

Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College – Media Design Program
FALL 2016 - GD101 Introduction to Games

Thursdays 9:30-12:15

Room A-425A

Professor Rees Shad

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Office: C-414A – Across from Humanities Office
Office Hours: T 1:30 – 3:30 and/or by appointment
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Course description:

This course introduces students to game culture, theory, design and development. Principles from traditional board games, sports games, and party games will be analyzed and this analysis will then be applied to designing two paper-based games over the course of the semester. Students will analyze several readings focusing on game history and theory. They will also play, make and analyze several games in order to build a common and more extensive vocabulary to both discuss and understand what game development is all about.

Prerequisites: None

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:

- Shad, Rees. **Einstein & The Honeybee**. The Hive Cooperative, 2012.



ISBN-13: 978-1479113576

ISBN-10: 1479113573

\$17.99 at Amazon.com

SEVERAL COPIES OF THIS ARE IN THE LIBRARY. SO WHILE ON ORDER YOU CAN STILL GET READINGS DONE.

Expectations:

While this class has not been designated as 'web-enhanced,' it is expected that students wishing to take full advantage of the class have:

- Familiarity with the Internet;
- Access to the Internet from home or elsewhere
- An **active Hostos email** account, which they check daily.

Student Services: Students with documented disabilities should contact Ms. Salazar (psalazar@hostos.cuny.edu) in the Savoy Building. Students wishing counseling for any reason should contact the Hostos Counseling Center (also in the Savoy Building) at 718/518-4319 (email: infocounseling@hostos.cuny.edu). Math tutoring is available at the Hostos Academic Learning Center (C-596), Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. through 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. through 3 p.m. Online tutoring is available at <http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/halc/>.

Due dates:

Late assignments will get only partial credit.

Grading:

Reviews:	5
Game Projects	85
Participation	10
Total	100

Grades:

95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
75-79	C+
70-75	C
60-69	D
0-60	F

Introduction to Games (IG) 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.

10% 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	Type	Points
Rules Exercise 1	Take-home / in class	1
Game Review 1	Take-home / in class	2
Game Review 2	Take-home / in class	2
Game 1 – Proposal & Instructions	Take-home / in class	5
Game 1 – Playtest Report	Take-home / in class	5
Game 1 – Presentation & GDD	Take-home / in class	10
Game 2 – Proposal & Instructions	Take-home / in class	5
Game 2 – Play-testable version	Take-home / in class	5
Game 2 – Playtest Document	Take-home / in class	5
Game 2 – Presentation & Final GDD	Take-home / in class	15
Game 3 – Proposal & Instructions	Take-home / in class	5
Game 2 – Play-testable version 1	Take-home / in class	5
Game 2 – Play-testable version 2	Take-home / in class	5
Game 3 – Playtest Report		5
Game 3 – Final Presentation	Take-home / in class	15
Total		90

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
- Creative Problem Solving
- Originality of work
- Contribution to in-class discussion

The assignments:

What follows are brief descriptions of the course assignments students will be doing over the course of the term. Detailed instructions will be provided in-class. Without a physician or counselor's note, late assignments will not be accepted and so will receive a grade of 0.

Rules Exercise One

In the first class, a game will be explained to and played by the group. This first assignment is to create a clear and functional instruction set for the in class game. As with all written assignments in this course, this paper should be typed and checked for grammatical mistakes and misspellings before being printed up several days prior to class two. This will provide students the opportunity to test their instructions on a friend or family member. Are the instructions clear? Can the friend or family member play the game properly **without being prompted** by the writer? Rules should be rewritten and handed in at the start of class.

Game Review Assignments

During the first third of the course we will be learning and reading about the foundation of game design. In class we will be playing games that illustrate these mechanics. Students will be expected to write response papers that relate this game play back to the lectures and readings. These papers should be no longer than two pages in length and each assignment will address a particular audience.

Game Review One

Good designers of anything from a game to a mousetrap must initiate their creative process by recognizing deficiencies and strengths of other similar or related designs. To this end it is important for an aspiring game designer to become a discerning game player. Recognizing what works well in games while also noting things that are not as effective. It is important to be able to communicate these observations to others. This project requires students to take the information they have been given in the reading and apply it to the observation of a non-digital game played in class 2. Students should consider how well the game is designed in terms of its components and rules, the system these help create, and the outcomes and goals.

The audience for this review should be other gamers, and should be between 500 and 600 words. See textbook example.

Game Review Two

This review is intended to be read by other designers and must explore the second analog game played in class. It should consider the level of engagement that players have while playing the game. What is the structure of the game? How rigid is it and what sort of free movement is the player allowed?

Finally, the reviewer must recommend options for improvement by providing a detailed redesign statement outlining a means of making the game more engaging.

The Game Review should be between 1000 and 1500 words. See textbook example.

Game Assignments

During the course of the semester you will be gathering into small groups in order to propose, test and develop three separate analog games. The goal of these projects is to exercise some of the design approaches we will learn about in class and to gain first hand knowledge of game development and testing. Each project will have three elements:

Proposal & Instructions

Short group presentation detailing the goal of the game, its target audience, rule sets, narrative, and precedents being referenced. The team should also hand in a carefully written initial Game Design Document (GDD).

Play Testing Report

In class we will be play testing student games and for each play test its corresponding group is responsible for documenting the results. This documentation will become part of the larger GDD.

Final Presentation: GDD, Rule Sets, and Assets

Each group is responsible for turning in a final set of rules for their game and any and all assets after we have completed the play-testing phase along with a final GDD.

The three game assignments will be as follows:

Game 1 -

Develop a set of rules and use them to write instructions for an original game. These instructions must clearly communicate the elements of a game system while also inspiring engagement. The game cannot be a board or card game and must be able to be played by four or more people in an interior space (think your Grandma's living room, not a gymnasium).

In preparation for this project, review instructions for similar games, and pay close attention to the way game play is described, how important rule set information is delivered, and the way that steps and levels of game play are introduced.

Game 2 – Game Expansion

Form a team of 3 to 5 students to review the games that have been play tested in the class and create an expansion set for one of the games. This should involve no more than three additional assets to the original game, and be consistent with the original in narrative, playability, and aesthetics. Research expansion sets to other analog games in order to inform the design. Develop heuristics and playtest strategies to be implemented in the iterative design of this project.

Game 3 – Enacting Change (Professor Reserves the right to change this)

Form a team of 3 to 5 students and using any assets you wish create a game designed to either raise awareness of or motivate action concerning a social, political, or environmental issue. This game must be able to be played in the classroom by members of the class and have an average playing time of no more than thirty minutes.

For example a game could involve players taking on the personas of city council members addressing their constituents regarding a current issue concerning their community.

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 amounts 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.

Week & Class	Project Due	ROOM	TOPIC	READ FOR TODAY
1 2/2		C-456	Discussion: Class Introduction OUR EXPECTATIONS Instructions Exercise 357 Game Play	No reading
2 2/9	Rules Exercise 1	C-456	Discussion: What are Games? Play Vs. Games Ticket To Ride Play Test	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Introduction & Chapter 1 What is a Game?
3 2/16	Game Review 1 Game 1 Proposal & Instructions	C-456	Discussion: Engagement Playtesting Product Play Test What is a GDD??	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 2: Engagement: Do I Get a Ring?
4 2/23	Game Review 2 Game 1 Playtest report	C-456	Discussion: Rules Product Presentations Play Test Game 1	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 3: Laying Down the Law: Rules & the Ruling Rulers Who Rule Them
5 3/2	Game 1 Presentation & GDD	C-456	Discussion: Iterative Design/Usability Product Play Test	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 4 Going Back to the Drawing Board & Why That Can Be a Good Thing
6 3/9	Game 2 Proposal & Assets	C-456	Discussion: Product Presentations Game 1 Presentation Play & Mechanics	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 5 Play It Like You Mean It, Mean It Like You Play It Chapter 6 Game Mechanics: So Many Pieces, So Little Time!
7 3/16	Game 2 Testable version	C-456	Discussion: Narrative & Collaboration	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 7 Tell Me A Story: The Role of Narrative in Design Chapter 8: Collaboration: Pulling Together an Effective Team
8 3/23	Game 2 Playtest document	C-456	Discussion: Playtests Social Interaction	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 9 Social Interaction: Tea Cups & Finger Sandwiches

9 3/30	Game 2 Final Presentation & GDD	C-456	Discussion: Design Approach	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 10: How To Get Started: One Approach To Designing a Game
10 4/6	Game 3 Initial Proposal	C-456	Discussion: Alternative Games	No Reading
4/13			SPRING BREAK	WORK ON YOUR PROJECT!
4/20			Hostos on Monday Schedule	WORK ON YOUR PROJECT!
11 4/27	Game 3 Play-testable version 1	C-456	Discussion: Writing Better Rules Team Meetings	<i>Einstein & the Honeybee</i> Chapter 11 Alternative Play: Games That Teach
12 5/4		C-456	Discussion: Play Testing	No Reading
13 5/11	Game 3 Play-testable version 2	C-456	Discussion: Play Testing	No Reading
14 5/18	Game 3 Play Test Reports	C-456	Discussion: Team conferences	No Reading
15 5/25h	Game 3 Presentation & GDD	C-456	Final Critique	No Reading

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