

**Course Description**

How is the architectural design process a game? How could video gaming influence architectural design? In this course students will explore the world of digital game play and propose new modes of designing based on their findings. Using a simple programming toolkit, students will design and build game software that presents new ways to see the design process. No prior experience with either computer programming or video games is necessary; course assignments will be geared toward students new to these topics.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- think critically about design processes in terms of the concepts of **play**, **gaming**, and **interface**.
- develop new design processes by combining elements from various forms of game play.
- realize game designs by building software using basic programming skills acquired through course assignments.

**Modes of Inquiry**

This course will rely primarily on process-based instruction as a mode of inquiry, utilizing software development as a primary medium. Software development will be taught only to a level sufficient to enable students to use it as a tool to realize their envisioned design games. The majority of learning will happen in workshops in which students and the instructor collaboratively translate ideas into software designs. In addition to the process-based instruction, students will engage in research into digital game play and human-computer interfaces.

**Expected Outcomes**

The outcomes of the course exercises will be a set of simple software applications that present playful ways for designers to create using computers. These software applications will take the form of rough prototypes and a final (not necessarily "finished") design game. In addition to the software, students will also make two short presentations: one on a digital game and one on a human-computer interface device.

**Texts and Materials**

There are no required texts for this course. Students will be expected to bring a laptop computer to each class session.

Course resources including this syllabus, assignments, software, and links will be posted to the course website at: [http://wiki.umn.edu/DesignGames/](http://wiki.umn.edu/DesignGames/)

Students are encouraged to check the course website regularly.

**Grading**

Grades for presentations will be based on thoroughness of research, thoughtfulness of analysis, and completeness of explanation. Design game prototypes and final design game will be graded on willingness to explore, progress of game functionality, and inventiveness of game play – **not software development ability**.

Course grades will be weighted as such:

- Digital game presentation: 10%
- Design game sketch: 20%
- Design game prototypes: 10% each (3 for 30% total)
- Final design game: 40%

Refer to the common BDA Workshop syllabus (on the course website) for general grading standards and other essential information.
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Assignment Due (weight)</th>
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</table>
| 1    | Wed, Sep 1, 2010 | • Course Introduction  
• Game Play and Architecture  
• Software Discussion  
• Game Research Assignment |                         |
| 2    | Mon, Sep 13, 2010 | • Game Research Presentations                                             | • Game Research Presentation (10%) |
| 2    | Wed, Sep 15, 2010 | • Design Game Project Intro  
• Design Game Sketch Assignment  
• Software Tools Introduction |                         |
| 3    | Mon, Sep 20, 2010 | • Sketch Critique and Refinement  
• Software Tutorial                                      |                         |
| 3    | Wed, Sep 22, 2010 | • Sketch Presentations                                                 | • Design Game Sketch Presentation (20%) |
| 4    | Mon, Sep 27, 2010 | • Software Tutorial  
• Collaborative Software Development Workshop |                         |
| 4    | Wed, Sep 29, 2010 | • Collaborative Software Development Workshop                          | • Stage 1 Prototype (10%) |
| 5    | Mon, Oct 4, 2010  | • Collaborative Software Development Workshop                          |                         |
| 5    | Wed, Oct 6, 2010  | • Collaborative Software Development Workshop                          | • Stage 2 Prototype (10%) |
| 6    | Mon, Oct 11, 2010 | • Collaborative Software Development Workshop                          |                         |
| 6    | Wed, Oct 13, 2010 | • Collaborative Software Development Workshop                          | • Stage 3 Prototype (10%) |
| 7    | Mon, Oct 18, 2010 | • Collaborative Software Development Workshop                          |                         |
| 7    | Wed, Oct 20, 2010 | • Guest Critic Sessions                                                |                         |
| 8    | Mon, Oct 25, 2010 | • Design Games Arcade                                                  | • Final Design Game Presentation (40%) |