INF1005/1006 Information Workshop. Exploring User Experience, Cultural Theory and Gamification through Board Games

Term: Winter 2017
Instructor: Steve Szigeti, PhD
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Text: 416-473-5685
Office hours: By appointment via email
Course Meeting time: Tuesday, 1 to 4pm
Course Location: Bissell (BL), Room 313. Note on Jan. 19/March 9 the class will meet at Snakes and Lattes (489 College Street at Markham, west of Bathurst).

Course description

This workshop will allow students to explore issues related to user interface, user experience, materiality, gamification and game theory. Board games (as opposed to video games), represent a space to consider social interaction, the use of materials, the role of emotion (and fun), knowledge sharing and the role gamification plays in influencing behaviour.

In the workshop, students will be exposed to professional and research publications related to design, game theory, user experience and game mechanics. In assignments, students will gain experience understanding the underlying assumptions which support board games.

Goals and Learning Objectives: This course will use the design and critical evaluation of board games as a framework for understanding concepts that are relevant to the information profession. The workshop is intended to help prepare students for successful careers in the information professions where gamification, design thinking and materiality play an important role. The course is designed to help students understand the terminology used in, and theories behind, game development. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain different game mechanics and their potential role in gamification of various activities;
- Conduct evaluation of game artifacts and present the findings in both written and oral form;
- Apply design thinking as a process in developing activities. This includes developing a plan for evaluating a game artifact, conduct evaluations, and iterating the design.
- Explain and interpret the social dynamics of teamwork as manifested in game play.
- Explain the role of perfect and imperfect information (from game theory), symmetry and asymmetry, and communication
- Demonstrate effective communication both orally and in writing
- Put into practice effectively working on a design team
- Identify opportunities for gamification in the information professions.
Workshop Structure: The class will meet for three hours each week. Class sessions will include lectures, discussions, activities and student presentations. On their own time, students must complete weekly readings and the assignments. Note that for every one (1) hour of contact, you can expect to do 2.5 hours of reading and preparation work on your own.

Each student is responsible for keeping up with the workshop material, which includes all of the required readings. Students are expected to attend all workshop sessions, to arrive on time, stay for the duration of the class, and to participate in discussions. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining any information or materials given in class, either from your classmates or online. Unauthorized recording of the lectures is not permitted.

The interaction among students and their collaborative work is essential in making the workshop a success. Students are expected to use the experiences and knowledge they bring into the workshop to help define their learning objectives, contribute to the course content, and complement their own learning experience and that of their classmates.

Deliverables and Evaluation

Students will be evaluated through three (3) assignments and a participation grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment Title / Description</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Game Critique&lt;br&gt;(individual grade)</td>
<td>Class 3&lt;br&gt;(Jan 26 / March 16)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Game Proposal (two parts)&lt;br&gt;a. Presentation&lt;br&gt;b. Report&lt;br&gt;(group grade)</td>
<td>Class 6&lt;br&gt;(Feb 16 / April 6)</td>
<td>10% 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>Short essay&lt;br&gt;(individual grade)</td>
<td>Two weeks after Class 6&lt;br&gt;(March 2 / April 20)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Attendance and participation are important in this workshop&lt;br&gt;(individual grade)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
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General Expectations:

1. **General:** Throughout the course, students are expected to practise project management principles in every aspect of their coursework and interactions.

2. **Communication Policy:** Email will be answered within four (4) business days.

3. **Readings:** It is important to complete the required readings before your class in order to fully benefit from the class activities.

4. **Late policy:** Assignments submitted after the deadline date/time will be penalized one grade (e.g., from B+ to B). An additional penalty of one grade will be deducted for every
two days. Submissions will not be accepted after two weeks. Exceptions will be made only when supported by appropriate documentation.

5. **Requests for assignment extensions:** Please make every effort to meet the assignment deadlines. If you absolutely require an extension, please send the instructor a request with the following information: (i) reason for extension, (ii) current status of the assignment, and (iii) due date requested. If an extension is granted, you must include correspondence regarding the request and the reply with your assignment.

6. **Academic Integrity:** The essence of academic life revolves around respect not only for the ideas of others, but also their rights to those ideas and their promulgation. It is therefore essential that all of us engaged in the life of the mind take the utmost care that the ideas and expressions of ideas of other people always be appropriately handled, and, where necessary, cited. For writing assignments, when ideas or materials of others are used, they must be cited. You may use any formal citation format, as long as it is used consistently in your paper, the source material can be located and the citation verified. What is most important is that the material be cited. In any situation, if you have a question, please ask the instructor (and provide adequate time for a reply). Such attention to ideas and acknowledgment of their sources is central not only to academic life, but life in general. Please acquaint yourself with the University of Toronto’s *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters:* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm.

7. **Participation and Attendance:** Discussion and interaction in the classes are important ways to learn. Sharing your experiences and ideas with your classmates is central to your learning experience in this course. As such, you should attend and participate in every class. There will be exercises and discussions that you will participate in within your groups in your class which will be very helpful in completing your assignments.

8. **Students with Special Needs or Health Considerations:** All students are welcome in this course and we will make every effort to ensure a meaningful, respectful and positive learning experience for everyone. If there are special considerations that you require to help you successfully fulfill the requirements of the course, please feel free to see one of the instructors, the Faculty of Information Student Service (http://www.ischool.utoronto.ca/services/personal‐advising), and/or contact the Accessibility Student Office (http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/index.htm) as soon as possible so we can ensure you are able to successfully meet the learning objectives for this course.

9. **Writing Resources:** Please review the material you covered in the Cite it Right presentation and familiarize yourself with:
**Weekly Schedule**

**Class 1: (January 12 / March 2) The mechanics of games**

**Suggested Readings**

**Class 2: (January 19 / March 9) Game evaluation**

NOTE: This class will be held at *Snakes and Lattes* (489 College Street at Markham, just west of Bathurst). The $6 fee/student will be paid by the Faculty of Information.

**Required Reading**

**Suggested Readings**
Class 3: (January 26 / March 16) Design thinking and board games

Required Reading


Class 4: (February 2 / March 23) Prototype development, part 1

Required Reading


Class 5: (February 9 / March 30) Prototype development, part 2

Required Reading


Suggested Readings


Class 6: (February 16 / April 6) Game concept presentations and discussion.
Resources

Books


Articles


**Design Related**


**Online Resources**


Board Game Geek. https://boardgamegeek.com/

Game Artisan’s of Canada. http://gameartisans.ca/


Toronto Area Board Game Designers. https://www.facebook.com/groups/tabdmembers/