GDD 110 Introduction to Visual Design for Games (3 credits) Fall 2013

Tuesday – Thursday Section A: 2:00–3:15 pm; Section B: 3:30–4:45 Tator Hall 130

INSTRUCTOR

Instructor: Professor Eric Nersesian   Email: eric.nersesian@quinnipiac.edu
Office: CAS 2-101   Tel: TBD

Open office hours: Mondays 3:00–4:00 pm, Tuesdays, Wednesdays 12:00-1:00pm and Fridays 12:00-1:00pm. Additional office hours are by appointment. Open Virtual Office Hours for email contact: during the week (Monday-Friday) I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours. Emails received on the weekend will be responded to by the beginning of the following week.

I am unable to accept work submitted by email. All work will be submitted via your blog & E-Portfolio.

COURSE BLOGGING

All course related materials and announcements are posted online. If you are reading this syllabus then you have already logged into http://blackboard.quinnipiac.edu Please set up a blog for the course. You can use the blog tool of your choice such as Blogger http://www.blogger.com/ or WordPress http://wordpress.org/

Please use the following format for your blog address: username-GDD110. Use lower case. Brad Pitt would create the following address using his assigned username: bpitt-GDD110.blogspot.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This foundation course in research methods for game design, prepares students for upper-level coursework by introducing critical, analytical and problem solving strategies for researching and developing game concepts, story, characters, game mechanics, level, world design and the user interface. Practical hands-on methods include visual research, design journals, thumbnail sketch- es, concept art, visualization drawings, storyboarding, mind maps, diagramming, prototyping, case studies, topic and content development. Every Year, All

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is an experimental laboratory and art/design studio where together we will explore and discover different ways to research, develop, analyze, document, iterate and test our ideas for games and game artwork through a dynamic process of *playing, reading, reflecting, writing, looking, drawing, making, editing and revising*. The overall objective of this course is to make an informal design journal / portfolio or a game design visual research document that shows your explorations, discoveries and creations. This course in conjunction with GDD 101 will provide the basic foundation for you to build a personal learning plan for every GDD course that follows. For both majors and minors this course is about learning to take responsibility to make informed and autonomous individual choices leading to creation of a portfolio as a 'work in progress' for continuous life long learning as a professional practice.

Through different weekly projects you will engage deeply in developing your game concepts and artwork, apply rigorous approaches to research, practice and design analysis. Your act of making will be informed by the act of thinking, visual literacy and your innate creativity. A focus of this course is to learn how to develop, present and communicate your game concepts, visual and artistic ideas using different tools and test them through discussions, critique and feedback.

ESSENTIAL LEARNING SKILLS

Whether you are a GDD major, a GDD minor or just testing the waters GDD 110 Visual Design & Research for Games ideally will resonate with courses you take in completing the University Curriculum, your second major or minor, free electives, and even with your experiences outside the classroom (hopefully with the games you play!).

In this course the dynamic process of playing, reading, reflecting, writing, looking, drawing, making, editing and revising will at times with varying degrees of emphasis make use of the following interpersonal and intellectual skills.

Interpersonal

Written and Oral Communication - An ability to think critically, clearly, and creatively in both written and oral expression in their areas of interest and expertise.

Diversity Awareness and Sensitivity - An understanding of and respect for the similarities and differences among human communities. This includes a recognition and appreciation for the unique talents and contributions of all individuals.

Social Intelligence - An ability to work effectively with others, to understand and manage interactions, and to act ethically, constructively, and responsibly to achieve individual and common goals.

Intellectual

Critical Thinking and Reasoning - An ability to recognize problems, and to acquire, assess and synthesize information in order to derive creative and appropriate solutions.

Quantitative Reasoning - An ability to represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally, and to interpret mathematical models such as graphs, tables, and schematics in order to draw inferences.

Information Fluency - An ability to find and critically evaluate information from various media, to analyze it, and communicate outcomes in the process of solving problems in a changing and complex world. Also, an ability to use information and computer literacy skills to manage projects and conduct rigorous inquiry.

Creative Thinking - The capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk-taking.

Visual Literacy - The ability to interpret visual messages and/or to create such messages in ways that advance thinking, decision-making, and communications. Visual Artifacts include, but are not limited to: electronic media, art, charts and graphs, diagrams, maps, metaphors, data, concept, information, strategy, and compound combinations.

COURSE STRUCTURE

We meet twice a week for one hour and 15 minutes. During this period we will often begin with your presentations/review of the previous week's assignment, followed by a short lecture and demonstration of the current learning topic and project. We will also have a weekly drawing exercise to strengthen your traditional drawing skills. You will then have an extended period of time to "do it yourself" or work with a team followed by group discussions, presentations, critiques and feedback as relevant. In addition, individual meetings/consultations will be scheduled.

THE WEEKLY CLASS BREAKDOWN

Week	Learning Topic	Drawing Exercise	Weekly Project
1	Art Fundamentals	Freeform Drawing	Blog Setup
2	Textures & Patterns	Sphere Lessons	Rock, Paper, Scissors
3	Values & Range	Cube Lessons	Game Pitch
4	Color Theory	Cylinder Lessons	Mood Board
5	Shape & Form	Tree Lesson, Thumbnails	Logo Design
6	Composition	Advanced Cube Lessons	Minimalist Poster Design
7	Proportion, Action Lines	Figure Sketching	Pixel Character w/ Walkcycle
8	Perspective	Perspective Lessons	2 Point Perspective Building
9	Space & Depth	Perspective Lessons	Isometric Pixel Prop w/ Animation
10	Mazes & 3D Modeling	Maze Sketching	Maze Design & Modeling
11	Textures & Rendering	Texture Thumbnails	Maze Texturing
12	Environment Design	Environment Thumbnails	Magic Land Cards
13	Character Design	Character Thumbnails	Magic Creature Cards
14	Storyboarding	Storyboards	VG & Level Storyboards
15	Finals		Final Project

THE WEEKLY PROJECT
Each week I will post on Blackboard a weekly project. These weekly projects will address different aspects of *playing, reading, reflecting, writing, looking, drawing, making, editing and revising.* To complete these weekly projects you will use your blog as a design journal and also use a sketchbook for sketches, drawings, wireframes, interface designs, mind maps, flow charts, clippings, collages etc. Under the link for Projects on Blackboard I will post the current assigned weekly project.

Grading Based on Blog Posting & Commenting
I am unable to accept work submitted by email. So in general a weekly project is due one week from the day that it is posted on Blackboard. In order to receive credit you should post the project on your blog and also present the project to your fellow students on the due date during class. Getting their constructive feedback, including suggestions for improvement is an important part of working as a team and taking this course.

The project is given out during the Tuesday class before the project is due. Before the start of the following Thursday class, the students must submit their first blog post of that project called the Concept Post, which is their research and concept proposals. If a student does not submit that concept blog post before the start of the Thursday class, then they will not be able to participate in Thursday's feedback session and hence will severely effect their grade for that project.

In the Thursday class, I review everyone's blog posting and provide feedback and direction along with other students adding to the discussion. The students joining in the discussion on the project must go onto the reviewed student's blog post and add their feedback as a comment to that blog post to get participation credit for their involvement. Their comment should begin with introducing themselves by their username and identify the student that they are providing feedback. After the student leaves the comment, they should copy it in a word document. Then before the end of class, they have all their comments in one word document and can include them in their final remarks comment mentioned in the next paragraph. Failure to post this final remarks comment before the end of class will result in no credit for their participation in that class which is part of their project grade. More details below.

After that reviewed student's review session and as I move on to the next student to review, that reviewed student must review the comments to his blog post and write a final comment summarizing the feedback session and how he will modify his project based on that feedback. The timestamp on the reviewed student's final feedback must be before the end of that class or else he receives no credit for that response. Any other students' comments written after the reviewed student's final remarks comment will not be counted as credit as its done after the review session so most likely done as a last minute attempt to raise a student's grade.

The students have to post up their final deliverable blog post for that project before the next Tuesday class. In that class, we will go through another review session with suggestions on how to further refine the project if the student wishes to select this project to refine as part of the final project portfolio presentation. Again, students providing feedback as part of the class discussion must write them as comments to the blog post to get participation credit. The reviewed student will write a final comment on the blog post about how he would refine this project if he chooses to pursue the portfolio presentation final project. The timestamp on the reviewed student's final feedback must be before the end of that class or else he receives no credit for that response. Any students' comments after that reviewed student's final comment will not get credit.

The feedback and commenting sessions will be done on a provisional basis. More than likely the Thursday feedback sessions on the research and concepting phase will be regular but the Tuesday feedback session on the final deliverable will be as needed.

BLOG POSTING NAMING CONVENTIONS
Please use the following format for your blog postings. There will be 2 blog posts for both the weekly and final projects. For weekly projects, one blog post focusing on the concept and one blog post on the final deliverable. For the final project, one post on your blog for final deliverable and one post on your E-Portfolio.

Week	Weekly Project	Phase	Blog Post Name
2	Rock, Paper, Scissors	Concept	Wk02 Rock, Paper, Scissors Concept Phase
2	Rock, Paper, Scissors	Final	Wk02 Rock, Paper, Scissors Final Phase
3	Game Pitch	Concept	Wk03 Game Pitch Concept Phase
3	Game Pitch	Final	Wk03 Game Pitch Final Phase
4	Mood Board	Concept	Wk04 Mood Board Concept Phase
4	Mood Board	Final	Wk04 Mood Board Final Phase
5	Title Screen	Concept	Wk05 Title Screen Concept Phase
5	Title Screen	Final	Wk05 Title Screen Final Phase
6	Logo Design	Concept	Wk06 Logo Design Concept Phase
6	Logo Design	Final	Wk06 Logo Design Final Phase
7	Pixel Prop	Concept	Wk07 Pixel Prop Concept Phase
7	Pixel Prop	Final	Wk07 Pixel Prop Final Phase
8	Pixel Building	Concept	Wk08 Pixel Building Concept Phase
8	Pixel Building	Final	Wk08 Pixel Building Final Phase
9	Maze Design	Concept	Wk09 Maze Design Concept Phase
9	Maze Design	Final	Wk09 Maze Design Final Phase
10	Maze Modeling	Concept	Wk10 Maze Modeling Concept Phase
10	Maze Modeling	Final	Wk10 Maze Modeling Final Phase
11	Maze Texturing	Concept	Wk11 Maze Texturing Concept Phase
11	Maze Texturing	Final	Wk11 Maze Texturing Final Phase
12	Magic Land Cards	Concept	Wk12 Magic Land Cards Concept Phase
12	Magic Land Cards	Final	Wk12 Magic Land Cards Final Phase
13	Magic Creature Cards	Concept	Wk13 Magic Creature Cards Concept Phase
13	Magic Creature Cards	Final	Wk13 Magic Creature Cards Final Phase
14	VG & Level Storyboards	Concept	Wk14 Storyboarding Concept Phase
14	VG & Level Storyboards	Final	Wk14 Storyboarding Final Phase
15	Final Project	Concept	Wk15 Final Project Concept Phase
15	Final Project	Final	Wk15 Final Project Final Phase

FINAL PRESENTATION/FINAL CLASS/FINAL PROJECT - Due Week 15
We will meet during the scheduled exam period for the final Major Project Presentations. So make your travel plans accordingly. For the Final Project there will be one major or "bigger" project that you will work on during the semester. You can choose from two options.

A Portfolio Presentation
Take at least six of your best weekly projects and refine them up another level of quality based on the feedback sessions. Then put them together as a portfolio presentation. You will develop each portfolio piece in your blog individually and then when the pieces are complete you will put the portfolio together on E-Portfolio. I need the individual refined pieces on your blog so I can see the time stamp and then the whole portfolio on E-Portfolio as a university requirement.

If you are a GDD student, then think about forming all of the weekly projects as pieces of a larger game idea that you are developing throughout this class. That way your portfolio presentation will actually turn into a larger Game Design Visual Research Presentation that you can use in future classes. See below for more details.

Optional: Game Design Visual Research Presentation
Select a game that you designed (could be one you created in GDD 101), and based on your research put together a compilation of the visual research for the game. This may include weekly minor projects previously completed but reworked as part of this final Major Project. Elements to consider for inclusion: game concept, genre, # of players (single/multi), target audience, story, platform, concept art, sketches, wireframe (screen design), sprite sheets, mood boards, cut scenes (animated or storyboarded), designs for cards, box art, branding etc.

PARTICIPATION
You will be awarded 1/2 point for attendance if you are present at the start of class and sign the attendance sheet. If you miss classes, not only do you miss this 1/2 point for attendance but you cannot participate in our project feedback sessions, which will affect your project grades. In order for you to be successful in this course it is important to attend each class, arrive on time and stay in class until the end of the period. Of course everyone at one time or another will encounter unforeseen circumstances that prevent attendance or cause late arrival. If you have a legitimate reason to miss class try to let me know in advance and provide upon your return to class a note from a medical professional or responsible authority.

Remember attendance is required for the last class meeting during the scheduled exam period.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM ATTENDANCE POLICY
You are expected to be in class ready to work at the beginning of the scheduled class time. PROMPT ARRIVAL TO CLASS IS EXPECTED. Three late arrivals to class will equal one absence. PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU HAVE 6 OR MORE ABSENCES YOU MAY BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COURSE. 7 ABSENCES DURING THE SEMESTER WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE. Attendance for the last class meeting scheduled during Finals Week is required.

There is no distinction between "excused" or "unexcused" absences - missed course work, content and class participation are an issue in any absence and can negatively impact the rest of the class members. In the case of extenuating circumstances, such as an ongoing illness or the death of a loved one, the professor should be consulted as soon as possible, and documentation from the Student Affairs office may be required. In such circumstances the faculty and student can negotiate the possibility of granting an "Incomplete." In the rare cases where a student is allowed to take an "Incomplete" as the result of extenuating circumstances, the student must follow the guidelines and timelines stipulated in the University catalog.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM ASSIGNMENTS POLICY
The assignments for this class must be turned in complete and on-time. NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED. If you have a medical or family emergency which will prevent you from getting your work done, it is your obligation to notify the professor of this fact and provide him/her with the appropriate documentation BEFORE the due date of the assignment. If your work is not turned in on time and you have not provided an excuse prior to the due date, do NOT email the professor with justifications. You will simply not receive credit for the assignment.

REQUIRED TEXT
Mark Kistler. *You Can Draw in 30 Days*. ISBN: 978-0738212418. Available at the Quinnipiac University Bookstore and can also be ordered online.

SUPPLEMENTAL ONLINE TUTORIALS
I will be basing a lot of my digital arts lectures on training videos available from a variety of sources including lynda.com, digitaltutors.com, 3dbuzz.com and some youtube channels. I will give you links to these tutorials for outside class training. Some of the tutorials are free and some are not. I do highly recommend buying a monthly subscription to digitaltutors.com but I will try to provide free alternative training videos when I can. All training videos will be listed on blackboard and mentioned in class.

WEEKLY PROJECT GRADING
For each weekly project you can earn up to 5 points. Each project grade is broken down into 5 parts, each of which are worth 1 point. The five parts are Research, Concept Development, Presentation, Participation, and Final Deliverable. Each part will be graded on a scale of 1 to 5. There's a pattern here somewhere… Below is a detailed breakdown of the 5 point scale and of the 5 parts of a weekly project:

5 Point Scaling System

Points	Quality Level	Grade Equivalent
5	Excellent	A
4	Good	B
3	Average	C
2	Below Average	D
1	Unsatisfactory	F

Research
Written and visual research about the project, and its related industry uses, history, artists, competitors, great examples of past uses, typography & color treatments, images and links.

Concept Development
Word associations and related sketches, multiple final strong concepts are demonstrated, appropriate exploration through the use of layout thumbnails of the final concept.

Presentation
Written and verbal representation of the look and feel of the final, communication of the concept, use of the principles and elements of design including layout skills, color choices, typography, and images. Consideration for neatness is clear.

Participation
General engagement and interaction throughout the span of the project. Covers the concept and final blog posting of the student's project along with their involvement in class and posting comments on other students' postings.

Final Deliverable
Comprehensive as described by the scope of the project, presented on time, excellent, representing the vision of the published piece, aesthetically demonstrating use of the principles & elements of design including layout skills, color, type, & images, use of design software is evident if appropriate to the project.

EXTRA CREDIT STORYBOARDING PROJECT GRADING
The last weekly project, which is Video Game & Level Design Storyboarding, is not a mandatory project. That week is focused on the final project. The storyboarding material is for the GDD students, but since this is a survey course available to the general student body, this project will be extra credit worth 3 points.

FINAL PROJECT GRADING
Final project is graded similar to the weekly projects. You can earn up to 20 points broken up into 4 parts, each worth 5 points. The 4 parts are Visual Research, Concept Development, Presentation and Final Deliverable. There is no Participation part of the final project since there is no feedback/refinement iteration of the project.

YOUR FINAL GRADE
Your final grade is calculated by added your 12 weekly projects, attendance, final project and extra credit storyboarding project as follows:

12 Weekly Projects each valued at 5 points	**60%**
Storyboarding Extra Credit Project	**3%**
Attendance for 2 classes a week for 15 weeks at 1/2 point per class	**15%**
Final Project	**25%**

Maximum total	**103%**

QUINNIPIAC GRADING SCALE

A 96–100	B+ 88–90	B- 80–83	C 73–76	D 60–69
A- 91–95	B 84–87	C+ 77–79	C- 70–72	F 0–59

NOTE: A C- or better is required in all departmental prerequisites.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM
See http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1046.xml

QU GRADING CRITERIA

A   Excellent–the student's work shows active mastery of the subject. Not only does the student understand the concepts and information in various readings but she/he can also integrate information and concepts across areas. The works shows creativity and original thinking.

B   Good–the student's work shows basic master of the subject. She/he understands the concepts and information presented and communicates them in her/his own words. The work is solid, but not original or creative.

C   Satisfactory–the student's work in general shows understanding of basic concepts and information, but has occasional lapses. The work shows satisfactory, but incomplete mastery of the subject.

D   Poor–the student's work shows enough understanding of the subject to be just barely adequate. The work shows major gaps in understanding.

F   Unsatisfactory–the student's work is unacceptable. Although there may be some understanding of the subject, her/his understanding is so incomplete that she/he does not satisfy the learning requirements of the assignment.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Contact John Jarvis in the Learning Center for answers to specific questions. 203-582-5390.
john.jarvis@quinnipiac.edu For further information: http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x2773.xml

OTHER CLASS POLICIES
As discussed earlier attendance is important because we will be doing a lot of projects together in class, discussing options and providing feedback. Everybody's contribution counts. So try to
arrive on time and stay until the end of class. If you have an extraordinary reason for leaving class early or arriving late, including inter-collegiate athletic contests or a religious observance let me know ahead of time. In those circumstances we can make arrangements for making up work. Take advantage of my office hours. You are encouraged to come by or make an appointment to talk about work, your professional aspirations, or other concerns related to the course.

HEADS-UP!
Since we are running class in a computer lab its important for us all to practice common courtesy and focus on the task at hand. Unless I tell you the checking of e-mail or Facebook, instant messaging, or the use mobile devices should not be done during class. I will warn you if I think there's a problem. A second warning will result in the deduction of 1 attendance point and a third time will result in the deduction of 2 attendance points.

MATERIALS
External portable drives are recommended for backing up work. You may wish to also use a thumb or flash drive for convenience. A pen tablet, sketchbook, pencil, eraser, sharpener and ruler is required and will be distributed in the semester.

SOFTWARE
Each workstation in the GDD Lab has all the software needed to complete required course works. For students planning to complete the major in Game Design & Development it is recommended to choose the Adobe Creative Suite 5 Production. For further information for selecting an edition see: **http://www.adobe.com/products/creativesuite/design/features/**

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED TEXTS FOR GDD MAJORS AND MINORS
"Reality is Broken," by Jane McGonigal
"Ready Player One," by Ernest Cline
"Daemon," by Daniel Suarez
"The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses," by Jesse Schell. Comes with a companion deck of cards.
"A Theory of Fun for Game Design," by Ralph Koster