


Course Introduction

CSC404 / GDES 3B71:
VIDEO GAME DESIGN

Plan for today & Tuesday

- Today: Course overview
 - What the course is about.
 - How to do well in this course.
 - Looking at indie games
- Tuesday: Game design tools
 - **Unity** (education version)
 - Led by: Adam Robinson-Yu 
- CSC404 Info Form
 - <http://tinyurl.com/404InfoForm>
 - Fill this in!!



What is this course about?

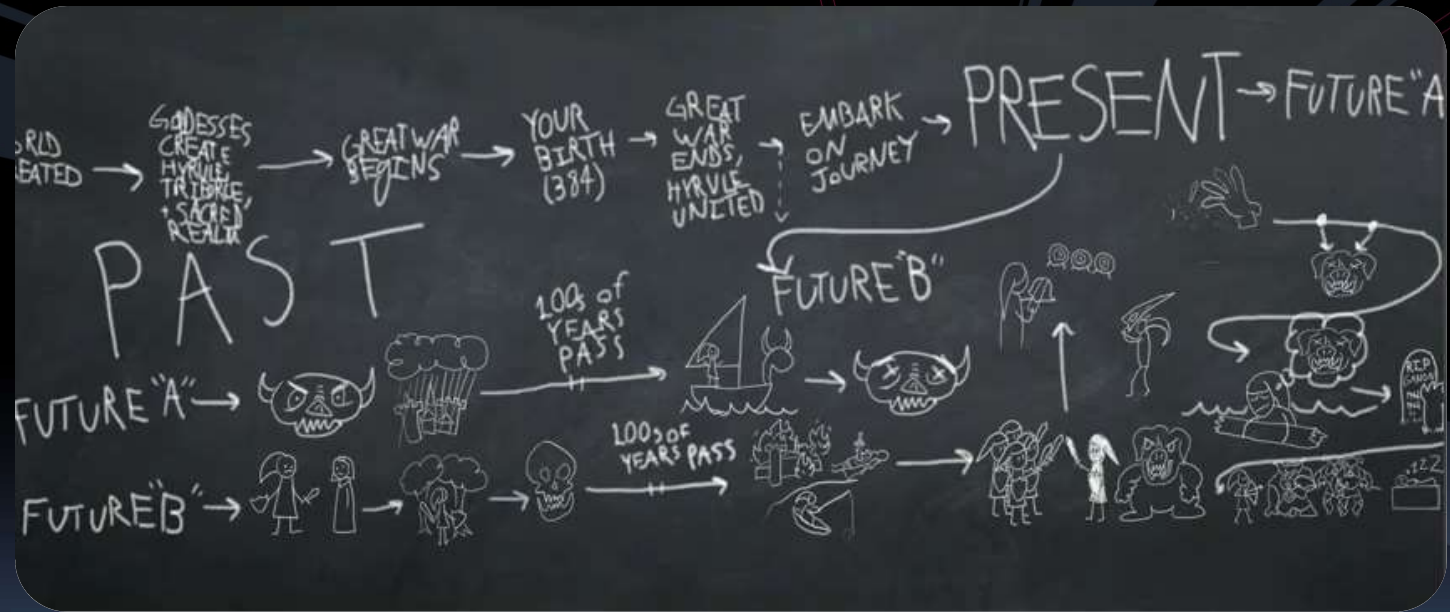
- The answer to this has changed over time.
- The answer (as of 2019):

**Learning the
Art of Design**

Learning from Experience

- Design principles are difficult to quantify, and video game design is no different.
- As past students have learned how to make high-quality games, we have also learned how to better teach students to make high-quality games.
 - That being said, there are always new lessons to learn by watching you succeed and fail 😊

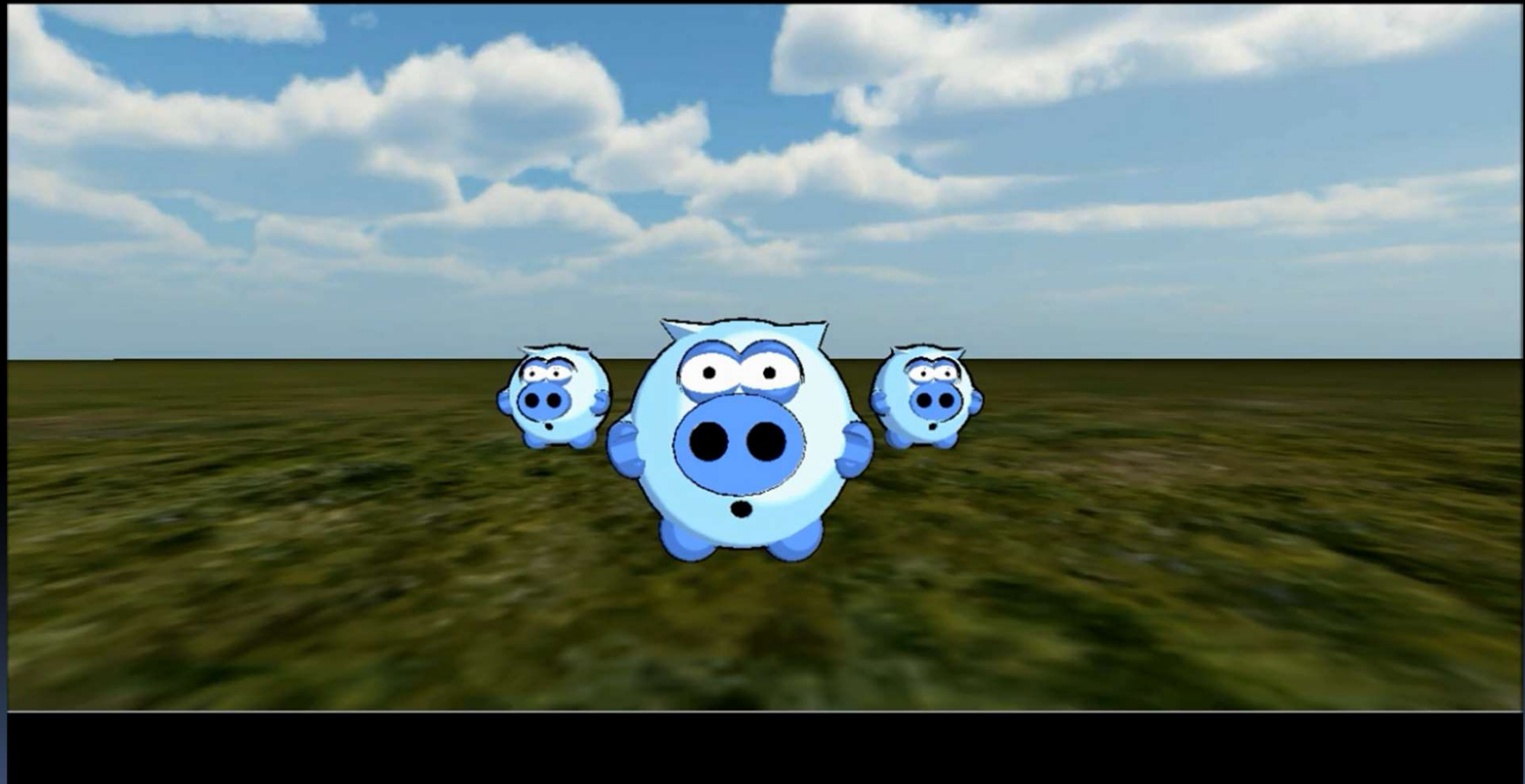
A glimpse into the past



Bubble Bound – 2008



Rolling Pig - 2011



Gentleman Explorer – 2012



Office Joust - 2014



Pitfall Planet – 2015



Course Overview



Course Deliverables

- **Assignments**
 - "Game jam" events
 - **Course Project**
 - **Participation**
 - Taking part in class, running playtesting sessions, attending special events, attending Level Up Showcase, etc.
- 10% (5% each)
- 80%
- 10%

Course Project

- Major game development milestones:
 - **Creative Brief**
 - Conceptual description; includes key components and secret ingredients.
 - **Design Document**
 - Detailed, fully explored, paper-playable breakdown.
 - **Alpha Release**
 - Playable prototype.
 - **Beta Release**
 - Feature complete demo and playtesting report.
 - **Final Demo**
 - The final evaluation, where industry members and the public judge your game.
 - Includes: peer evals and game trailer.

Course Project

- Other course project elements:
 - **Game Brainstorming**
 - In week 2, submission of potential game ideas.
 - **Mini-Demos**
 - Demos between major milestones.
 - **Game Design Blog**
 - Weekly log of development progress.
 - Submission site for creative brief & design document.
 - **Playtesting Report**
 - Playtesting results and analysis.

Course project

- Groups: UofT + OCAD U + Faculty of Music.
 - Teamwork is essential!
- Design options:
 - Unity, Android, Oculus, etc.
 - No keyboards or mice!
- Industry feedback at every milestone, and at playtesting time.

Level Up Student Showcase



Game Jams

- Rapid game prototyping
 - Make a game in 6 hours!
- Birthplace of innovative, exploratory game ideas:
 - Surgeon Simulator, Superhot, Goat Simulator
- Popular and prevalent around the community.
 - e.g. Global Game Jam, ROM Game Jam, TOJam (pictured here)



What you should want from CSC404



Why you're here

- Reasons why people take CSC404:
 - Interest in game development careers
 - Real-world industry interaction
 - Working with artists and musicians
 - The challenge of a capstone course
 - Having a game idea that you want to work on
 - Enjoy playing games
 - Need a 4th-year course

What I want to see from CSC404





Course Goals

- Developing your creative abilities:
 - Brainstorming
 - Designing
 - Developing
 - Refining
- Applying your development skills:
 - Agile development
 - Working with others
 - Dealing with failure



But most of all...

I want you to make a game
that people want to play.

Past (failed) examples

- **Bearly Made It**
 - Endless runner where main character runs toward the screen, chased by mutant Goldilocks.
- **Cat's Cradle**
 - Co-operative game where cats are tethered together by yarn.
- **Islands of Araceli**
 - Player-vs-player game of throwing blocks at people on other islands to knock them down.

It could happen to you!

- There are many reasons why a game could fail, and far fewer that lead to success.
- We will try to steer you in the right direction, assuming that you want to be led there.

Ways to do badly in CSC404



Diffusion of responsibility

- Don't just do what you think you're required to do. Think of what's best for the game.

**THIS
RARELY
WORKS.**

Unless the group you're in is reaaally motivated and the task doesn't suck too much, more often than not giving many people a task for one accomplishes nothing, because everyone thinks somebody else will do it.

Point directly at someone instead.
Asking less people gets more done.

somebody do it, okay?

bob, get it done, okay?



Taking over the project



INSOLENCE

SILENCE! I WILL NOT TOLERATE YOUR

Designing by committee

"A camel is a horse designed by a committee."



Ignoring feedback

- Accepting feedback is hard.



Ways to fail CSC404



Being a bad teammate

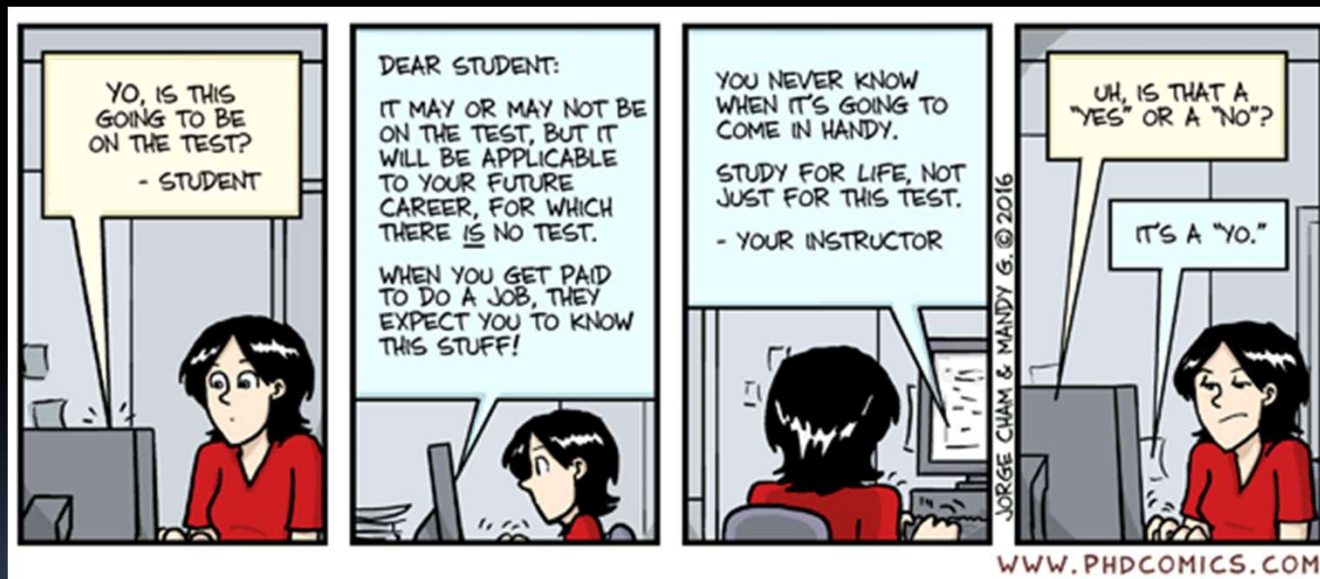
- Don't do your work.
- Don't show up for meetings.
- Not communicating with your team.
- Impeding the team's progress.
- Being a complete jerk.
- *This is why peer evaluations exist.*

Time management issues

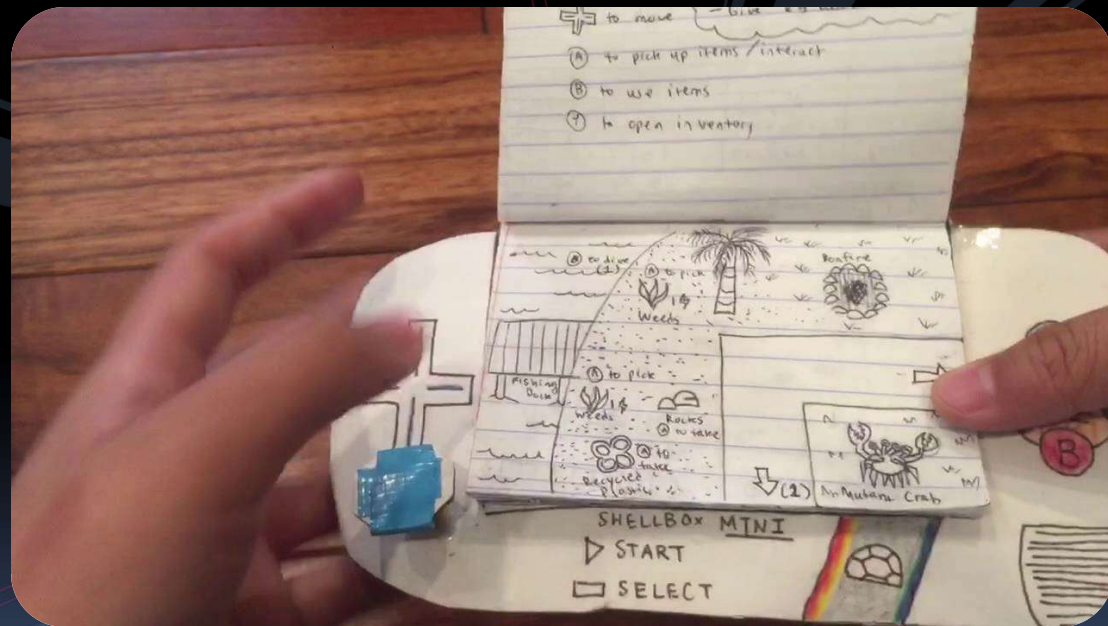


Treating this like a course

- Care about the game, not about the marks.



Good game designer habits

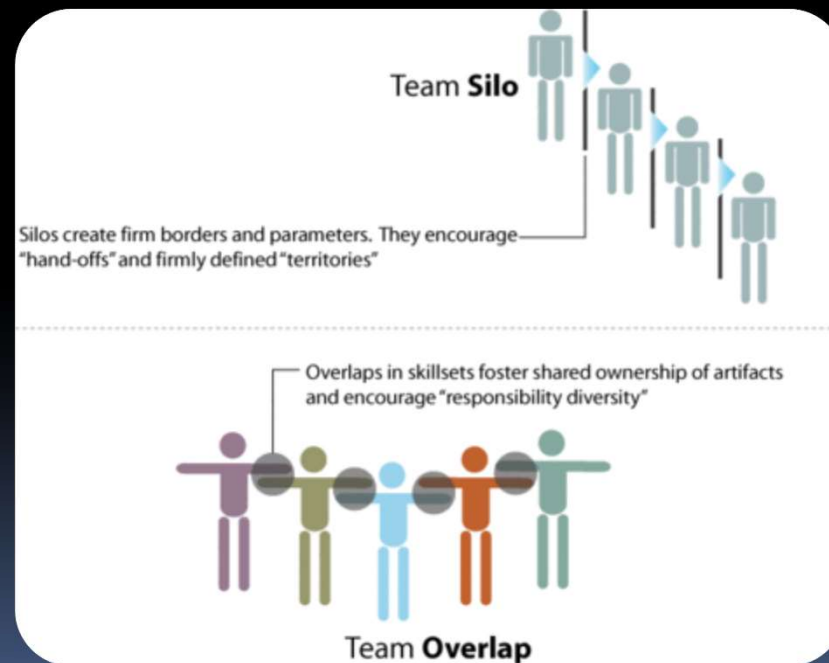


Communication



Have leaders and helpers

- Everybody works on everything, and everybody is responsible for something.



Playtesting

- Solicit feedback constantly.



Bigger expectations

- Novelty
- Mastery
- Insight
- Prudence
- Tenacity



Making an “indie” game



Project theme: “Indie Games”

- What does “indie games” mean?
 - Games that have a certain feel to them?
 - Games that are made by an indie studio?
 - Games made in small groups?
 - Games made with small budget?
- For CSC404: **Something Novel & Innovative**
 - Let’s see some examples....

Braid



Monument Valley



Journey



rain



Johann Sebastian Joust



Papers, Please



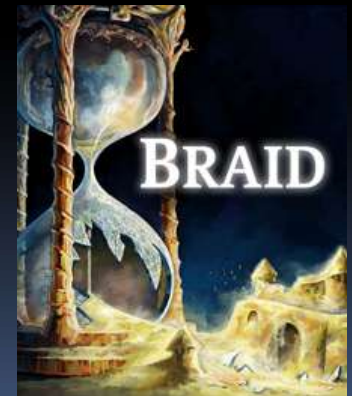
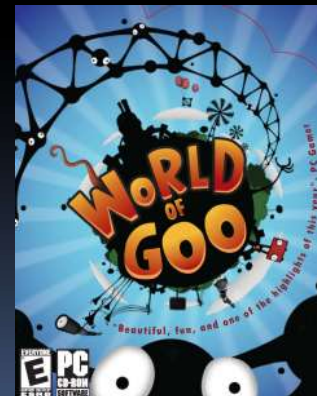
Passage



CSC404: “indie” = innovation



2D BOY



Final Takeaway

