



LMC 2410 Introduction to Game Studies

Instructor: Aditya Anupam Email: aanupam3@gatech.edu

Time: MW 3:00p - 4:15p, Fall 2019 Room: Skiles 357 Office: TSRB Room 209

Office hours: TBD and by appointment

Course Description

Why study games, when you can just play them? After all, games are great at helping one escape studying! They move us into a magic circle far from the struggles of daily life. They let us undergo experiences we may never have dreamed of. They let us express, create, and transform ourselves and those around us. Yet, studying games has its own rewards. It reveals the science behind their spell and empowers us to craft magic circles for others. It enables us to look beyond their curtain of entertainment and find a rich medium bustling with meaningful experiences, self-reflection, and cultural commentary.

In this introductory course on game studies, you will learn the basics of how to analyze, design, and develop games. Class discussions and activities will be grounded in a variety of digital and non-digital games as well as contemporary articles that will equip you with the vocabulary to meaningfully critique and design games. You will apply this understanding to develop a total of three games throughout the semester (one non-digital, two digital) and analyze one game of your choice using the concepts learned. Classes on Monday will be dedicated to game design theory, and those on Wednesday to programming and game development.

No programming background is assumed. You will learn to code in C# and develop games on the Unity game engine, which is the standard for independent game development.

Learning Objectives

After completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Analyze games from the perspectives of their mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics and articulate how they contribute to meaningful play
2. Design and develop meaningful game prototypes using game design techniques such as storyboarding, iterative design, and play-testing
3. Collaborate effectively in teams to accomplish common goals

Course Material

All reading material will be available online and will include readings mainly from the following:

Theory:

- Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of Play - Game Design Fundamentals*. MIT Press.
- Hunicke, R., LeBlanc, M., & Zubek, R. (2004). MDA: A formal approach to game design and game research. *Proceedings of the AAAI Workshop on Challenges in Game AI*, 4, 1722.
- YouTube channel: *Extra Credits*
- Gamasutra.com

Programming and Unity:

- FreeCodeCamp C# Tutorial on YouTube
- Unity Basics by YouTube Channel: AI and Games
- Unity Beginner Gameplay Scripting Tutorials

We will discuss game design theory in the context of the following games:

- *Tic-Tac-Toe*
- *Fireboy & Watergirl*
- *Jenga*
- *Mario Kart 64*
- *Okay?*
- *Florence*
- *Baba is You*
- *Celeste*
- *Home Sheep Home*

Course schedule: <http://designstudio.gatech.edu/introgamedesign.html>





Assessments

Your full assessment plan is detailed as follows:

Assessment	Weightage (total 100 points)
Class Participation and Attendance	5 points
Short Assignments (~2 per week)	30 points
Non-digital game assignment (Due Sep 12)	10 points
Game Analysis Video (Due Nov 10)	10 points
Final Game Beta (Due Dec 10th)	45 points
Playable Game – 25-30 mins playtime (Due Dec 10th)	10 points
Collaborative Design Document – 3000 words (Due Dec 10th)	10 points
Individual Reflection - 500 words (Due Dec 10th)	5 points
Trailer – 1-2 minutes (Due Dec 10th)	5 points
<i>Intermediary Submission 1</i> – Idea and Storyboards (Due Oct 8th)	5 points
<i>Intermediary Submission 2</i> – One playable level with basic art assets (Due Oct 29th)	5 points
<i>Intermediary Submission 3</i> Playable Beta (~10 mins) for Class Feedback including Basic Trailer (Due Nov 17th and 19th, night before class)	5 points

Please submit all assignments at the due time. A delay in submission will result in a loss of 0.5 points per day.

Grading Policy

Score	Grade
85-100	A
75-85	B
50-80	C
40-50	D
<40	Fail

Attendance

Students are expected to arrive on time for class, and be present for the entirety of the class. Because this class hinges on both critique and group work, it is extremely important to attend class and communicate with your groupmates. Students are permitted two absences a semester. Beyond that, you may begin to lose up to 5% off your final grade with each subsequent absence. More than six 6 absences will lead to an F grade.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

The Office of Disability Services provides information, resources, and support services to students with disabilities at Georgia Tech. Disability Services, located in the Office of the Dean of Students (Charles A. Smithgall Jr Student Services Building, Suite 210), provides students with information and support. Disability Services assists students self-identifying as having a disability. Any student who wishes to receive accommodation for a disability is encouraged to do so and will be fully accommodated, provided they submit the necessary university accommodation form.

Academic integrity

In this classroom context, it is not appropriate to represent work as your own or your group's that you did not ideate, brainstorm, prototype and refine (this goes for both the game mechanics and written components such as game rules or any story/narrative). Any instances of such behavior will be given serious review and may be taken to the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information on the Georgia Tech Honor Code, please see: <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/> Students in this course are also bound to the Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct, which address plagiarism as well as other issues related to academic dishonesty: <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/19b.php>