

Instructor Aaron Oldenburg
MW 12:30-1:20, Room 2215
Office Hour: Weds 2:30-3:30 (rm 3147)
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GAMES, SIMULATIONS, & SOCIETY (COSC 460)

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

As a result of the course, the student will be able to analyze the games they produce and their relationship to society as a whole. Students will produce critical writings and create a game design document for a serious game that addresses a specific societal issue. This course is for Simulation and Digital Entertainment majors and those who wish to pursue a career in game design.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Examines the nature of games and how they are framed by and impact individuals and groups. Topics include scholarly work on online economies and community building, fan cultures and their creative reworking of game content, the role of play in human culture and the relationships between online and offline identity, as well as psychological facets of games. Laboratory fee required.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to

- Discuss fluently the theories and debates concerning the crossover between games and the "real world",
- Create games that address these ideas,
- Produce a game design plan for the creation of a serious game.

METHODS

The primary objectives of this course will be met through class discussion and writing assignments.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture by T.L. Taylor
Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Media Consumers in a Digital Age by Henry Jenkins

SUGGESTED READINGS

Second Person: Role-playing and Story in Games and Playable Media by Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin
The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology by Katie Salen & Eric Zimmerman

GRADES AND REQUIREMENTS

Assignments are expected to be turned in on time or early. Your computer failing does not extend the due date of the project. Make sure that you plan projects accordingly and you finish them before schedule. Projects will be dropped one letter grade for each day late. Project grades will be based on meeting criteria for the project, attention to detail, creativity, and writing skills.

- 20% Readings
- 20% Topic Presentation
- 20% Game Concept Paper
- 40% Game Design Document

A	Excellent execution of all aspects of projects. The assignments' objectives have been mastered and executed with excellent craft. The innovation and originality of writing generally sets it apart and the student has had outstanding participation and attendance.
B	Above-average execution and analysis with very good writing. The projects' objectives have generally been mastered and the student has contributed well through class participation.
C	Writing and analysis is average and shows adequate understanding of concepts. Class participation is average.
D	Below expectations of the assignments, poor grasp of objectives and little participation in critiques.
F	Unsatisfactory work and failure to grasp concepts. Poor participation and/or attendance.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Classes Begin.....January 28
Spring Break.....March 16-23
End of Semester.....May 18

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class. If you miss a class because of work or family obligations, an informal explanation will usually do. Try not to miss a class at which you are expected to deliver a presentation or report. Don't skip class if you're late with an assignment. Excessive or unreasonable absences will affect your grade.

LATE WORK OR MISSED INFORMATION

You are responsible for announcements, changes in the syllabus, and assignments that may be given out in class. In the future these will be posted to the class website iat.ubalt.edu/courses/cosc460.sg1_sp08/ Please

observe closely any policies about deadlines announced in specific classes. Do not email me asking me to call and catch you up on a missed class or fax course materials. If you are struggling in this class, though, don't hesitate to ask for extra help.

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL AND INCOMPLETES

I will not issue an Administrative Withdrawal if you stop attending. It is your responsibility to withdraw from the course if you cannot complete 75 percent of the work (or complete 50 percent and file for an Incomplete). Students who do not withdraw fail the course. I will sign petitions for an Incomplete grade if you have satisfactorily completed at least 50 percent of the assigned work.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UB's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Readings: Summarize and respond to weekly readings.
2. Topic Presentation: Investigate a topic for presentation and discussion.
3. Game Concept Paper: Submit a one-page document that describes the high concept of a persuasive game, including the social issue that the game addresses.
4. Game Design Document: Submit a detailed document that describes the persuasive game mechanics, AI, game elements, story overview, game progression, and system menu.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

The Center for Academic Success (CAS) offers onsite academic assistance for students attending classes at the Shady Grove Center.

Here's what CAS can do for you:

- Run your paper by a professional writing consultant (in person or over the phone)
- Find an individual tutor for a course you could use a boost in
- Take advantage of weekly reviews, called Guided Study Sessions (GSS), in business, social work, psychology, nursing and other areas led by peer tutors who aced the class last year and who knows the ropes
- Offer workshops in speed reading, memory strategies or textbook reading strategies that could save you hours of time and reduce your stress level
- Have a session with your personal academic trainer to see how you can do more work with less time
- Help you tackle and conquer writing snags with grammar assistance handouts, online exercises (with answers) and software programs on our computers

Contact: Dr. Marsha Youngblood

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