Introduction to Game Studies Section 02

ART 108

Spring 2025   Hybrid   3 Unit(s)   01/23/2025 to 05/12/2025   Modified 01/22/2025

Section 02 and Section 81

👤 Contact Information

Instructor:	James Morgan
Office Location:	Art 325 / Zoom
Email:	james.morgan@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	M 1515-1715
Class Days/Time:	Section 2 M/W 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm, Art 135 Section 81 Friday 12:30 - 3:15pm, Online

🕐 Course Information

Course Requirements and Assignments

"Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

General Advice –

Fail early and fail often. If you take chances in your proposal and draft there is always room to fix it in your final. A mediocre idea that is work-shopped through your peers on time creates a better project then an amazing idea that is attempted the night before.

Department Advising

For information about majors and minors in Art & Art History, for change of major/minor forms and a list of advisors: http://www.sjsu.edu/art/ or the Art & Art History department office in ART 116, 408-924-4320, art@sjsu.edu

Please note: Except in cases of documented emergencies, incomplete grades are not given in this course.

"All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades." See University Policy F13-1 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf for more details.

Additional Note:

This syllabus is subject to change, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, or in the case that changes will significantly enhance the quality of the course. Students will collectively have the opportunity to shape the ways in which the course unfolds.

⌨ Course Description and Requisites

Introduction to the systems, design, history, and cultural analysis of games with emphasis on critical studies, development, technological literacy, markets and impact on society.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing or instructor consent.

Letter Graded

✳ Classroom Protocols

Student Responsibilities

- Students are responsible for all information presented in lectures and demonstrations, and through assigned readings and web related research.
- Students will present and critique their projects, drafts and proposals in class and on-line.
- Students are responsible for actively engaging in the course material by completing all course assignments and readings.
- In the course of the semester we will undoubtedly talk about things, which are not in the mainstream and may be controversial. If at any time you find the subject or content of this course objectionable you are encouraged bring that into the discussion. If you find a presentation offensive you are

permitted to quietly, without disrupting the class, excuse yourself. It is then your responsibility to contact the instructor for make-up work.
- Additionally, students are responsible for their own well-being. If you need help, it is your responsibility to ask for it.

Late Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on time and complete. An assignment will not be considered complete until all elements are uploaded and fully working. Assignments that are turned in on time may be redone for full credit until the last week of class. It is most important to present your work publicly. Note that project presentation days are mandatory, if a project is not presented on a critique day it may be considered late. Late assignments may receive a one time 10% or one point penalty.

Program Information

Department Name: Art and Art History
Department Office: ART 116
Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/art
Department Email: art@sjsu.edu
Department phone number: 408-924-4325

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

LO1 Demonstrate an appreciation for the cultural value of the technologies and strategies used in games through writing and projects;

LO2 Investigate and research user experiences of their own games and those of others;

LO3 Apply researched information to improve player experience;

LO4 Speak and write clearly about their own and others' work;

LO5 Demonstrate and apply technological and information literacy;

LO6 Translate different kinds of subject matter into gaming environments;

LO7 Create original and creative content through the medium of games.

Course Materials

Textbook

Introduction to Game Design, Prototyping, and Development, 3rd Edition, Jeremy Gibson Bond, eText
https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/introduction-to-game/9780136619918/

Please also be aware that the library has tremendous resources relating to games and game studies. We have a lib guide at http://libguides.sjsu.edu/GameStudies

Other technology requirements

Major software products are listed here so that you may make the decision now whether you are willing to sign up for these accounts. Generally, these software packages have been vetted and are considered safe, however many of them involve online connections and content that is not controlled by the faculty member or school. This is considered fair notice, before the drop date and that there is no penalty for withdrawing from the course at this point.

ADOBE CC - this is provided free to students; you must sign up for an adobe account using your sjsu email and log in via the enterprise option. You can then download the Adobe Cloud Manager and continue to download any of the suite of programs. https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/adobe/students/index.html

Discord - this communication tool requires you to create an account. You can then join our semi-private server. You will have control over what handle we see and will be able to easily communicate with your group and the class.

Github - you will need to create an account but are then able to host projects and collaborate with others as well as host public web pages. This is where our portfolios will live.

Trello – you will need to make an account to be able to share project management with your team.

Unity – you will need to make an account to be able to download and run Unity. This is required for the digital prototype in Unity.

Piskel.com - you may need to make an account or download this 2D art tool. This tool makes animations MUCH easier.

Online blog software wordpress.com or medium.com, in order to post your blog publicly, you will need an account. You may use other software, but the requirement is that all of your posts are public, that you can link directly to each post, and that previous posts are easily findable from an existing post.

jackbox.tv – online game play, if you want to host games, you will need to have purchased the game.

Various online game sites. You are always encouraged to question the security of your data and be conservative in creating accounts, but we shall be doing this several times during the semester.

Also, all students will be required to get a standard deck of playing cards. (4 suits, 52 cards total but may have 2 jokers.) https://www.amazon.com/Bicycle-Standard-Playing-Cards-Colors/dp/B000050GET/

⠿ Course Requirements and Assignments

Game labs- 20%

Game labs are structured play or design sessions often followed by brief reflective writing, and in-class discussion. These sessions are done as a group and are very difficult to make up. LO2, LO3.

Blog - 20%

Students will be asked to maintain a weblog to publicly post writings and responses to readings. Students will write no less than 200 words (approximately one 'typed' page and include images). Points will be given for both postings and peer review. LO1, LO4, LO5.

Participation - 10%

Active participation within groups and in discussion is expected. Performance can be tracked in CANVAS beginning the second week of class. LO4

Game 1: paper prototype – 10%

Design, play test and turn in a non-digital game using the readings and your group as a development guide. Games will be evaluated according to the game rubric. LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7.

Game 2: videogame prototype - 10%

Design, play test and turn in a digital game using the readings and your group as a development guide. We shall use Unity for this prototype so that we can see the advantages of a toolkit. Games will be evaluated according to the game rubric. LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7.

Exam -10%

The Exam will cover essential vocabulary and concepts. The class will work on a study guide throughout the semester. LO1.

Final - Paper, Presentation, or Game - 20%

The final project of this course will be negotiated between the individual and the instructor. It may be a formal paper, presentation (video or in person). LO7.

A quick note about final presentations, I typically reserve the last day of class and the final period for final presentations. Students are asked to be present at two of these dates and give feedback in addition to presenting their project at one. You may choose which two of the four sessions to attend, two will be on campus and two online. This is intended to give you flexibility during finals.

✔ Grading Information

Projects

Each project will be evaluated per the following formula:

Completeness(1/3) + Function(1/3) + Aesthetics(1/3)

Determination of Grades

- Grades will be determined based on the sum of the areas listed above according to the chart below.
- Extra credit options may be offered or requested.
- Late work may be graded down if submitted within a reasonable time, or not accepted if submitted too late. This especially applies to group work.

Late assignments will be accepted under unusual, extenuating, or emergency circumstances.

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Numeric grade equivalents:

93% and above	A
92% - 90%	A minus
89% - 88%	B plus
87% - 83%	B
82% - 80%	B minus
79% - 78%	C plus
77% - 73%	C
72% - 70%	C minus
69% - 68%	D plus
67% - 63%	D
62% - 60%	D minus
below 60%	F

🏛 University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

Section 2

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan 27	Adopt a classic arcade game: https://archive.org/details/internetarcade
1	Jan 29	Lecture 1: What is a Game? Due **(IGDPD) CH 1:** Thinking like a designer. Lab 0: Race to the finish
2	Feb 3	Lecture 2: Session Reports and Boardgame Geek DUE: Blogpost 1: Description of Play: Arcade Game Due: **(IGDPD) CH** 7: Acting like a designer
2	Feb 5	EXERCISE: game lab 1 (card game/board game) Due **(IGDPD) CH 8** Design Goals
3	Feb 10	Blogpost 2 Due: Boardgame/Card-Game Lab **(IGDPD) CH 9** Paper Prototyping Lecture 3: Prototyping and Design
3	Feb 12	EXERCISE: Tabletop Game Design (paper prototype)
4	Feb 17	**(IGDPD) CH 10** Game Testing Lecture 4: Prototyping Part II
4	Feb 19	EXERCISE: Paper Prototype Playtest Blog 3 (Paper Prototype) **(IGDPD) CH 2:** Game Analysis Frameworks

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
5	Feb 24	DUE: Reading: MDA Framework: http://www.zubek.net/robert//publications/MDA.pdf Lecture 5: Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics
5	Feb 26	EXERCISE: game lab 2 – video game play Blog 4 (Video Games Played)
6	Mar 3	(IGDPD) CH 11 math and balance & (IGDPD) CH 12 guiding Lecture 6: Game Engines
6	Mar 5	EXERCISE: Unity Intro (IGDPD) CH 14 agile & (IGDPD) CH 15 industry
7	Mar 10	Lecture 7: History of Videogames Due: Design Doc
7	Mar 12	(IGDPD) CH 13 puzzle design EXERCISE: Unity Game I
8	Mar 17	Lecture 8: Level Design Patterns
8	Mar 19	(IGDPD) CH 3 the layered tetrad; EXERCISE: Unity Game II
8	Mar 24	Lecture 9: RPG, MMO, Simulation and VR
9	Mar 26	Videogame First Playable Blog 5 (first playable)
	mar 31-apr 4	Spring Break

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
10	April 7	**Jenkins: games as narrative architecture** Lecture 10: Narrative Architecture **(IGDPD) CH 4** the inscribed layer
10	April 9	**DUE: Video Game Prototype** Blog 6 (video game prototype)
11	April 14	Lecture 11: Skinner Box, Juicy Games, Serious Casual Games & Learning
11	April 16	Proposal for Final Project Due **(IGDPD) CH 5** the dynamic layer; **(IGDPD) CH 6** the cultural layer
12	April 21	Lecture 12: Literacy, Criticism & Science of Games
12	April 23	game lab 3 – Jackbox Games blog 7 (technology based non-video games)
13	April 28	**Exam Week** Lecture 13: Fine Art and Games
13	Apr 30	Draft of Final Project and Feedback
14	May 5	Game Criticism and popular media
14	May 7	Blog 8 (final project)
15	Friday May 9, 1:30 pm online	Final Presentations (Presentations & Papers)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
15	Mon May 12, 6pm art 135	Final Presentations (Presentations & Papers)
Final Exam	Thurs May 15, 1pm - 3pm	(Final Presentations / Final Play) (online Zoom) Blog 9 (course reflection)
Final Exam	Mon May 19, 530-730	(Final Presentations / Final Play) (in person Art 135) Blog 9 (course reflection)

Section 81

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan 24	Adopt a classic arcade game: https://archive.org/details/internetarcade
		Lecture 1: What is a Game? Due **(IGDPD) CH 1:** Thinking like a designer. Lab 0: Race to the finish
2	Jan 31	Lecture 2: Session Reports and Boardgame Geek DUE: Blogpost 1: Description of Play: Arcade Game Due: **(IGDPD) CH** 7: Acting like a designer
		EXERCISE: game lab 1 (card game/board game) Due **(IGDPD) CH 8** Design Goals

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
3	Feb 7	Blogpost 2 Due: Boardgame/Card-Game Lab **(IGDPD) CH 9** Paper Prototyping Lecture 3: Prototyping and Design
		EXERCISE: Tabletop Game Design (paper prototype)
4	Feb 14	**(IGDPD) CH 10** Game Testing Lecture 4: Prototyping Part II
		EXERCISE: Paper Prototype Playtest Blog 3 (Paper Prototype) **(IGDPD) CH 2:** Game Analysis Frameworks
5	Feb 21	**DUE: Reading: MDA Framework:** http://www.zubek.net/robert//publications/MDA.pdf Lecture 5: Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics
		EXERCISE: game lab 2 – video game play Blog 4 (Video Games Played)
6	Feb 28	**(IGDPD) CH 11** math and balance & **(IGDPD) CH 12** guiding the player Lecture 6: Game Engines
		EXERCISE: Unity Intro **(IGDPD) CH 14** agile & **(IGDPD) CH 15** industry

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
7	Mar 7	Lecture 7: History of Videogames **Due: Design Doc**
		(IGDPD) CH 13 puzzle design EXERCISE: Unity Game I
8	Mar 14	Lecture 8: Level Design Patterns
		(IGDPD) CH 3 the layered tetrad; EXERCISE: Unity Game II
9	Mar 21	Lecture 9: RPG, MMO, Simulation and VR
		Jackbox and Party Games
10	Mar 28	**Jenkins: games as narrative architecture** Lecture 10: Narrative Architecture **(IGDPD) CH 4** the inscribed layer
		Videogame First Playable Blog 5 (first playable)
	mar 31-apr 4	**Spring Break**

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
11	April 11	**DUE: Video Game Prototype** Blog 6 (video game prototype) Lecture 11: Skinner Box, Juicy Games, Serious Casual Games & Learning
		Proposal for Final Project Due **(IGDPD) CH 5** the dynamic layer; **(IGDPD) CH 6** the cultural layer
12	April 18	Lecture 12: Literacy, Criticism & Science of Games
		game lab 3 – Jackbox Games blog 7 (technology based non-video games)
13	April 25	**Exam Week** Lecture 13: Fine Art and Games
		Draft of Final Project and Feedback
14	May 2	Game Criticism and popular media
		Blog 8 (final project)
Final	Fri May 9, 1:30 pm online	Final Presentations (Presentations & Papers)
Final	Mon May 12, 6pm art 135	Final Presentations (Presentations & Papers)
Final Exam	Thu May 15, 1pm - 3pm	(Final Presentations / Final Play) (online Zoom) Blog 9 (course reflection)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Final Exam	Mon May 19, 530-730	(Final Presentations / Final Play) (in person Art 135) Blog 9 (course reflection)