

Computer Games: Theory and Practice – Course UDIS0601 – California College for the Arts

CURRICULUM

REVISED: Sept 26, 2005

	DATE		CLASS THEME	PRESENTATION	PLAY / PROGRAM	DISCUSS	FILM / VIDEO	ASSIGNMENT
1	Weds	7-Sep	Introductions class plan, Andy Cox's teaching philosophy, history of computer games	Andy - Personal History of Computer Games - Part I		Discuss class content and individual goals for the class		For Mon 12-Sep class read handouts: "Introduction" (VGTR), "Abstraction in the Video Game" (VGTR) and "Missile Command" (BWAD)
2	Mon	12-Sep	History of computer games. Classic arcade games.	Andy - Personal History of Computer Games - Part II. .	Class plays classic Atari arcade games.	Class presents Show and Tell. Discuss abstraction and aesthetics of arcade games.	Interview with Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari.	For Mon 19-Sep class reads handouts: "Playing at Being: Psychoanalysis and the Avatar" (VGTR). Research and select computer game for in-depth study.
3	Weds	14-Sep	What are computer games for?	Introduction to Multi Arcade Machine Eemulator.	Play Star Wars classic vector game under MAME. Prizes for highest scores!	Discuss requirements for mid-term presentation.		
4	Mon	19-Sep	Computer games and psychoanalysis	Introduciton and Demo of Half Life.	Class plays Half Life	Class presents Show and Tell items. Class presents games for in-depth study		For Mon 26-Sep read handout "Half Life" (BWAD). Formulate personal reactions to Half Life.
5	Weds	21-Sep	Computer games and violence.		Class plays Half Life	Discuss "Psychoanalysis and the Avatar" plus personal reactions to Half Life.		
6	Mon	26-Sep	First person games. Cultural relevance of games.		Play Half Life	Class presents Show and Tell items. Make notes then discuss cultural relevance of Half Life.	Excerpts from 1930's first person film Lady in the Lake	Research computer games and violence, e.g. ESA web site, and articles on Salon.com. Read handout from the Economist.
7	Weds	28-Sep	Mods, collaborative games, computer games and violence.	Andy - Introduction to Game mods and Couterstrike	Class draws lots for teams and starts Counterstrike game.	Discuss computer games and violence		Research the game Counterstrike and it's community. Investigate Velvet Strike.
8	Mon	3-Oct	Subversion of games, political, and artistic interventions.	Andy - Overview of political and artisit uses of video games. Demo of STOP BUSH.	Class plays Counterstrike. Make "sprays" and use in the game.	Change in game dynamics after using sprays.	watch "gamers" a documentary about Counterstrike	Reading on computer games and narrative structure.

9	Weds	5-Oct	Politics, art, and computer games.	Introduction and demo of political and artistic computer games	Find political and artistic computer games on the internet	Discuss types of artistic/political games and effectiveness.	watch BBC News segment on politics and video games	
10	Mon	10-Oct	Narrative and video games	Back to basics - text based adventure games	Class plays the classic Adventure game.	Discuss similarities and differences between 3d games and text-based games.		Work on final project. Research military use of computer games. Read NY Times article.
11	Weds	12-Oct	The Military Entertainment Complex	Andy - Overview of use of computer games in the military. Demo of America's Army		Present results of online research. Open discussion of implications of computer games in the military.		
12	Mon	17-Oct	How 3d computer games are made	Andy - Overview of components. 3D Game Studio Demo.	Start 3DGS tutorial			Reading on the computer game industry.
13	Weds	19-Oct	How 3d computer games are made		Continue 3DGS tutorial			
14	Mon	24-Oct	Student presentations: Grason, Sam, Zee, Eric, Sue	Each student demos their game and presents cultural connections and significance. Total time 30 minutes		Class will discuss each game for 10 minutes		
15	Weds	26-Oct	Student presentations: Amity, Chandinid, Hee, Paris, Natasha	Each student demos their game and presents cultural connections and significance. Total time 30 minutes		Class will discuss each game for 10 minutes		Develop idea for final project for brief presentation to class.
16	Mon	31-Oct			Continue 3DGS tutorial	Present and discuss ideas for final projects.	Screening of the film "Tron"	
17	Weds	2-Nov			Complete 3DGS tutorial			
18	Mon	7-Nov	3D modeling and animation		Milkshape 3d tutorial			Reading on narrative structure of computer games.
19	Weds	9-Nov	3D modeling and animation		Milkshape 3d tutorial			
20	Mon	14-Nov	3D modeling and animation		Milkshape 3d tutorial or 3DGS			
21	Weds	16-Nov			Work on final project			
22	Mon	21-Nov			3DGS			

23	Weds	23-Nov			NO CLASS. Work on final project			
24	Mon	28-Nov			3DGS			
25	Weds	30-Nov			Work on final project			
26	Mon	5-Dec			3DGS			
27	Weds	7-Dec	Students present final projects	Each student has 30 minutes for final presentation, incl. discussion.				
28	Mon	12-Dec	Students present final projects	Each student has 30 minutes for final presentation, incl. discussion.				
29	Weds	14-Dec	PARTY AND DEBRIEF (off-campus)					

VGTR = Video Game Theory Reader
 BWAD = Blue Wizard is About to Die
 MAME = Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator
 DQAV = Difficult Questions about Video Games
 ESA = Entertainment Software Association