



“Using Games to Teach: What You Can Convey Through Play”

Time: MTh 6:00-8:00 pm EST

Duration: Mar 6-Apr 17, 2022

Industry Expert: Liz Davidson, Educator and Host, Beyond Solitaire podcast

Academic Expert: Andrew D. Devenney, Associate Director of CLGS, Co-owner and Publisher of Superhero Necromancer Press

During this six-week synchronous online course, you will study how games convey information—intentionally or unintentionally—and then learn to harness these powers for yourself. You will gain experience breaking down games about history, science, and more so you can see what and how they teach. By the end of the course, you'll develop an idea for a game that can teach something you think others ought to learn!

Course Schedule

Week One

Monday, Mar 6: Introduction to Course & Gather Space

- Introductions, technical stuff, and course overview.
- **Assignment:** Students will analyze a historical/scientific/educational game to present next class.

Thursday, Mar 9: What Games Can Convey

- Games can focus on many different issues and events. A special guest will join us to discuss a specific example.
- **Assignment: Subject Reflection.** What topic would you like to teach via a game, and why?

Week Two

Monday, Mar 13: Ethics of Teaching Through Games

- Gaming and Ethical Considerations: Representation, modeling, and why it all matters.
- **Assignment:** Students will conduct market research to identify games that cover similar topics to the one they want to cover for their final project.

Thursday, Mar 16: Research, Part 1

- Gaming and Research: What research needs to go into a board game? What do we see on the board vs. in designer notes?
- **Assignment: Ethical Reflection.** Students will write about potential challenges confronting their proposed game.

Week Three

Monday, Mar 20: Mechanisms in Games

- Gaming mechanisms: What can they communicate, and what experiences do they create?
- **Assignment:** Mechanism deep dive.

Thursday, Mar 23: Research, Revisited.

- Discussion: How can designers combine research with gaming mechanisms for greatest effect?
- **Assignment: Annotated Bibliography.** Students will begin work on their annotated bibliographies.

Week Four

Monday, Mar 27: Gaming in Educational Environments

- Discussion: What does the current landscape of educational gaming look like?
- **Assignment: Educational Reflection.** Students will write about intended settings for their future game.

Thursday, Mar 30: NO CLASS. (Liz will be on the road.)

Week Five

Monday, Apr 3: How to Talk About Your Game

- Discussion: Blurbs and Elevator Pitches
- **Assignment: Mechanical Reflection.** Students will at last have to commit to some mechanisms for their proposed game! (At least enough to write them down.)

Thursday, Apr 6: Putting it All Together

- Discussion: Putting together a compelling proposal.
- **Assignment:** Pull what you've done so far into a cohesive game proposal. To be presented in Week 6.

Week Six

Monday, Apr 10: Small Group Work Time

- Liz and Andrew circulate and check in w/ students.
- **Assignment:** Create a potential blurb for your game.

Thursday, Apr 13: Presentations 1

- Students present and give feedback to other presenters.

Week Seven

Monday, Apr 17: Presentations 2

- Students present and give feedback to other presenters.

Assessment

In order to certify your completion of this course, you must finish each of the five core Challenge activities listed below before the end of the course:

- **Subject Reflection:** What will be the subject of your game, and why? What are you hoping to communicate?

- **Ethical Reflection:** What potential difficulties arise for your game in terms of presentation of your topic/representation within the game?
- **Educational Reflection:** In what setting do you imagine people will play your game? What design elements do you need to pay attention to in order for it to scale properly?
- **Mechanical Reflection:** What game format/mechanisms do you think you might employ in your game, and what will they represent?
- **Annotated Bibliography:** What research are you doing for your game?

These Challenge activities will be completed throughout the course and brought together into a cohesive game proposal at the end of the course.

Finishing the Challenges requires submitting a 1-2 page summary of your creative activities for each Challenge by the appropriate class period deadline (other evidence could include links to image collections, card and board mockups, and the like). Instructors will provide feedback on your submissions, either in class or in writing or both (depending on the nature of the Challenge assignment).