

# CS297: Analog Game Design, Spring 2015

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30am – 11:50am, FPH 101

**Professor:** [Ira Fay](mailto:ifay@hampshire.edu), (413) 559-6844, ASH 216, [ifay@hampshire.edu](mailto:ifay@hampshire.edu)

**Office Hours:** A sign up sheet is available digitally at <http://ifay.youcanbook.me>. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 1pm - 2pm, and by appointment.

**Course Email List:** [cs297@lists.hampshire.edu](mailto:cs297@lists.hampshire.edu)

**Game Gatherings:** (attend at least 1/week) Wednesdays 2:30pm - 5pm (Library Rm 205), Mondays and Wednesdays 7pm - 10pm (Library Basement, Chris Young room)

## Course Website

All course materials will be here: <http://irafay.com/classes/CS297>

## Course Overview

In this course, students will play, analyze, and design many non-digital games to deepen their understanding of game design. We will make good use of the [Hampshire Game Library](#)! Assignments will be project-based and are intended to provide both crucial practice of skills and useful additions to a portfolio. The course will include three primary parts. First, students will play and analyze existing games on a weekly basis. Second, each student will individually design an original game. Third, students will work in small and large teams on an existing, ongoing, real-world game development project, such as the D&D miniatures game with 1500+ existing cards and stats. Frequent critiques and playtests will increase students' ability to give and receive thoughtful feedback, which is a key skill for game designers. To facilitate the substantial game playing and analysis that will be required outside of class hours, there is a reserved lab time.

## Skills and Knowledge

In this course, you will learn, practice, and develop many skills, including:

- Reading, learning, and retaining complex game rules
- Developing a breadth of knowledge of many different design ideas
- Describing play sessions with precision
- Writing game rules
- Understanding your own tastes
- Analyzing and critiquing games
- Networking with peers
- Playtesting
- Reaching final polish
- Sustaining effort
- Interacting with an active player community
- Understanding, debugging, and improving an existing complex game

## Required Materials

- 1) Paper and pencil. Also, bring a device that can connect to the internet to class.
- 2) "[Kobold Guide to Board Game Design](#)," by Richard Garfield, Steve Jackson, et al.

## Game Related Books that are Awesome

- "The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses," by Jesse Schell
- "Challenges for Game Designers," by Brenda Brathwaite and Ian Schreiber
- "A Theory of Fun for Game Design," by Raph Koster
- "You," by Austin Grossman
- "Ready Player One," by Ernest Cline

"Reality is Broken," by Jane McGonigal  
"Daemon," by Daniel Suarez

### **Additional Resources**

On the course website (<http://irafay.com/classes/CS297>), there is a Useful Links section. Check it out!

### **Class Etiquette and Attendance**

Game design often happens collaboratively. If you miss class, you will be depriving your classmates of your creative ideas and feedback. Please attend every class on time and ready to contribute. Since game design draws on personal experiences, all of you will be expected to critique ideas thoughtfully, respectfully, and honestly.

### **Time Commitment Expectations**

As with most things, the more time you put into this course, the more you will get out of it. I expect you to spend at least seven hours per week (on average) doing activities outside of class time, including assignments, playtesting your game, playtesting your peers' games, reading, and anything else related to game design.

### **How to get an Evaluation for this Course**

- 1) Write a self-evaluation.
- 2) Commit at least seven hours per week (plus class time) to the course.
- 3) Complete all the assignments on time, putting forth your best effort.
- 4) Miss 2 or fewer classes, and participate fully while in class (listen carefully, stay focused on the task at hand, share thoughtful ideas, etc.)
  - a. If you are excessively or repeatedly late or distracted, it will be impossible to participate fully in the class session, and I will count it as an absence.

If you are falling behind and would still like to pass (or get an incomplete), then you must communicate with me ASAP. If you have any questions, contact me.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following items:

- Major assignments
- Peer feedback
- Attendance and class participation
- Time commitment and communication
- Self-evaluations

### **E-mail Professionalism**

There are certain standards for professional e-mails, and e-mail (not Facebook) is a primary mode of communication in the work place. We will practice sending professional e-mails in this class. Guidelines include:

- Relevant subject line
- Some greeting (Dear Ira, Hello Professor, etc.)
- Some message body, even if it's only one line
- Some closing, with your name (Sincerely, Greg)
- No spelling or grammar errors (run spell check, proof read before sending)

I realize email professionalism may be obvious to many of you, though I know from experience that it's not obvious to everyone.

## **Response Time**

E-mail and office hours are the best way to reach me, and I will respond to all e-mails within 48 hours, except over holidays.

## **Saving Trees**

Whenever possible, please submit assignments to me in digital format via e-mail. Some assignments will require physical bits (like dice or game boards), and that's fine.

## **File Backups**

Since you do lots of digital work, I strongly recommend a file backup system. There are many free options, including Dropbox and Google Docs. Use something and avoid tragedy.

## **Projects**

There will be three large projects in this class:

- Design a Game
- Weekly Gameplay sessions
- D&D miniatures (DDM)

All assignments will be posted on the course website.

## **E-mail Lists**

The Hampshire community is fortunate to have many e-mail lists that allow people to connect according to their interests. To receive information and participate in discussions about game development and local game-related events, projects, and more, subscribe to the "GameDevelopment" email list. For details, see <http://lists.hampshire.edu/mailman/listinfo/gamedevelopment>. If you're interested in Game Development internships and jobs, join <http://lists.hampshire.edu/mailman/listinfo/gamejobs>. For an overview of all lists, go here: <https://lists.hampshire.edu/mailman/listinfo>.

There is a local game development meetup group called the [Pioneer Valley Game Developers](#). Check them out!

## **Cumulative Skills**

This work in this course will help you develop your cumulative skills in Independent Work and Quantitative Reasoning.

## **Game Development Community**

There are a variety of game development related activities available on Hampshire campus. See the course website <http://irafay.com/classes/CS307> for more information. It's easy to get involved, and many of the activities can count for CEL-1 credit.

## **Game Stores and Game Supplies**

I have a variety of board game making supplies on hand for your use, which you can see here: <http://irafay.com/classes/Supplies>. In addition, you may want to be connected with nearby game stores: <http://tinyurl.com/kp4b5w7>

## **Center for Academic Support and Advising (CASA)**

CASA is an incredible resource available to you. If you would like additional support, contact CASA here: [http://www.hampshire.edu/academics/index\\_casa.htm](http://www.hampshire.edu/academics/index_casa.htm). If you are a student with disabilities, please contact Joel Dansky. Here's the link with all the details: <http://www.hampshire.edu/casa/9138.htm>

## **Plagiarism and Integrity**

Here are some things that are totally OK to do:

- 1) Talk with another person and discuss ideas.
- 2) Playtest games together and share feedback.

Here are things that are bad to do:

- 1) Send a copy of your work to someone else for them to copy or modify.
- 2) Use what someone else wrote or said without quoting them nor attributing it to them. If you have any doubt, just quote and mention them.

If you're wondering if you can hand in joint-work instead of individual work, feel free to ask me in advance. If you do joint-work, give credit to your partner. Most projects for this class are individual work because I believe that is best for learning, though we will definitely do group projects, too.

Don't lie, don't cheat, and treat each other and me with respect. If you have questions, ask me. If you make a mistake, tell me. You can read Hampshire's official policy on Plagiarism here: <https://handbook.hampshire.edu/node/87>

## **Special Thanks**

Thank you to the following professors who helped me with this syllabus:

Ruth Kaplan

Lee Spector

Laura Wenk

(See how I did that? So easy! You can do it too.)

## Class Schedule (subject to change)

Date	In Class	Assigned	Due
1/22	Introductions, Course Overview	Weekly Gameplay, Book	
1/27	Snow		
1/29	DDM intro	DDM	
2/3	DDM demo		Weekly Gameplay Part 1
2/5	DDM demo 2	Design A Game	DDM Part 1
2/10	Design A Game – 60 second presentations		DAG Part 1
2/12	Advising Day – No Class		
2/17	DDM		Weekly Gameplay Part 2, DDM Part 2
2/19	Design A Game – Playtesting		DAG Part 2
2/24	Book Discussion, DDM	Self-Review	Book
2/26	Design A Game – Playtesting		DAG Part 3
3/3	GDC (no Ira), DDM		DDM Part 3 Self-Review
3/5	GDC (no Ira), Design A Game – Playtesting		
3/10	DDM		DDM Part 4
3/12	Design A Game – Playtesting		DAG Part 4
3/17	Spring Break		
3/19	Spring Break		
3/24	DDM		Weekly Gameplay Part 3
3/26	Design A Game – Playtesting		
3/31	DDM		
4/2	Design A Game – Playtesting		DAG Part 5
4/7	DDM		
4/9	Design A Game – Playtesting		
4/14	DDM		
4/16	Design A Game – Playtesting		DAG Part 6
4/21	DDM		
4/23	Design A Game – Playtesting	Self-Review	
4/28	DDM		DDM Final
4/30	Design A Game – Playtesting		Weekly Gameplay Final DAG Final Self-Review