


Course Introduction

# CSC404 / GDES 3B71: VIDEO GAME DESIGN

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## 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!!

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## What is this course about?

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

### Learning the Art of Design

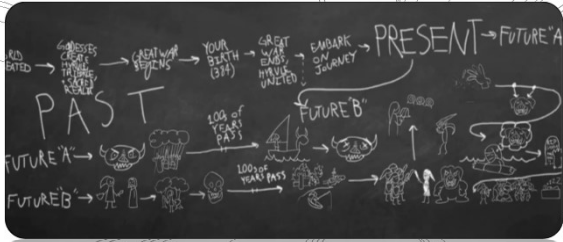
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## Learning from Experience

- 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 😊

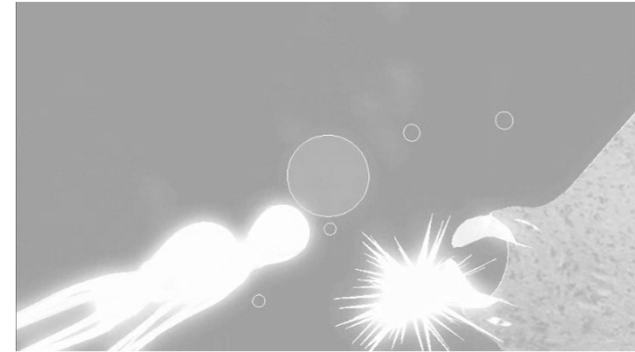
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### A glimpse into the past



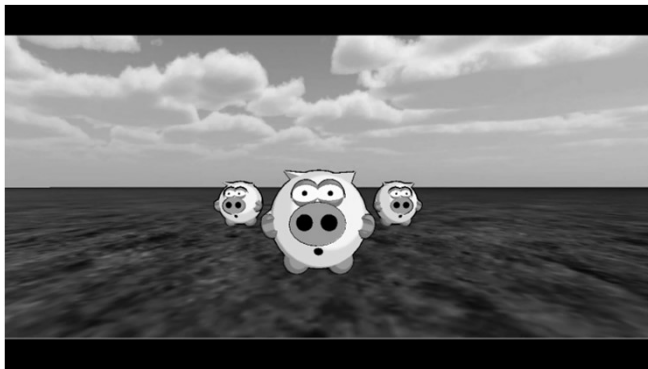
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### Bubble Bound - 2008



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### Rolling Pig - 2011



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### Gentleman Explorer - 2012



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## Office Joust - 2014



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## Pitfall Planet - 2015



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## Course Overview



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## 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%

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## Level Up Student Showcase



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## 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)



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## What you should want from CSC404



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## 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 4<sup>th</sup>-year course

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## What I want to see from CSC404



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## Course Goals

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

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But most of all...

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

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## Past (failed) examples

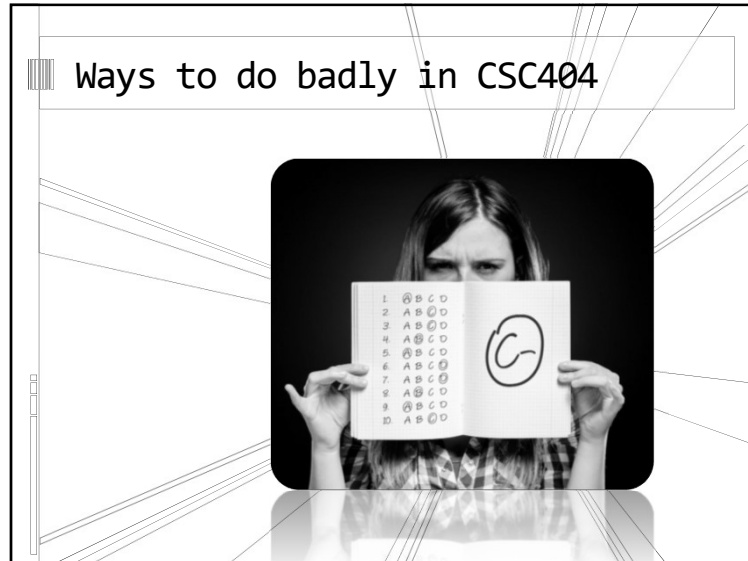
- Bearly Made It
  - Endless runner where main character runs toward the screen, chased by mutant Goldilocks.
- Cat's Cradle
  - Co-operative game where cats are tethered together by yarn.
- Islands of Araceli
  - Player-vs-player game of throwing blocks at people on other islands to knock them down.

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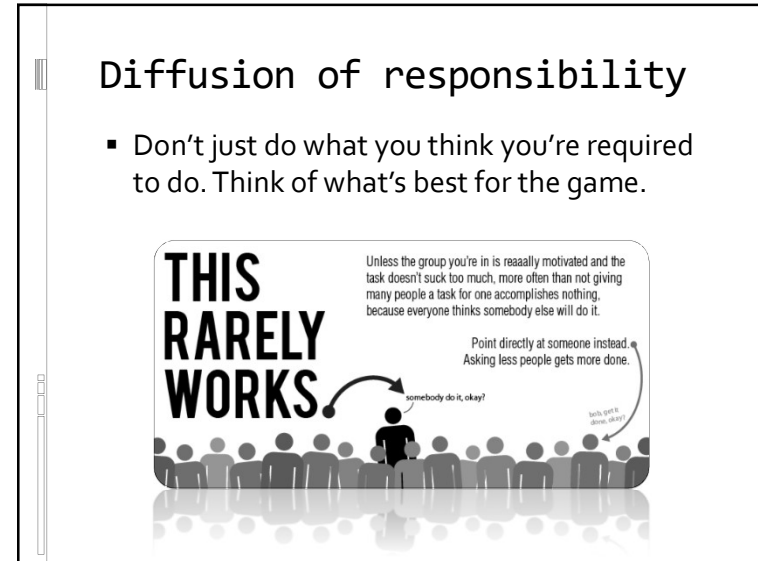
It could happen to you!

- 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.

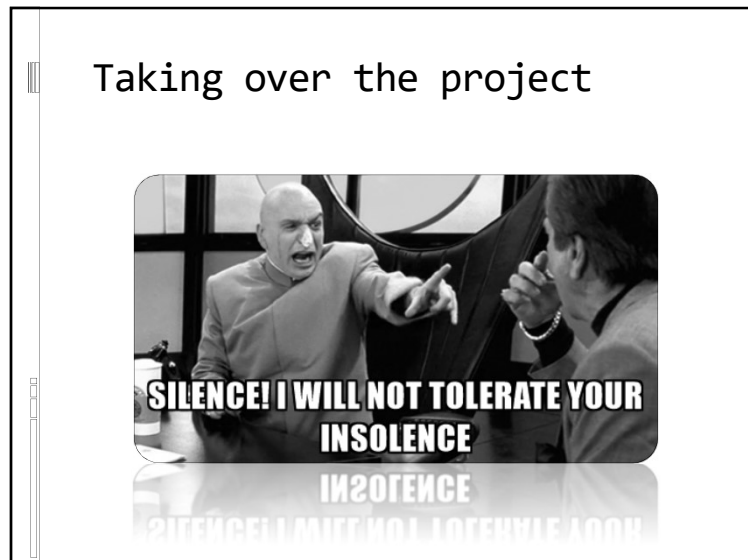
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## Ignoring feedback

- Accepting feedback is hard.



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## Ways to fail CSC404



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## 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.*

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## Time management issues



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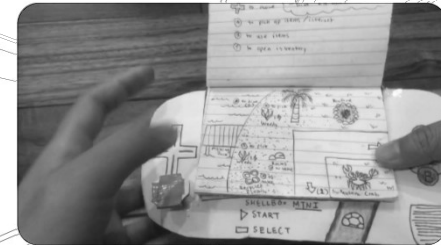
## Treating this like a course

- Care about the game, not about the marks.



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## Good game designer habits



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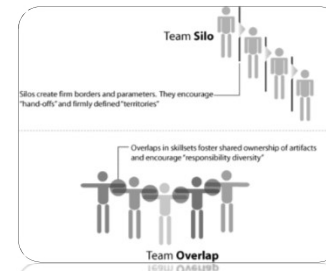
## Communication



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## Have leaders and helpers

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



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## Playtesting

- Solicit feedback constantly.



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## Bigger expectations

- Novelty
- Mastery
- Insight
- Prudence
- Tenacity



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## Making an “indie” game



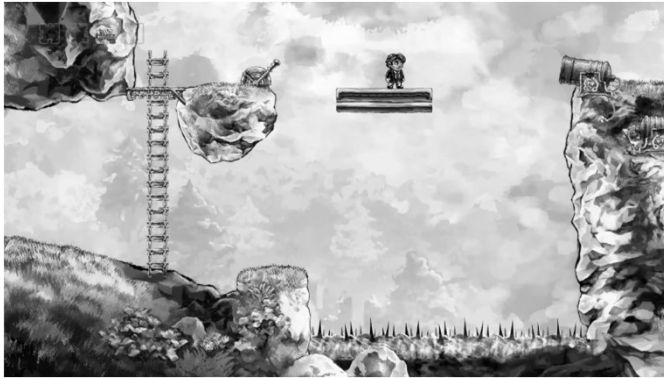
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## Project theme: “Indie Games”

- 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....

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# Braid



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# Monument Valley



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# Journey



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# rain



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## Johann Sebastian Joust



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## Papers, Please



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## Passage



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## CSC404: "indie" = innovation



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## Final Takeaway



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