ISTA 251
Introduction to Game Design

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Class Location and Time

McClelland Park 102
Tue & Thur, 11:00am-12:15pm

Instructor Location and Time

Office: Gould-Simpson 830
Office Hours: M 12:30-1:30, W 2:00-4:00, or by appointment (dtgreen@email.arizona.edu)

Description

This course provides an introduction to game design and teaches students the fundamental concepts for creating games. Students will survey many different games, exploring the issues game designers face when designing games in different genres. Students will participate in a series of game design challenges and will be responsible for designing and prototyping simple games using a game building tool. Students will present their solutions to these challenges in front of the class for general discussion and constructive criticism.

Course Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

After taking this course students will be able to:

- Identify the majority of known game genres and several games belonging to each genre.

- Identify the fundamental components of a game and list examples for specific games.

- Understand the design issues inherent in different types of games and thoughtfully critique others' game designs.

- Design games from different genres, demonstrated by several working prototypes.

- Clearly communicate their game designs both orally to an audience and in the form of written documentation.

- Rapidly prototype game designs using a game building tool.

Textbook

Game Design Workshop: A playcentric approach to creating innovative games, 2nd Ed., Fullerton, T. (2008). Elsevier.

Prerequisites:

Basic programming experience recommended, e.g: *ISTA 130*, *CSC 127A*, or equivalent.

Grading:

Breakdown	
Homework	60%
Class participation	20%
Final Project	20%

Scale	
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Homework Assignments

4 Game Design Challenges

There will be 4 game design challenges related to game design topics covered in lectures. Students will work in teams and submit game prototypes (along with documentation) which they will build using a game building tool that will be introduced in the class. Teams will be changed for each challenge.

Game Deconstruction

There will be one game deconstruction assignment in which students analyze a game and write up a full deconstruction of the game. Deconstructions are individual assignments.

Portfolios

Late in the semester students will each design and build a web page to show off their work. Portfolios are individual assignments.

Participation

Students will present their solutions to game design challenges to the class and will participate in general discussions over the merits of each solution. Students will also give weekly progress updates on challenges.

There will also be several play-testing/game-review assignments in which students play games outside of class and participate in discussions about design issues in the games.

Final Project

Students will work in teams on a final project in which they design and build a game using what they have learned in the class. Final projects will be presented by teams during our final exam time: Thursday 5/10 10:30am-12:30pm

Tentative Schedule of Topics and Assignment Dates

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1/9	—	Introduction
1/16	GameMaker Tutorial 1	GameMaker Tutorial 2
1/23	Structure of Games	Structure of Games
1/30	Formal Elements	Platformers **Proj: Platformer**
2/6	Dramatic Elements Platformer Updates	System Dynamics **HW: Deconstruction**
2/13	**Platformer Demos**	Lect. Shmup **Proj. Shmup**
2/20	Conceptualization Shmup Updates	Prototyping
2/27	**Shmup Demos** **Deconstruction due**	Lect. Strategy **Proj. Strategy**
3/5	Prototyping Strategy Updates	Playtesting
3/12	spring break	
3/19	**Strategy Demos**	Lect. Serious Games **Proj. Serious Games**
3/26	Completeness Serious Updates	Balance
4/2	**Serious Demos**	Lect. Portfolios **HW: Portfolios**
4/9	Team Structures	**Proj: Final**
4/16	Final Project Pitches **Portfolios due**	Stages of Development
4/23	Final Project Updates	Project Help Day
4/30	Final Project Playtesting	Design Document

Absence Policy:

- Students are expected to be in class and to participate in class discussions and game critiques. Excessive absence will result in a letter grade reduction.

- All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion.

- Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) or instructor will be honored.

Academic Integrity:

- Students are responsible for their own work.

- Discussions about homework are allowed, but homework must be done alone.

- Cite references and other classmates if help is received from either.

- Students are expected to follow the Student Code of Academic Integrity: (http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policiesandcodes)

Students With Disabilities:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.