



Course title and number	VIST 486: Introduction to Game Design
Term	Fall 2015
Meeting times and location	10:20 – 11:35 MW Room 107B Langford Building A

Course Description and Prerequisites

Computer game design; emphasis on interactive storytelling, game play and interface design; history of computer games, review of selected games; analysis of rules of play and simple game prototype development.
Prerequisites: Junior or senior classification

Introduction

This course will provide students with an introduction to game design, drawing on many samples from video games. The classes are fun filled with many hands on experiences to allow students to explore all aspects of game design. During the classes we strive to simulate a real world studio environment, including the challenges and opportunities encountered in Game Design at a Game company. Trying to simulate a game company environment may lead to unexpected challenges! Students should be prepared and willing to deal with ambiguity, problems, collaborate and have fun.

At the end of the course students should be able to create comprehensive industry standard design documents, critically examine existing games and have an understanding of the history of games.

Learning Outcomes or Course Objectives

1. Name, describe, and understand the history of games and key game genres.
2. Describe current state of the art in industry game design techniques.
3. Implement a variety of game design scenarios on a range of platforms.
4. Describe relationships between game genres.
5. Design and manipulate game design to create mood and emotion.
6. Critique gaming solutions in terms of technology and aesthetics.

Instructor Information

Name	André Thomas
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Office hours	By appointment
Office location	Langford A 330
TA	Ben House

Textbook and/or Resource Material

Handouts as provided

Optional Reading:

- The Art of Game Design: A book of lenses by Jesse Schell; Morgan Kaufmann, 2008. ISBN 0123694965
- Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman; MIT Press, 2004. ISBN 0-262-24045-9
- Chris Crawford on Game Design by Chris Crawford; New Riders Press, 2003. ISBN 0-13-146099-4
- Game Design Workshop: A Playcentric Approach to Creating Innovative Games by Tracy Fullerton; Morgan Kaufmann, 2008. ISBN 0240809742

Grading Policies

Students enrolled in this course will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Game Design Document:	75%
Class presentation:	15%
Class participation:	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Grading Scale

A / 100 - 90; B / 89 - 80 C; / 79 - 70.0; D / 69 - 60.0; F / 60 and below

The instructor's qualitative judgment of the student's exercises, projects, and research will include such factors as preparation, conceptualization, technical application, documentation, and aesthetic effectiveness.

The instructor's qualitative judgment of the student's in-class participation will include such factors as attendance, preparation, engagement, professional demeanor, and informed contribution to discussions and critique sessions.

The Game Design Document is broken up into 10 major categories and will be graded as follows:

- Game Overview – 5%
- Gameplay and Mechanics – 20%
- Story and Narrative – 20%
- Levels – 5%
- Interface – 10%
- AI – 10%
- Technology – 10%
- Art – 10%
- Management – 5%
- Appendixes – 5%

Assignment Grading Practice

As an aide to understanding the method by which your assignments are evaluated, read the following carefully. The actual grading criteria will be related to these categories but will be more specific to the given assignment. The scores noted below are relative to a 100 point assignment.

F: 60 and below: The student work is unresolved; the intentions are unclear and major criteria or goals lack resolution; Presentation is incomplete and/or of poor quality; There is a complete lack of problem solving intent, artistic content and/or visual merit.

D: 60 - 69: The work has problems in two or more major areas; Skill and problem development is marginal or incomplete; The project lacks imagination and/or design/artistic potential.

C: 70 – 79: The student has completed the basic assignment, but the work lacks depth of understanding; Some aspects are not completely satisfied and the work contains little promise even though most issues have been addressed.

B: 80 – 89: The student work shows imagination and potential; Presentation and visual content is good; The assignment requirements are fulfilled but in need of more refinement or development; There are no major issues that would require a total redesign of the project.

A: 90 – 100: The student work has imagination and the response to the assignment show understanding and thought; The work is highly developed and well presented; The entire project shows depth and breadth and is well coordinated; The project potential has been achieved.

Class Participation Grading Practice

As an aide to understanding the method by which your class **participation** is evaluated, read the following carefully. The actual grading criteria will be related to these categories but will be more specific to the given topic. The scores noted below are relative to a 100 point total.

F: 60 and below: The student is consistently absent or significantly late to class; is rarely prepared for class; is rarely a willing participant or responsive to questions; consistently exhibits unprofessional and/or disruptive behavior; offers virtually no considered opinions, researched information, or constructive criticism.

D: 60 - 69: The student is frequently absent or significantly late to class; is only occasionally prepared for class; is only occasionally a willing participant or responsive to questions; frequently exhibits unprofessional and/or disruptive behavior; only infrequently offers considered opinions, researched information, and constructive criticism.

C: 70 – 79: The student is occasionally absent or significantly late to class; is inconsistently prepared for class; is sometimes a willing participant and responsive to questions; infrequently exhibits unprofessional and/or disruptive behavior; inconsistently offers considered opinions, researched information, and constructive criticism.

B: 80 – 89: The student is rarely absent or significantly late to class; is consistently prepared for class; is frequently a willing participant and responsive to questions; almost never exhibits unprofessional and/or disruptive behavior; usually offers considered opinions, researched information, and constructive criticism.

A: 90 – 100: The student is never absent without excuse or significantly late to class; is always very well prepared for class; is always a willing participant and responsive to questions; never exhibits unprofessional and/or disruptive behavior; always offers considered opinions, researched information, and constructive criticism.

Attendance Policy

The University views class attendance as the responsibility of an individual student. Attendance is essential to complete the course successfully. University rules related to excused and unexcused absences are located on-line at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu>.

Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Major Assignment Dates

Week	Topic	Required Reading	Due Dates
1	Introduction to Games & History of Games		
2	Game Concept & Game Design Document (GDD)		
3	Game Flow, Look and Feel		Game Overview
4	Game Play		
5	Game Mechanics		
6	Screen Flow		Game Play & Mechanics
7	Game Story and Narrative		
8	October 19 th College of Architecture Research symposium – No Class, attendance optional		
8	Interactive Storytelling		
9	Interactive Storytelling		Story & Narrative
10	Game Levels		Levels
11	Interface & Game Systems		Interface
12	Game AI		AI
13	Game Tech		Tech
14	Game Art		Art, Appendixes
15	Management - Budget, Schedule, Risks, Testing, Localization		Management

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>

Academic Integrity

For additional information please visit: <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Statement of Responsibility

"It is unlawful for any person to damage or deface any of the buildings, statues, monuments, trees, shrubs, grasses, or flowers on the grounds of any state institutions of higher education (Texas Education Code Section 51.204)"

The words damage or deface refer specifically to any and all actions, whether direct or indirect, that either diminish the value or mar the appearance of the physical environment.