Grade Clarification** 

Grade	Definition	Who Initiates the Grade?	Punitive or Non-Punitive?	Is this grade recorded on student transcript?	Will Financial Aid Pay for this Grade?
WD	Withdrawn, Dropped This grade indicates that the student has officially withdrawn from the course during the 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> week of classes.	Student	Non-Punitive	No	Financial Aid pays based on the days the student attended the course.
W	Withdraw without penalty This grade indicates that a student has good and sufficient reasons for withdrawing from the course, prior to the 10th week of the course.	Student	Non-Punitive	Yes	Financial Aid pays based on the days the student attended the course.
WA	Immunization Non-Compliance Grade Given to students who do not show proof of immunization	Registrar's Office	Non-Punitive	Yes	Financial Aid pays up to the 30 <sup>th</sup> day the student has been reported in attendance.
WU	Unofficial Withdraw Unofficial withdrawal (when a student attends at least one class session, stops attending the course, and does not complete required forms to withdraw from class) or excessive absences signify that the course was not completed.	Faculty	Punitive Included in GPA as an F grade	Yes	Financial Aid pays 50% of the eligible award.
WN	Withdrawn – Never Attended  If "No, Never Attended" is selected on the "Commencement of Attendance" roster (by the faculty member via CUNYfirst) the College assigns a "WN" grade for the course.	Faculty*	Non-Punitive	No	If a student is a financial aid recipient and receives a "WN" grade, there will be an adjustment made in the amount of federal aid.

<sup>\*</sup> WN Grade-If a student was <u>incorrectly</u> given a WN grade (marked "Never Attended) a WN grade reversal form is required before another grade can be assigned. If a student has attended class at least once, the form should be completed by the faculty member and signed by the department chair. WN grades negatively impact financial aid awards and incorrect WN grades must be addressed immediately. WN Grade reversal forms submitted <u>after</u> the last day of the term (when final grade rosters have been made available to faculty) require a signature from a dean in the Office of Academic Affairs.

#### Important Information

- -Each type of "W" grade affects students' Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).
- -Credits are counted as attempted credits and cumulative earned units towards the completion of degrees.
- -Students are eligible to receive a lifetime maximum Pell award of six years.

**Statistics Regarding Missing the First Day of Class** 



Students who miss up to 5% of class (1 absence if the class meets 2x/ week)

- 8.5% of them fail the class
- Have an average GPA of 3.03
- Less than 4% of them lose financial aid eligibility

Students who miss more than 15% of class (4 absences if the class meets 2x/week)

- 48% of them fail the class
- Have an average GPA of 1.43
- 22% of them lose financial aid eligibility

If for some reason you can no longer attend the class, you must officially withdraw from the class (see pg. 47 in the Hostos catalog)