

# Digital Games

## Game Design 201

Professor Bethancourt

Meets: T: 9:30-12:15 C-456  
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### Course description:

This course introduces students to the concepts of game mechanics, game theory and digital game production by affording them the opportunity to read about games and game development, play test several different video games, and finally to create their own games using important development tools. The course explores the effect of gaming on entertainment, learning, and even business by analyzing how games can be more critically discussed. In this way, students learn to be better developers through building skills in critical thinking, analysis, game design, and communication. On a deeper level, the course works to find ways to address fundamental misunderstandings by the general public that the form is entirely represented by games such as 'Grand Theft Auto,' and 'Doom.'

**Prerequisites:** GD101 Intro to Games; DD101 Digital Toolbox; DD112 Intro to Web Design

### 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

**Credit Hours:** 3 hours

### Required readings:

- Habgood, Jacob and Overmars, Mark. *The Game Maker's Apprentice*.
- Rogers, Scott. *Level Up*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2010
- Poole, Steven. *Trigger Happy*. New York: Arcade, 2004.
- Kent, Steven. *The Ultimate History of Video Games*. New York: Crown, 2001.
- Wolf, Mark. *The Medium of the Video Game*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001
- Collins, Karen. *Game Sound*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2008

### Due dates:

Late assignments will not be accepted without a note from a physician or counselor.

### Digital Games 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.

15% 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	Description	Points
Reading and Game Response (RGR) 1-5	During the first few weeks of the class we will be learning and reading about video games. Students will be assigned various readings and additional homework that requires them to play games that illustrate both the history and the mechanics of our topic. Students will then write response papers that relate these games and readings back to the lectures and in-class discussions. These papers should be no longer than two pages in length and each assignment will address a particular topic outlined by the professor in class.	5 each
Game Design Documents (GDD) 1 & 2	<p>Each Game Design project will be accompanied by a design document that outlines the concept, core mechanic and basic assets for the game. This document will be handed in, and a formal presentation given to the class.</p> <p><i>Proposal</i> A short group presentation detailing the goal of the game, its core mechanics, narrative and precedents will be expected.</p> <p><i>Ruleset and Mechanics</i> A final set of rules for the game will be required, as well as a set of visual assets, which help to describe the game's character and level by level play.</p>	15 each
Game 1 (G1) - SHMUP	Take-home / in class	15
Game 2 (G2) - Platformer	Take-home / in class	20
Attendance		10
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

**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
- Contribution to in-class discussion

#### **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 will 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.

Class	Lecture	Due	Other Assignments	Reading
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class Introduction</li> <li>• Beginnings - Pinball to PacMan (1931-1980)</li> <li>• Intro to GameMaker</li> </ul>		Play: <a href="#">Pong</a> / <a href="#">Spacewar</a> / <a href="#">Adventure</a>  Download and install GameMaker	<i>Trigger Happy</i> , Chapter 2, pages 15-44
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History - the 80s</li> <li>• Genres</li> <li>• Game Play</li> </ul>	RGR1	Play: <a href="#">Zork</a> / <a href="#">Peasant's Quest</a> / <a href="#">A Dark Room</a>	<i>The Medium of the Video Game</i> , Chapter 5, pages 93-111
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges and Rewards</li> <li>• Narrative</li> </ul>	RGR2		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game Pitches</li> </ul>	GDD1	Play: <a href="#">Pitfall!</a> / <a href="#">Spelunky</a>	<i>Level Up!</i> , Chapter 9, pages 197-242
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character</li> <li>• Levels</li> </ul>	RGR3	Play: <a href="#">The Secret of Monkey Island</a> / <a href="#">Super Crate Box</a> / <a href="#">Wonderput</a>	<i>Level Up!</i> , Chapter 12, pages 197-242
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting</li> </ul>	RGR4	Play: <a href="#">Pac-Man</a> / <a href="#">Soundodger</a> / <a href="#">You Must Escape</a>	<i>Game Sound</i> , Chapter 7, pages 123-138
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game Sound</li> <li>• Workshopping</li> </ul>	RGR5		

8	Game Jam	G1		
9	Game Pitches	GDD2		
10				
11	Game Workshop			
12	Game Workshop			
13	Game Workshop			
14	Game Workshop			
15	Game Jam	G3		



