Intro to Game Design

Jumping Right In

Fall 2015
Mondays & Wednesdays 9:30 AM-12:15 PM

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Welcome! This is: Intro to Game Design

Today’s Class

• Reading Quiz!
• Being a game designer
• What are games made of?
• The tricky thing about definitions
• Getting meaning out of choices
Hi, I’m Naomi

I design games
About teaching and learning...

NOT
A BLANK SLATE
“To teach is not to *transfer knowledge* but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge...

Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning.”

Paulo Freire

*The Pedagogy of Freedom*
Welcome! This is: Intro to Game Design

Now, who are you?

Please share with us:
- Your Name
- What you’re studying here at NYU
- Your preferred gender pronouns (“I go by she and her”)
- A recent emotional experience you had playing a game (>10s)
Why are we here?
Designing

Objectified.

Gary Hustwit’s second film in the design trilogy available on DVD and Digital

“You’ll never look at objects the same way again.” — Wired
MacGyver Game Design

• Your group will receive an envelope
• You will use the materials within to make a game
• There are four types of object inside (not including packaging)
• Use every type, but you don’t have to use all of them
• You may also use: scissors and pens/pencils
• Any kind of game is fine
We will now have a 10 minute intermission before starting our next show.
Course Structure: Inside a Week

• **Lecture Sessions**: discussion, explanations, and exercises
  - Readings will usually be due
  - Our TA will give you a quiz to do as you come in
  - Discuss the readings: come with questions if you have them!
  - Most of class: illustrating what we’re reading/thinking about through play

• **Lab Sessions**: get together for group collaboration
Lab time will be devoted working on your projects, getting feedback, and playtesting your games.
Keep in mind: you *must work on your projects outside of class too!*  
It’s unlikely you’ll have enough time in lab sessions alone.
Intro to Game Design: what we’ll do this semester

Course Structure: Across the Weeks

PART 1: GAMES AS FORMAL SYSTEMS

PART 2: GAMES AS EXPERIENCES

PART 3: GAMES AS CULTURE
The Things You’ll Make

Project I: **GAME MODIFICATION** *(starts today!)*
Change an existing game until it’s unrecognizable

Project II: **ABSTRACTION**
A game of rules, dice, cards, chips, boards...

Project III: **SOCIAL**
A game of alliances, emotion, betrayal, bargaining...

Project IV: **NARRATIVE**
Create a game that expresses a provided story

Project V: **INTERVENTION**
In and for a real-world setting

Project VI: **PITCH**
Sell us on your videogame idea

Project VII: **DOCUMENT**
Make your idea concrete & conveyable

Project VII: **FINAL PROJECT**
It’s up to you...
Intro to Game Design: extrinsic motivators

Grading Breakdown

- Class Participation & Attendance
- Prototype Readiness
- Quizzes
- Game Modification
- Abstract Game
- Social Game
- Narrative Game
- Digital Pitch
- Intervention / Big Game
- Final Project
What *are* rules?

Why are they considered important for games?
What are the rules...

...of Tic-Tac-Toe?
Rules: changing it up

Modifying Tic-Tac-Toe

• Turn to the person next to you
• Talk about how to improve (or just mutate) Tic-Tac-Toe
• You may change 1, 2, or 3 rules
• Things you could change: the board, the turn sequence, the number of players, the number and type of marks, how to win/lose/tie...
Howard Wexler & Ned Strongin take it vertical
Project I: Game Modification

In a moment you will get an envelope.

Play the game in the envelope and analyze it: what’s wrong with this game? But also: what’s good about the game? What’s actually fun, what works?

Your assignment (in lab next week) is to improve this game by making modifications to it. Keep modifying it until it’s both:

a) a better game: your modification should create a more meaningful experience for players
b) feels like a new and different game (someone from outside this class wouldn’t just think it’s a slight variation of the game in your envelope)
What you need to turn in

1. **Overview**: name of the game, creators, short description
2. **Rules**: complete rules that can teach someone to play.
3. **Materials**: anything you need to play the game, whether it’s tokens, game pieces, coins, cards. If you make your own components, be sure to have them on hand or print them out!
Your other homework...

Readings! YOU WILL BE QUIZZED