

BIMD 362: Game Design in a FU'd World

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Winter 2023 | on campus UW2-211 Thursdays with optional online Tuesdays, 1:15-3:15 PM



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—COURSE INFORMATION—

INSTRUCTORS



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Office Hours: by appointment (prob after class) or just email

HOW TO EMAIL: 1. write a relevant subject, 2. get our names and titles right, 3. provide context for your email, and 4. sign it with who the heck you are. Also, check the syllabus first.



Marco Nepomuceno, Peer Facilitator | marcon7@uw.edu | morco#3769

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DESCRIPTION

Welcome, intrepid designers, to game design in a fu'd up world!

A lot had been happening in the last few years leading up to 2020, all of it seeming to come to a head in [October 2018 when the UN put out a climate report that reiterated that we were headed for disaster by 2040](#). Surprisingly, this was picked up by the media and politicians in a way that [hadn't been happening for decades](#), and we gained more and more traction in the global fight against climate change. At last, it seemed, the general populace and governments started to take notice. The voices of climate scientists and conservationists were finally rising above misinformation and resistance from greed corporations. Additionally, the unmovable object that is Hollywood started to listen to the voices of women who had been sexually exploited for years, and it seemed like the world was also making headway in a whole bunch of other social issues, too. Then 2020 happened.

As you know, we've had to adjust in a huge way to living with a pandemic while the misinformation continues and as we boil in the alt-right and QAnon pot. But we didn't do any of this without fighting back. When the protest movement of BLM started happening and then spread throughout the whole world, not just the US, it seemed like we were finally not just sitting down defeated by the status quo.

But now, it's more than a year later... We had a hopeful election in 2020 then months of seemingly nothing progressing in 2021. We had the promise of a vaccine and then months of idiots not taking it, made worse with new variants, forcing us to realize we're in this for the long haul, making it really hard to stay motivated, leaving so many of us feeling directionless. 2022 seemed to be the year when we returned to the reality of increasing gun violence, too, and the war in Ukraine is just... Argh. Anxiety levels are at an all-time high.

That all said, here's the thing: We can blow things apart and deconstruct and reconfigure things in extreme ways, leading to radical explorations of art and design. If old design, mired in a history of capitalist toxicity leading to toxic design patterns, f'd us up, maybe we can rebel and subvert and find power through new design. (Or maybe not; maybe we're doomed and can't escape from the matrix.) Indeed, this time of being on the cusp of collapse provides an extremely rich context in which to grow as designers, and it's possible to keep going. This course will hopefully provide resources and

strategies for finding solace and salvation through intentional gaming and radical game design. Furthermore, we hope to impress upon you how important it is to consider larger social ramifications of your work, both now and in years to come.

This course is meant to provide (through readings, etc.) lots of background on social issues and how they manifest in gaming culture and how games are designed so that you can think of these larger issues as you skill up through engaging in several game design activities. Note that game design follows the same general design pattern as other projects that build creative solutions so, even though we will be focusing on games, it should be relatively easy for the lessons learned to apply to design work, in general, and your ability to make connections between lots of different things will serve you well. The main difference is that with games, often you're deliberately setting systems up to be challenging and disorienting rather than "easy" because it's through this challenge that players take on a [lusory attitude](#) and learn how to adapt and overcome.

Three main threads of gaming tradition are heavy influences for this course:

1. [Alt.Ctrl.GDC](#) and alternative controllers that focus on pushing the limits of interactivity. We want to experiment and try out novel forms of control that might lead to emergent experiences.
2. [absurdist](#) games that focus on finding the wherewithal to keep going (and design for the ridiculous) in the face of insurmountable obstacles.
3. [games about story and narrative](#) (with a particular emphasis on [text games](#) and [visual novels](#)) that focus on encouraging players to experience and empathise with others rather than shooting them in the face or seeing them as competition.

There are five basic steps to the design process: scope, brainstorm, prototype, test, refine, and we'll be covering most of the beginning steps (given the constraints of a 10-week quarter) by having students create mockups and presentations after thinking through and iterating on a variety of design ideas. We'll also simultaneously be learning about the structure and form of games (primarily using the [MDA framework](#)), how they can provide [opportunities for learning](#), and how to increase engagement (through [game feel](#)) and encourage players to get stuck on the *right things*. We want players to be

challenged intentionally by the ideas and concepts and deliberate systems in our games and not challenged by just poor UI design. Game design presents unique constraints that are sometimes in contrast to regular design work.

The final project will be to present a polished game mockup or prototype that is freaking awesome in how it pushes, destabilizes, and empowers. The course attitude is one of scrappy, cobbled-together, thoughtful and contemplative resourceful survival tactics in a fu'd up world. It's about struggle through design and artistic expressions of [absurdism](#) to cope with struggle. It's about finding fun in tedium and playfulness in a world that doesn't make any sense. We'll use these lusory attitudes to push the limits of design and speculate about an optimistic future.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

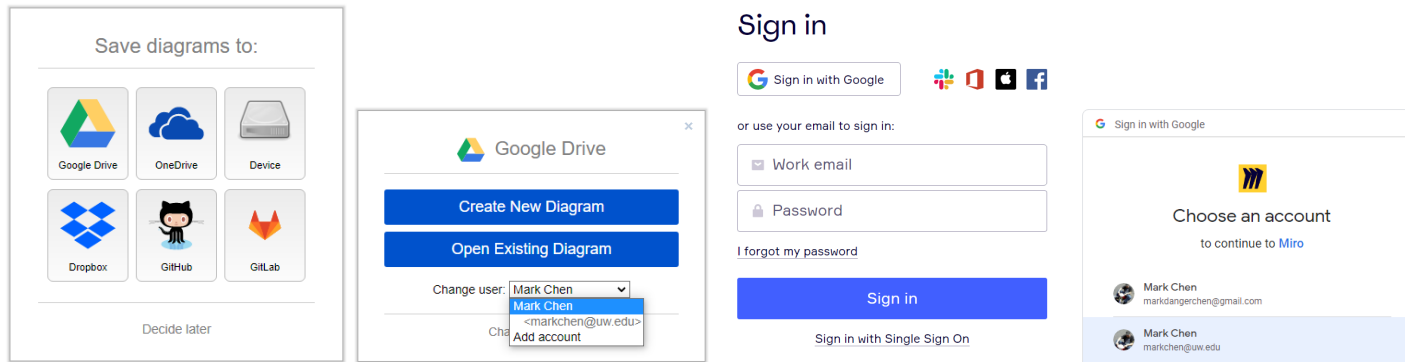
By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Examine games and game systems using critical design frameworks (such as MDA).
- Follow a general design process (scope, brainstorm, prototype, test, refine).
- Rapidly prototype and mockup a game with serious themes.
- Write reflectively and connectedly through online learning journals.
- Work on teams that value diversity and empathy.
- Engage in academic discourse around gaming for social change topics.
- Research and present about a game design-related topic.
- Exhibit a lusory attitude to gaming, game design (and life).

Note: This course is 5 credits. A general guideline for each credit at UW is 2 hours per credit outside of class. Therefore this class is meant to take about 10 hours of outside class time (tho there's the potential for it to eat up as much time as you're willing to devote to it). The readings and note-taking should take less than 5 hours. The remaining time should be spent working on the projects!

TECH

- **Google Shared Drive** (most of the assignments and course materials will be here): <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0ANNXDGZXMt-RUk9PVA>
- **Canvas** (announcements and grades): <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1608028> Turn on notifications!
- **Discord** (group work coordination): <https://discord.gg/JgdrPdVa>
- **Perusall** (reading annotations): <https://perusall.com> Use course code: **CHEN-X6KQY**
- **Zoom** (for optional Tuesday office hours, presentations, or chilling): <https://washington.zoom.us/j/99650996724>
- **Trello** or **ClickUp** (not required but highly recommended project management)
- **figma** or **Adobe XD** (to create mockups and flows)
- **draw.io**, **miro**, **MURAL**, or **StoryboardThat** (or whatever) (to create flowcharts, diagrams, or storyboards)
 - When you can, choose Save diagrams or Sign in with Google and then use your uw.edu account!



Note: This is a course that fully embraces digital media and a connected life. As such, we will be using appropriate tools that will persist and be useful to you outside of UWB. Google Shared Drives should serve as a course archive and be available even after you graduate, and Slack is a business-level discussion platform.

Also note: Read these [tips for how to do online teamwork](#) and [how to hold teams accountable](#).

—ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS—

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Points</i>
<p><i>Introductions and Character Sheet (Redux)</i> Last Quarter's character sheets were so cool to see. Let's have you make another one to see a different take on what you made before that could include a focus on game design and gaming and also highlight new things you want to include this time around.</p> <p>Attach your character sheet to your introduction post in Discord in the #character-sheets channel, and tell us a bit about yourself!</p>	<p><i>Due Thursday, Jan 12</i></p>	<p>2</p>
<p><i><u>Note-taking while Reading</u></i> Please use Perusall to annotate and comment on the weekly course materials, asking questions, adding clarification, and/or generally posting reactions. Each week, a student's Perusall annotations are worth up to 2 or 3 points (2 points is considered full credit, but it's possible to get 3 if you contribute a lot), depending on a number of factors including quality and quantity of annotations throughout the documents, commenting on and/or upvoting other people's annotations, etc. At least three notes spread throughout the PDF are required, but they need to be high-quality notes so it's safer to post five or six notes to be sure.</p>	<p><i>Weekly on Mondays:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using Perusall = 2 x 10wks <p>Course code: CHEN-X6KQY</p>	<p>20+</p> <p>Read more about the Note-Taking assignments</p>

<p><i>Personal Learning Journal (Individual x 3)</i></p> <p>For this course, you are expected to write higher-level journal reflections that synthesize and unpack your weekly thoughts and activities. Think of this as a way for you to engage in metacognitive reflections on your learning. Additionally, this journal writing is meant to be comprehensive and include everything about your pathway through design. In other words, you can <i>and should</i> include work and thoughts from both within and outside IMD—basically, anything related to your design life and pathway.</p> <p>One way to think about this is that these less frequent synthesis writings are for a more general audience. I find that it helps to either pretend you'll be reading this 5 years from now OR you're trying to give someone the director's commentary version of your weekly reflections. What sorts of notes or additional material can you include that helps the reader understand what your design life was like this quarter? You can also think of this as a way to add stuff from outside of whatever you covered in the timesheets. Maybe you have an internship or a job where you got a chance to design something. What sorts of things can you tell us about that process and whether what you're learning in IMD helped or related to that work.</p> <p>Use Google docs so we can all leave comments for each other.</p> <p>Each entry in the learning journal is worth 3 points and should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1pt: What you've done since the previous entry and what's next. Include a detailed account of your activity. Also include things that didn't work or alternative approaches you needed to come up with. Detail is important. Think of this as sort of a documentary or behind-the-scenes look at the process that you use to think and create. If it helps, specifically think about these items: 	<p><i>Due Thursdays, Jan 26, Feb 16, March 9</i> <i>(Weeks 4, 7, 10)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● each entry is 3 pts (writing debrief, including screenshots or images, and including links to outside sources) ● proofing and providing feedback on others = 1 pt <p>PROOFREAD your work!</p> <p>Note: Not everyone is at the same place in terms of writing experience. Please treat this as an opportunity to get better at writing reflectively. Take on an open-growth mindset and know that you will get better with practice. It is <i>*highly*</i> suggested that students install the Grammarly extension and use it in their Google docs. In general, make sure what you're writing flows logically. All sentences about a particular subject should be clumped together in one</p>	<p>12</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What you learned. Include how you think you learned it and whether there was a particular resource or concept that you can highlight that helped you learn how to do the task.○ What worked well for the task. This could include reflections on your work schedule or other meta-things about your learning process. If you worked with others or gave or received help with others, include that info, too.○ Next steps. What you plan on trying next, especially if you're currently stuck on a problem or have ideas for new things to try. How you will adjust what you've been doing based on what's happened so far. <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 1pt: Screenshots or photos with labels. When talking about specific issues or things you learned, please include screenshots or photos or other visuals of work to help illustrate what you're talking about. Be sure to label them and refer to them in your text entry.● 1pt: Links to web or other resources you used while working through the problems in your entry and some sort of description of the resources. They might include other people or YouTube videos or articles or whatever. Just be sure to document and reflect on them! This is one of the hardest items to include since it is next-level thinking. Start connecting your work to the larger design world in a deliberate fashion and engage in the larger design trends and conversations that the discipline is engaged in! <p>My guess is that these entries will be about 750 words long, but it really depends on personal writing style.</p> <p>1pt: Each student is expected to read someone else's journal entry and comment and suggest edits. The feedback should include both grammatical</p>	<p>paragraph. (USE paragraphs.) Be consistent with verb tenses and point-of-view. Also, be sure to properly capitalize titles and names. Take advantage of the online format and link generously when appropriate.</p>	
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<p>and editorial suggestions, as well as thoughts on content and structure of the reflections. Is it detailed enough for you to have a clear picture of what happened during the design life of the author since the last reflection? Is it clear what the designer was thinking about and how they applied that thinking to the work? Make sure your comments are visible and that it's clear they're from you.</p>		
<p><i>In-Class Activity: 2-Hour Game Jam</i></p> <p>During class sessions on January 12 and through the following week, we'll be engaging in a game design sprint. Details will be given that week.</p> <p>A game jam is sort of like a weekend hackathon, where you're given a topic and some criteria and then expected to make a game in 48 hours. We'll extend this format to 8 days. The first game you make is to just get a feel for the game-making process. The games don't have to be that good; just try your best!</p>	<p><i>Duration: Jan 19 - Jan 26</i> <i>(Weeks 2-3)</i></p>	<p>5</p>
<p><i>Game Deconstructions</i></p> <p>Pick two games or game series and write a short review for them using the MDA or other framework. The games you pick must not be games you have played before, and they must be non-AAA games. Try to find games that are story-heavy, meaningful experiences, or are meant to teach you about social issues.</p> <p>Create a google doc for each deconstruction and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your name, date, etc. • Title of the game, genre, platform played on, how long played • Why you chose the game • Overall thoughts about the game 	<p><i>Due Thursday, Jan 26</i> <i>(Week 4)</i></p> <p>If you want, you may partner up with someone for these deconstructions. Both are due at the same time.</p> <p>In addition to all of this, any student who leaves thoughtful comments or feedback on other deconstructions may receive an extra point or two</p>	<p>10</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the game was designed vs. how you received it • What emotions were intended vs. were elicited? • Which actions or verbs are emphasized? • Overall aesthetics • Screenshots or video of gameplay <p>Anyone who doesn't receive full points but then revises their document after receiving feedback can have the assignment regraded! Just let Mark know that you've made revisions.</p>	<p>of community engagement points, depending on how many they do within about five days. Just email or message Mark to let him know which ones you did this for!</p>	
<p><i>Extra Credit: Husky Game Dev 2023 Winter Game Jam</i></p> <p>Anyone who participates in the Husky Game Dev Quarterly Game Jam will receive 10 points of extra credit. Submit the itch.io URL for your game in Canvas and participate in the game showcase at the end of the game jam. More info TBA.</p> <p>Anyone who does not or cannot participate in the game jam can still receive extra credit if they do two more game deconstructions. (Note: there are way more than 100 points possible this quarter so these extra points aren't necessary to receive a 4.0 if you've done the other assignments well.)</p>	<p><i>Duration: Feb 3 - Feb 12</i> <i>(Weeks 5-7)</i></p> <p><i>discord.gg/5kzKR3</i></p>	<p>10</p>
<p><i>Extra Community Engagement</i></p> <p>Students who go above and beyond assignment requirements and generally do things to encourage or develop the whole classroom community will receive extra points. Post (memes) frequently in Discord, write thoughtfully about your project, ask others questions, participate in weekly activities, be responsive to your team, help other students, etc.</p>	<p><i>Ongoing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement. Tip: Attempt positive interactions with us and your peers in class and online and use your video camera or have a photo of yourself in 	<p>10</p>

<p>It helps A LOT if you approach group work with compassion, generosity, and curiosity. Don't assume things about each other, and be genuinely curious about each other's lives. If anyone seems to be participating less than they should be, figure out how you can help them stay on top of their work by asking what they need rather than just yelling at them or not saying anything and building up resentment.</p> <p>More on teamwork:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teamwork for this course is extremely important, and that means being proactive about what you do, and don't wait for others to give you assignments. In small teams, everyone should be leading.2. If you want to help but just don't know how that's okay; we can work on that. Communicate!	<p>Zoom so we remember who you are!</p> <p>Thanks for reading the syllabus. I know it's a lot, but this is important stuff. If you email me using the format outlined in a later part of this syllabus, I'll give you 2 extra credit points.</p>	
<p><i>Game Design Project</i></p> <p>This course focuses on game design, not game development, meaning you will delve into designing interesting systems and stories that lead to deeper experiences but not focus on the actual coding and implementation of these designs. Therefore, we will mostly be covering the first parts of the whole design process. That said, you will also be using some common game design tools to aid in the planning and exploration phase of design. These include using a Game Design Document for planning and creating flowcharts, storyboards, and mockups to show gameplay loops (aka user flows) that highlight main mechanics with the goal of making clear what sorts of emotions and experiences are the intended outcome.</p> <p>The end goal is to create a pitch or showcase presentation that details what your radical game is about, how it's played, what its art style will be, etc. Pretend you're delivering an announcement presentation at E3 or that you're showcasing the game to get funding, either through a publisher or through crowdfunding.</p> <p>The general theme for the games will be a combination of any of the following: alternative controllers, absurdism, and/or story-focused text games / visual novels. Additionally, you may focus on climate change, COVID, mental health, #metoo, BLM,</p>		

resistance, survival, or any other serious social topic. The main focus, however, is to make something that challenges our traditional ideas of what games can be, as well as something that challenges players through transformative experiences.

The readings throughout the quarter are meant to help with understanding the game design process including the Game Design Document as well as themes or topics that could potentially be explored. One of the main themes that could be new for many students is the concept of absurdity, which is why Mark will cover it in one of the weekly presentations. For more information, though, check out the Wikipedia page on [Absurdism](#), as well as a good write-up of [Albert Camus](#) and the [Theatre of the Absurd](#). Other inspirations include [Yale's School of Art page](#), [/r/shittyrobots/](#), [Simone Giertz](#), [Hebocon](#), [alt.ctrl.GDC](#), [Shake That Button](#), [kusoge](#), and that reddit thread on [horrible volume sliders](#).

Some good story / text games to check out: [Roadwarden](#), [Demon Deleter](#), [Tower of Dread](#), [A.I. Dungeon](#), [Universal Paperclips](#), [Doki Doki Literature Club](#), [Save the Date](#), [80 Days](#), [Heaven's Vault](#), [Spiritfarer](#), [Disco Elysium](#), [Depression Quest](#)

Tip: Good flowchart tools include [miro](#) and [MURAL](#). [StoryboardThat](#) is good for storyboards (tho hand-drawn ones or whatever are fine, too). [figma](#) and Adobe XD are good for mockups. (Wireframes could be done digitally or by hand, too.)

Also: Each team is expected to try out [Trello](#) or [ClickUp](#) for project management.

Each assignment is a group assignment unless otherwise noted. However, grading will be done by individual students, and, to help with that grading, you will be doing team evaluations and periodic reflective updates in your Game Design Documents.

Tips for good teamwork [from Google](#):

- Make sure everyone is talking at roughly the same amount of time.
- Try to develop high social sensitivity, by reading each other's moods and emotions.
- Become friends and share personal information to create psychological safety.
- Also, work on [curbing defensiveness](#).
- Remember, often [the quiet ones have brilliant ideas](#).

Also: [Project management in the time of COVID-19](#)

<p>Idea Generation (individual)</p> <p>Individual students will come up with a game idea in a Google doc by defining who the audience of the game is, what genre or type of game it is, and what sorts of intents and goals the game will have. Describe what the game is about and then detail the game's focus. How will it push the idea of interactivity, absurdism, and/or storytelling? What sorts of experiences or gameplay loops are important? Think about the verb(s) of the game and describe what they are and what emotions or feelings or thoughts they are intended to evoke.</p> <p>For example, if you intend to teach a specific learning goal, your write-up would have to include a profile or persona for who the player is and how that learning goal will come about for that particular player because different people have different backgrounds and capabilities. Additionally, if you intend to push the boundaries of a particular game genre, we need enough background info on the genre and how you plan on pushing it.</p> <p>This should probably be 1 or 2 pages, but it does not need to be polished in any way. We need enough information to get a quick sense of where you're going with your thoughts so that we can upvote the best ideas and divide into groups to explore the ideas more for the rest of the quarter.</p>	<p>Due Thursday, February 2 (Week 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Idea in a Google doc <p>We'll have students vote for which ideas they want to work on over the weekend so by Tuesday, February 7, we'll have the teams set up.</p>	2
<p>Team Contract</p> <p>Teams will start by negotiating who's going to be doing what and fill out a Team Plan/Contract. (Just copy that Google doc to your team folder and fill it out.)</p> <p><i>For this course, please include in your Team Plan which project management platform you'll try to use (Trello, ClickUp, or Ayoa).</i></p>	<p>Due Thursday, February 9 (Week 6)</p>	2

<p>Meeting Notes</p> <p>Each team is expected to meet at least once every three weeks to work on this project. <i>While</i> holding team meetings, take copious notes! Please use this Team Meeting Notes template to format your notes. Also, start taking photos of your work process, take screenshots of stages of progress, and do quick annotations on them. This will help with the write-up assignments for the draft and final turn-ins.</p> <p>Each meeting should have roughly this agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check in with each other and make sure everyone is okay 2. Go over the agenda 3. Review what work has been done since the last meeting 4. Discuss any issues 5. Work on stuff together if time allows and it makes sense 6. Assign tasks to do before the next meeting <p>Each team should post their notes to their team channel and one person on each team should submit the notes to Canvas as well. Each one is worth a point.</p>	<p>Due Monday every two weeks (three total, but submitting more is welcome!)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feb 13 2. Feb 27 3. March 13 	<p>3</p>
<p>Initial 2-Page Game Design Document</p> <p>Create a 2-page Game Design Document (GDD) in Google docs, using either Rogers's version from <i>Level Up!</i> or Mullich's version as a starting point, but feel free to edit, mashup, and/or modify it as you see fit (and make it look nice). At a minimum include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a title, list of team members, misc details, etc., • a one-line description of the overall game (one tweet?), 	<p>Due Thursday, February 9 (Week 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Game Design Document = 4 pts • Team Eval 1 (individual) = 2 pts <p>Team Evaluation Each student should submit via Canvas a quick check-in</p>	<p>4+2</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a statement of intent that details how the game represents struggle, resistance, climate health, staying sane, dealing with pandemics, absurdism, patchwork, power, and/or any other theme we end up with, • a bit about who the audience is, what background they should have, and what they'll get out of playing your game, • a clear description of genre inspirations, mechanics, and how these match intent, • a section that covers the different design goals with regard to the MDA or other framework, • a list of needed art and design assets, and • a link to your Trello (or other project management platform) page. <p>Add art if you have it ready and/or screenshots of any tools you're using to create this. Screenshots of other games that inspired this one are much appreciated as well!</p> <p>Any team that doesn't receive full points but then revises their document after receiving feedback can have the assignment regraded! Just let Mark know that you've made revisions.</p>	<p>on how the team is doing overall and how each other member specifically is doing. Use this Team Evaluation Template. The evaluation is a chance for you to be hypercritical of the process so far with an eye towards improving your team culture. Reflecting this way is an invaluable skill, and you all should share with each other when appropriate to try to coordinate and communicate better as a team. This is worth more than just one point for a reason; it should demonstrate thoughtful reflection on your team. I do take evaluations into consideration when I calculate grades.</p>	
<p>Feedback on 2-Pagers (Individual)</p> <p>Each student should hop into other teams' 2-Page GDDs and leave feedback or comments. Do this for at least two other teams!</p> <p>Generally, to count, we're looking for good in-depth feedback, not short unhelpful comments. Focus on structure, flow, mood, clarity, etc., and whether there are</p>	<p><i>Due Monday, February 13</i> <i>(Week 7)</i></p>	<p>4</p>

<p>other sources of literature or other games that you know of that they should reference. Then also describe any issues or clarifications that need to occur and other ideas that you have to improve the overall experience and depth. Let Mark know for whom you left feedback.</p>		
<p>Wireframes, Sketches, and Systems / Mechanics and 10-Page GDD+ (with Debrief)</p> <p>Each team will create wireframes, sketches, storyboards, and/or whatever makes sense for your game idea. If you want, you can do some prototyping in whatever platform you want, but that's really only necessary insofar as you need to test out novel systems. Additionally, if you want, you can start working on more high-fidelity mockups, but beware that it might be work that you will cut after receiving feedback...</p> <p>Teams will also make a copy of their 2-page GDD and then edit the copy so that it becomes more like a 10-pager (from Rogers's template).</p> <p>Then teams should append a debrief section to the 10-pager that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of issues that have come up or explorations that the team has had to make, and • photos, videos, or other media files that help document the game creation. <p>Any team that doesn't receive full points but then revises their document after receiving feedback can have the assignment regraded! Just let Mark know that you've made revisions.</p>	<p><i>Due Thursday, February 23</i> (Week 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wireframes = 4pts • 10-page GDD+ = 4pts • Team Eval 2 (individual) = 2 pts <p>The wireframes should provide enough detail about interactions plus some high-level sense of aesthetics so that we can understand how the game mechanics and systems work. It may help to annotate these heavily if you have complicated systems and mechanics to explain. We want to get a comprehensive look at the different features to make sure it all makes sense!</p>	<p>8+2</p>

<p>Feedback on wireframes and GDD+ (Individual)</p> <p>Each student should hop into other teams' 2-Page GDDs and leave feedback or comments. Do this for at least two other teams!</p> <p>Generally, to count, we're looking for good in-depth feedback, not short unhelpful comments. Focus on structure, flow, mood, clarity, etc., and whether there are other sources of literature or other games that you know of that they should reference. Then also describe any issues or clarifications that need to occur and other ideas that you have to improve the overall experience and depth. Let Mark know for whom you left feedback.</p>	<p><i>Due Monday, February 27</i> <i>(Week 9)</i></p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Game Design Presentation</p> <p>Each team is expected to showcase their games on March 9 with a quick presentation done with a slide deck.</p> <p>The presentation should consist of these parts (inspired by final presentations for the Game Certificate program at UW):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Start with a 30-second intro that includes:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. your names,b. the title of game, andc. a really quick description that you can say while showing off either a quick series of images or an animated gif.2. Then go into more detail, from a higher level that you can then drill down from.3. Cover the narrative and setting first.4. Showcase each unique mechanic in detail, each mechanic gets its own section/slide or animated gif.	<p><i>Due Thursday, March 9</i> <i>(Week 10)</i></p> <p>Each team gets 10 minutes. The given format is pretty flexible, but, if you're sure you won't go over time, you can change it all you want for a better presentation. Think about how to most wisely spend those 10 minutes so that your vision comes across clearly.</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>You want to impress us with a clear art style, yes, but also a clear explanation of how this fits or bends particular genres and what makes the mechanics and systems so compelling. Try not to get mired in minute details if you don't need them to explain the overall experience and draw of the game. Make sure to highlight how this game is different than others and how it addresses serious topics or focuses on meaningful experiences.</p>		
<p>Mockups and Final GDD+ (with Debrief)</p> <p>Prepare a set of high-fidelity mockups (and storyboards or whatever else you want to create) that show the game as close to what it would look like if it were to be developed as possible. Be sure to tell us how to view these mockups in your GDD.</p> <p><i>Make a copy of your 10-Page GDD+ and edit it to be the final GDD+.</i></p> <p>The final document should basically consist of two things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The final version of your Game Design Document. This will likely be longer than 10 pages as it should be comprehensive. Ask yourself, if a different team were to read your GDD, could they create the same game? 2. Debrief and process documentation on how the work was done. It may help to break it out chronologically, adding reflections where appropriate (though a lot of this could also be done in the personal learning journals). Throw in photos and screenshots, example code (if any), artifacts that attest to its evolution, thoughts on early ideas and why you chose to go the route you ended up with, the feedback you received, etc. Pretend this part is a documentary that shows off the behind-the-scenes of your team's work. Remember, good write-ups are narratives with plot, structure, conflict, etc. 	<p><i>Due Monday, March 13</i> <i>(Week 11)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mockups = 4pts • Final GDD+ = 4pts • Team Eval 3 (individual) = 2 pts <p>Create a new document rather than edit your previous GDD+ because you will then have multiple iterations in your team folder that help articulate the evolution of your design. Feel free to copy and paste a lot of the content, but edit and add as much as you see fit to make these as detailed and comprehensive as possible.</p>	<p>8+2</p>

Play with the design of the documents, as well, to make it functional as a “recipe” but also presentable to potential funders!		
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—GRADING—

To calculate your grade, **ignore the percentage columns in Canvas**.
Instead, just add up your points and consult this table.

Points	Grade		Points	Grade
>=99	4.0		80	3.0
98-97	3.9		79	2.9
96-95	3.8	
94-93	3.7		70	2.0
92-91	3.6	
90-89	3.5		60	1.0
88-87	3.4	
86-85	3.3		57	0.7
84-83	3.2			
82-81	3.1			

—WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS—

Week	Topics and Activities	Readings
01 Jan 5	Introductions and Game Definitions Some background on our FU'd world: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figueres, Christina, & Rivett-Carnac, Tom. (Apr 16, 2020). Two Futures (excerpt from <i>The future we choose: Surviving the climate crisis</i>). Atmos. The Climate Reality Project. Climate 101. Climate in the Time of Coronavirus. <i>Grist</i>. Bing COVID-19 Tracker Rabbit Rabbit (aka Reed Berkowitz). (Sep 30, 2020). A game designer's analysis of QAnon. <i>curiouserinstitute</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bogost, Ian. (2013). Persuasive Games. <i>UX Week 2013</i> [video]. Chen, Mark. (2014). A new definition for games: Meaningful play. Skim these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juul, Jesper. (2003). The game, the player, the world: Looking for a heart of gameness. Keynote presented at the Level Up conference in Utrecht, November 4th-6th 2003. Upton, Brian. (2015). Interactivity. In <i>The aesthetic of play</i> (pp.23-38).
02 Jan 12	MDA and Ludonarrative Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunicke, LeBlanc, & Zubek. (2004). MDA: A formal approach to game design and game research. http://www.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/pubs/MDA.pdf Despain, Wendy, & Ash, Lauryn. (2016). Designing for ludonarrative harmony.

<p>03</p> <p>Jan 19</p>	<p>Absurdism</p> <p>Also, check out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yale's School of Art page • /r/shittyrobots/ • Simone Giertz • Hebocon • Shake That Button • kusoge • that reddit thread on horrible volume sliders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marker Ninja Studios. (2015). This absurd universe: Albert Camus' The myth of Sisyphus [video]. • Penny, Laurie. (Nov 27, 2019). On hope (in a time of hopelessness). <i>Wired</i>.
<p>04</p> <p>Jan 26</p>	<p>The Game Design Document</p> <p>Also, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fullerton, Tracy. (2008). Chapter 9: Playtesting. <i>Game design workshop: A playcentric approach to creating innovative games</i> (pp. 248-276). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rogers, Scott. (2010). <i>Level Up!: The Guide to Great Video Game Design</i>. Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 (pp. 57-82, 435-444). • Mullich, David. (2018). An actionable game design document template.
<p>05</p> <p>Feb 2</p>	<p>Game Feel and Text Games</p> <p>Also, check out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bandersnatch</i> • Jones, Mat. (Jan 9, 2019). Some video games that are like Bandersnatch, but better. <i>Rock Paper Shotgun</i>. • Ashwell, Sam Kabo. (2015). Standard patterns in choice-based games. <i>These Heterogenous Tasks</i> (Jan 26, 2015). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swink, Steve. (2009). <i>Game Feel: A Game Designer's Guide to Virtual Sensation</i>. Intro and Chapter 1 (pp. xiii-33). Whoever picks this should also read: Keogh, Brendan. (2017). An Incomplete Game Feel Reader • Reed, Aaron. (2021). 2020: Scents & Semiosis. <i>50 Years of Text Games</i>.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aarseth, Espen. (1997). Cybertext: Perspectives on ergodic literature (pp. 1-23). ← This reading is DENSE. May help to also read a discussion about ergodic literature on Grand Text Auto and also listen to http://rangedtouch.com/2019/10/01/16-aarseth-cybertext/ 	
06 Feb 9	Exploitationware and Power Distribution through Design Also, check out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark Patterns • Wark, McKenzie. (2014). Losing is fun. In <i>The gameful world</i> (pp. 163-165). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bogost, Ian. (May 3, 2011). Persuasive games: Exploitationware. <i>Gamasutra</i>. • Debaque, Sidney. (Mar 10, 2021). Designers should redistribute power, not consolidate it. <i>UX Collective</i>.
07 Feb 16	Playful Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we design for behavior change? <p>Also, highly recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Grasshopper</i> by Bernard Suits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hassenzahl, Marc, & Laschke, Matthias. (2014). Pleasurable troublemakers. In Walz & Deterding (Eds.), <i>The gameful world</i> (pp. 167-195). • Quantic Foundry. (2016). Our gaming motivation data distilled into a 20-minute talk. <i>GDC</i>.
08 Feb 23	Videogames of the Oppressed, Games and Learning <p>Also, check out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henley, Stacey. (Nov 17, 2021). The games industry is truly repellent. <i>TheGamer</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frasca, Gonzalo. (2004). Videogames of the oppressed: Critical thinking, education, tolerance, and other trivial issues. <i>First person: New media as story, performance, and game</i> (pp. 85-94). • Shaffer, David William, Squire, Kurt D., Halverson, Rich, and Gee, James Paul. (2004). Video games and the future of learning. University of Wisconsin-Madison and Academic Advanced Distributed Learning Co-Laboratory.

09 Mar 2	Games for Social Good Also, watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People Make Games. Investigating Three Indie Superstars Accused of Emotional Abuse. YouTube.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lin, Holin, & Sun, Chuen-Tsai. (2022). Game-assisted social activism: Game literacy in Hong Kong's anti-extradition movement. <i>Games and Culture</i>. DOI: 10.1177/15554120211061852• Trammell, Aaron. (2022). Decolonizing play. <i>Critical Studies in Media Communication</i>. DOI: 10.1080/15295036.2022.2080844
10 Mar 9	Agency through Games and Where Do We Go from Here? Also, read and watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benfell, Grace. (Jan 11, 2021). 2020: Flickers of the apocalypse. <i>fractals</i>.• A message from the future with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making Games in a F****d Up World video• Making Games in a F****d Up World blog post
11 Mar 16	We might meet this week, depending on whether projects need more time or if we skip a week sometime during the quarter.	

—COURSE RESOURCES AND MATERIALS—

Games to Change the World:

- [Depression Quest](#). Zoe Quinn.
- *Dys4ia*. Anna Anthropy.
- examples of [Subversive Play](#)
- [Google Docs CYOA escape room](#)
- [Movers & Shakers](#). MIT Gamelab.
- Indie Game Jams <http://www.indiegamejams.com/>
- [IndieCade / Games for Our Future Climate Jam](#)
- [IndieCade Jamming the Curve](#)

Resources on game design:

- [Tiny Game Design Tool](#)
- [Gamasutra's post-mortem list](#). ← use these as a guide for your post-mortems
- [10 Seminal Postmortems](#)
- [Altering Reality through Play](#) (Alternate Reality Games)
- [Thimbleweed Park Puzzle Dependency Charts](#) and [Puzzle Dependency Graph Primer](#)
- [Tim Cain and Leonard Boyarsky's design lessons from *The Outer Worlds*](#)
- [Emotional Context in Decision Design](#)
- [The Illusion of Choice](#) [video]
- [Solving Puzzle Design](#) [video]

Game Studies readings/resources:

- [Games and Culture first issue](#).
- [Gamestudies.org](#)

- [Critical Gaming Project](#) blog.
- [This Week in Videogame Blogging](#). ← One of the most important sites about critical gaming.
- [Games, Play, and Joy](#), a statement and a syllabus by Jane Friedhoff

Design resources:

- [Starting a career in user experience design: Nearly everything you need to know](#)
- AIGA's [Design for Good](#) initiative
- [Design in a Nutshell: One-Minute Animated Primers on Six Major Creative Movements](#)
- Prototyping resources: [What is a Prototype?](#), [Top UI & UX Prototyping Tools 2020](#)
- UX prototyping tools: [Figma](#), [Sketch](#), [JustInMind](#), [Moqups](#)

—IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFO—

[IAS Common Syllabus Resources and Policies](#) ← Go read this. It pertains to all of your IAS courses!

General Teaching Statement:

First, I believe I have a responsibility to support you for lifelong success and happiness. The way I've designed this course is in line with this guiding principle, from the technologies we use to how I accept revisions for almost all assignments. Furthermore, **the course is initially destabilizing by design because I want you to practice finding answers, asking when you need help, and learning through trying something, receiving feedback, and trying again until you excel.** I have a tiny blip of a chance to affect you positively in the long scheme of things so I've designed this course to encourage agility, independence, curiosity, and perseverance so that hopefully I've helped you be successful long after this course is over.

Second, I am a scholar and designer who believes in equity, justice, and **maximizing agency for everyone.** But I don't have all the answers, and I am on a lifelong journey to learn as well. Additionally, I try my hardest to decentralize power and to treat you as equals, but there are inherent dynamics that will always exist. I will endeavor to never exercise that power unless it is ethical to do so.

Third, **learning is social.** This is the foundational principle of my Ph.D. research in education and informal learning. I encourage you to communicate with each other, with the peer facilitators, and with me as much as possible, even if all you have to say is just a small status update. You want to develop "[swift trust](#)" and to learn by asking and reasoning aloud and by watching others.

Late and Revision Policies:

Most of the activities for my courses are done in teams or have certain milestones requiring you to give and receive feedback from peers. As such, it's quite difficult to get the same experience if you turn in late assignments. **Late work becomes meaningless if they arrive after someone was available to provide you with feedback. Meaningless work gets a zero grade. Late, but still**

meaningful, work gets at least partial credit, and you must let us know that you are still planning on doing it. If it's extremely insightful or proves that you've been thinking about the course topics deeply, full points are still possible.

For work in **Perusall**, the system is set up to accept late work, but I reserve the right to deduct points for egregiously late **work**, especially if you don't let me know beforehand that it will be late. If your notes are late, it helps a lot if the notes are particularly insightful and of high quality to make up for the fact that they're late. Also, **if you post something after the initial deadline, you should let me know** since I don't receive notifications for additions to previous readings.

For Slack or Discord, generally, you should let me know what's going on if you're going to miss a week or be late. Most likely, it'll be okay so long as you're communicative. Then follow up and let me know when you've posted something, and I'll regrade.

If you receive only one point in Perusall or Slack / Discord, it generally means you didn't meet the criteria for two points. **In most cases, you can revise or post more** (Perusall requires at least 3 high-quality notes, but more help make sure you get full points) and then just let me know to regrade.

For anyone who is chronically late with either Perusall notes or Slack / Discord, it is even more important to communicate any issues with me and/or peer facilitators and work with us to figure out a schedule for making up the late work. In most cases, you'll receive at least partial credit, but, again, you must negotiate your case in advance.

I try to email students who are chronically late with work to check in and then escalate by filing a Navigate Student Success Management report if I feel the need. Extreme circumstances sometimes do occur, however, so if that happens, please let me know and we can figure something out. If you know something will come up during the quarter, let us know earlier rather than later so we can figure out how you can still participate.

That said, **revisions are usually encouraged and actually expected if you receive comments or suggestions for edits.** In other words, your best stab by the due date is waaay better than not turning something in on time. **Most of the time, you'll just get comments and can submit revisions to be regraded.** You must, however, let us know what's going on and what your expectations are! So let us know what you're thinking!

Attendance and Zoom:

You are expected to be there during class times, but we will not be taking attendance to allow for anyone who needs to be absent for any given week (due to COVID or other reasons). That said, if you miss an in-class activity, that's on you. ***If you cannot make it to a class session, you are still expected to let us and your team know!*** That's common decency and being responsible and communicative. Not doing so results in fewer community engagement points.

Any Zoom class sessions might be recorded. The recording will capture the presenter's audio, video, and computer screen. Student audio and video will be recorded if they share their computer audio and video during the recorded session. The recordings will be accessible to students enrolled in the course to review materials. Normally, these recordings will not be shared with or accessible to the public.

The University and Zoom have FERPA-compliant agreements in place to protect the security and privacy of UW Zoom accounts. Students who do not wish to be recorded should:

- Change their Zoom screen name to hide any personal identifying information such as their name or UW Net ID, and
- Not share their computer audio or video during their Zoom sessions.

All that said, you are still highly encouraged to share your video during our Zoom sessions where appropriate. A lot of online community and *presence* research shows that it is harder to "be social" through online forms of communication since people miss out on gestures, body language, facial expressions, tonal changes, etc., but one way to mitigate this at least a little is to share video and audio. But it is entirely up to you whether you do. If not, there are alternatives such as using a filter (e.g., [Snap Camera](#)) or [putting up a photo as your profile image](#). If you are simply self-conscious about how you look, one solution would be to [turn off your self-view in Zoom](#), which has been shown to alleviate the feeling like everyone is watching. Also, if you don't share your video without some good reason and you complain about not being social when remote, that's sort of on you.

Online Communication:

Allow for mistakes. Despite the best intentions, sometimes you might be hurt by something that someone in the course says. Please talk to me about this, as I can help resolve the conflicts. Remember that most students, and humans in general, are clueless and that we don't usually intend to be hurtful. Never ascribe spite when it's more likely incompetence or cluelessness!

Write well. Be clear and concise, and use good spelling and grammar. Stay on topic. To check clarity, read your message

aloud to yourself before sending it.

As a general rule, I will not message or respond to students on Slack / Discord or through other means after 9 pm, so if you want to reach me and want a reply that day, please be sure to message me well in advance of that evening. Please write to me on my university email account markchen@uw.edu for any messages that are super important and/or that you do not wish to place on Slack / Discord so that we can keep a good record of the messages (and to ensure I receive them because DMs on Slack / Discord can sometimes get lost!). You may also want to send a group DM to the PFs and me instead of just me if you need time-sensitive help.

In addition, advising staff in the UW Bothell's Schools of IAS and STEM will have access to Canvas, Slack, and other communication tools used in courses as a means to support and mitigate issues if any arise.

I take on different roles in my relations with students. I am generally your friend and care about you, but I am also your professor, so keep that in mind in your communications with me.

A Note on Stress:

Thinking about the amount of work you have to complete within the next few weeks like



Success in this course depends heavily on your personal health and well-being. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. And let's be realistic. Life absolutely sucks for most people right now. Stress is a perfectly natural response to world-altering events. If you somehow have made it through the past year completely unaffected, realize that most of your classmates were not so lucky. Some of them may have lost friends or family, have lost their jobs, have been hospitalized, have extra responsibilities such as caring for parents or grandparents or are otherwise dealing with things that make them perform less than optimally.

That said, your other instructors and I strongly encourage you to reframe challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak.

You do not owe me or your teammates personal information about your situation. It is up to you what you choose to share with your team that is personal in nature; however, do let your team know anything that will affect projects (for example, if you'll be late on a deliverable, you should let your team know that you're running late, but you're not obligated to tell them why). From the other end of things, if others on your team give you bad news about their own status, don't ask for personal information; let your teammates choose whether to volunteer anything additional, don't pressure them to divulge, and respect their decision.

Please DO feel free to reach out to me about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your performance in this course as soon as it occurs and before it becomes unmanageable. And you are always welcome to talk to me about whatever you like, whether it's personal, professional, or a combination. Additionally, your academic advisor and many [other support services on campus](#) stand ready to assist you if you need/want.

Again, thanks for reading this syllabus. I know it's a lot, but it's important. If you email me with your name, this course number, and an image of a cat, you'll get 2 extra credit points. If you email me later in the quarter asking for help and the answer is in the syllabus, I'll respond with an image of a cat.

Classroom and Online Etiquette:

Understanding and respecting the fact that people have diverse backgrounds, embodiments, and experiences is at the heart of higher education. In IAS and at UWB, students are expected to: 1) respect differences expressed in readings, by students or instructors which may include: age, cultural/ethnic/racial background, linguistic, disability, gender & gender presentation, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, veteran status, and we can go on (use your good judgment); 2) engage respectfully in discussions of diverse viewpoints and ideologies embedded in course readings, films, and presentations.

Basically, be respectful of other views and experiences, even when they are in conflict with your own. Try not to be defensive. No one wants to brainwash you. Learn everything you can. If you agree, good for you. If you disagree, the knowledge that you gain can provide you with intelligent reasons for why you disagree. Either way, you'll know more and will be smarter on a variety of topics. That is the point of education.

Treating your interactions online as you would in a face-to-face class is imperative for successfully completing this course. Inappropriate interactions will have consequences.

Syllabus Revisions:

You are responsible for all materials, updates and announcements covered during class sessions. The course calendar will most likely change over time due to unforeseen circumstances; please be sure you are using the most recent version. I also expect you to use your UW e-mail account and Canvas regularly, so that I can communicate with each of you electronically between classes. If you wish to use another e-mail address as your primary account, set up your UW account to forward to your other address.

Syllabus Academic Freedom Statement:

Academic freedom is the principle that scholars have the right - without repression - to teach, conduct research, and/or disseminate ideas, even those that are not widely accepted or convenient, with the primary goal of truth-seeking. This is central to the mission, goals, and values of the academy and is a core principle of academia. As the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) states, "institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good...The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition." This course is based on the most recent and relevant research and scholarship in this discipline and in related fields. Although some of the ideas expressed within this course may not be convenient or fit within your worldview, they are grounded in rigorous and informed study.

Our goal is to have deep, informed, and lively classroom debate and discussion. Students **MUST** provide logical, rational, and evidence-based argumentation. To be entitled to have your views treated as serious candidates for the truth, you must present evidence for your statements. All "opinions" should be backed up with logical argumentation and evidence with the purpose of seeking truth toward the common good.