PMU199: Intro to Video Game Design

Course topics include: game history & genres, "ludology" (theory of fun, story creation, optimal experience), character and level design, industry tools & processes, graphics & animation, modeling techniques, collision detection, visual effects, scripting (passive & active), HCI & interface design, verification & playtesting, business of gaming. Material & projects based on real-world processes.

Instructor Information

Name	Office	Phone	Email
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Course Materials

- **Web Page:**   http://www.cs.utoronto.ca/~pmu199h
- **Course Design Blog:**   https://goo.gl/apmiuT
- **TA Contact:**   pmu199ta@cs.utoronto.ca

Course Schedule & Mark Breakdown

Week	Lecture Content	Deliverables	
1	Sept 12 ⇨ Course Intro	Sept 15 ⇨ Game Jam (5%)	
2	Sept 19 ⇨ Ludology	Sept 22 ⇨ Game Brainstorming (3%)	
3	Sept 26 ⇨ Game Mechanics	Sept 29 ⇨ Design Blog Creation (2%)	
4	Oct 3 ⇨ Game Pitch	Oct 3 ⇨ Pitch Presentations (5%)	
5	Oct 10 ⇨ Character & Level Design	Oct 13 ⇨ Background Research (5%)	
6	Oct 17 ⇨ Design Doc	Oct 20 ⇨ Game Design Presentation (5%)	
7	Oct 24 ⇨ Project Management	Oct 24 ⇨ Mini-Demo (5%)	
8	Oct 31 ⇨ Alpha Demo	Oct 31 ⇨ Alpha Demo Presentation (5%)	
Reading Week			
9	Nov 14 ⇨ Game AI	Nov 14 ⇨ Mini-Demo (5%)	Nov 17 ⇨ Playtest Report (10%)
10	Nov 21 ⇨ Beta Demo	Nov 21 ⇨ Beta Demo Presentation (5%)	
11	Nov 28 ⇨ TBD	Nov 28 ⇨ Mini-Demo (5%)	
12	Dec 5 ⇨ Game Release	Dec 6 ⇨ Final Playtest (15%)	Dec 8 ⇨ Peer & Self Evals (5%)

⇨ **Game Design Blogs: 10%**   ⇨ **Participation: 10%**

Course Deliverables

Project Presentations *(presented in class)*:

- **Pitch** = High-level game description, outlining how fun and learning will be achieved.
- **Design** = Detailed game description, including character design, level design and progression, mood boards, data models, task breakdown, and proof-of-concept.
- **Alpha** = First playable prototype of game design.
- **Beta** = Feature-complete game implementation.

Note: *For each of these milestones, you are expected to provide in-class feedback to other groups.*

- **Mini-Demos** = 5-minute progress updates.

Playtesting Sessions

Playtesting sessions measure the effectiveness of a game on a target audience, and should take place throughout your game development process.

- **Playtesting Report** = Documented results of the playtesting sessions, and how they inform the final updates to the game.
- **Game Release** = External group of testers will be brought in to determine final mark.

Game Development Elements

- **Game Jam** = One-day game hackathon session, with peer demos and feedback.
- **Game Brainstorming** = The contribution of ideas to the studio producers, from which a subset is selected for the team to develop.
- **Design Blogs** = A development journal, outlining the ideas, progress and obstacles encountered throughout the game development process.
    - **Background Research** = Investigation into the aesthetics, interface and mechanisms behind similar games. Research into technologies that implement key features, often including a proof-of-concept demo (part of design blog).
- **Participation** = Taking part in feedback sessions, engaging in lectures, attendance, etc.
- **Peer & Self Evaluations** = Assessment of individual contributions to final game product.

Academic Integrity

You are welcome to use material that is not your own as part of this course, and it is understood that some elements of your game would be impractical to design from scratch. However, the source of any such material must be cited (for instance, as a source code comment, or a link in your design blogs to where you found the code you are using). Otherwise we assume that all of the work you submit was produced by you and not by someone else.

Plagiarism is academic fraud and is taken very seriously. The department uses software that compares programs for evidence of similar code. Please read the Rules and Regulations from the U of T Calendar (especially the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters).