



**Faculty of Arts and Social
Sciences**

School of the Arts and Media

MDIA3001

Serious Games

Session 2, 2015

UNSW Course Outline

Staff Contact Details

| Position | Name | Email | Availability | Location | Phone |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Course Authority | Brigid Costello | bm.costello@unsw.edu.au | 3-4pm Wednesdays during semester | Webster 311P | 9385 6805 |

School of the Arts and Media Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

Phone: 9385 4856

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Website: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au>

Attendance Requirements

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a F2F or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.
- A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).
- A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.
- If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.
- A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.
- A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course without failure rather than be awarded a final grade of UF. The final decision as to whether a student can be withdrawn without fail is made by Student Administration and Records.
- For more information about the SAM attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Essential Information For SAM Students

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies and Guidelines

webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Course details

Credit Points: 6

Summary of the Course:

Understanding what games really are and how they can affect and create audiences is essential knowledge for every media graduate. In this course we focus on the most common types of games that media producers create, *serious games*. These are games that are used for real-life purposes other than pure entertainment. For example, they might be used for social change, education, training, advertising, or to help people achieve a particular health objective. In this course you will focus on the conceptual design and analysis of serious games. This context will shape an investigation into game aesthetics, learning, affect and engagement. You will also be introduced to the methods and practice of game play-testing. The course does not involve any computer programming or require any previous knowledge in this area aside from skills already developed in the pre-requisite course MDIA1000.

Aims of the Course:

This course aims to:

- Give students a broad knowledge of the social, ethical and cultural contexts of the production and consumption of serious games.
- Introduce students to the critical and analytic reading of a serious game.
- Promote understanding of the methods of user-centered design.
- Develop students' ability to critically and creatively apply these methods in the creation or evaluation of a serious game.
- Initiate reflection on the relationship between designers and user-groups.

Student learning outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Knowledge of the social, ethical and cultural contexts of the production and consumption of serious games.
2. Increased ability to analyze and evaluate a serious game.
3. Understanding of the methods of user-centered design.
4. Ability to critically and creatively apply these methods in the creation of a serious game.
5. Practice-based knowledge of the relationship between designers and user-groups.

Graduate Attributes:

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. An appreciation of the cultural diversity of media audiences, media forms and media delivery contexts.
2. A respect for ethical practice and social responsibility.
3. The skills of communicating effectively through media production and the ability to tailor this communication to suit different audiences and delivery platforms.

4. The skills involved in practice-based research.
5. The capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem solving within a media production context.
6. The skills required to create, discuss and evaluate creative work in collaboration with others.
7. The skills to appropriately locate, evaluate and use relevant information to develop media production content and learn new practice techniques.
8. The ability to independently learn media production skills and to critically reflect on their value and purpose as tools of practice.

Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach

Teaching strategies

There will be a strong emphasis on the relationship between practice, theory and method in this course. The weekly 1-hour lectures will provide theoretical and methodological frameworks that will then be explored within a practical context in the 2-hour workshops. The 2-hour workshops will also be structured to encourage students to give support and feedback to fellow students. This will provide opportunities for students to reflect on the production practices of others and to view their own practice experiences within a broader context. The course will use real-world client briefs and where possible will provide game project students with an industry client to work with. This is designed to give students experience at developing and maintaining a client relationship. Our past experience shows that this approach can help students start to develop the professional networks that they will need after they graduate.

Assessment

There are three assessment tasks to complete. You must complete and hand in all three tasks in order to pass this course. This means that you will fail if you do not hand in one task even if you have a total grade of over 50 from the other two assignments.

Your answers to the weekly online lecture discussion questions will be used to record your lecture attendance. As with normal attendance you must complete 80% of these in order to pass the course. You can also present medical or other documentation to be excused from making a late post.

Assessment Summary

See the course website on Moodle for full assignment task descriptions, marking criteria and submission instructions.

| Assessment task | Length | Weight | Learning outcomes assessed | Graduate attributes assessed | Due Date |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Game Analysis Essay (40%) | 2000 words +/- 10% | 40% | 1,2 | 1,2,5 | 10pm Wed 7th October 2015 |
| Online Seminar & Discussion (30%) | 1000 words plus 2-3 discussion posts that total 500 words. | 30% | 1,2,5 | 3,4,5,6,7,8 | 10pm 24th August 2015 |
| Serious Game Prototype Package (30%) | In-class presentation, game prototype video, game rulebook. | 30% | 2,3,4,5 | 1,3,4,5,6,7,8 | Various: In-class weeks 7,8,11,12 and 13. |

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their **names** and **student numbers** on **every page** of their assignments. If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au. Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally in SAM there will no longer be any hard-copy submission; assessments must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible it will be stated on your course's moodle site with alternative submission details.

Late Submission

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE RULES APPLY FOR ALL COURSES IN SAM.

If your assignment is submitted after the due date, a penalty of 3% per day (including Saturday, Sunday and

public holidays) will be imposed for up to 2 weeks. For example, if you are given a mark of 72 out of 100 for an essay, and your essay were handed in two days late, it would attract a penalty of 6% and the mark would be reduced to 66%. If the same essay were handed in seven days late (i.e. a penalty of 21%) it would receive a mark of 51%. If your assignment is not submitted within 2 weeks of its due date, it will receive a mark of 0. For more information on submission of late work, consult the SAM assessment protocols at <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Extension Procedure

- A student seeking an extension should submit a SAM extension application form (found in Forms on SAM website) to the Course Authority before the due date.
- The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days of the request.
- The Course Authority can only approve an extension of up to five days. A student requesting an extension of more than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.
- If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.
- This procedure does not apply to assessment tasks that take place during regular class hours or any task specifically identified by the Course Authority as not subject to extension requests.
- A student who missed an assessed activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.
- For more information, see the SAM extension protocols on the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Special Consideration

In the case of more serious or ongoing illness or misadventure, you will need to apply for Special Consideration. For information on Special Consideration please go to this URL: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

Students who are prevented from attending a substantial amount of the course may be advised to apply to withdraw without penalty. This will only be approved in the most extreme and properly documented cases.

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement. UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

- **Copying:** using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.
- **Inappropriate paraphrasing:** changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.
- **Collusion:** working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.
- **Inappropriate citation:** Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
- **Duplication ("self-plagiarism"):** submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Details of what plagiarism is can be found on the Learning Centre's Website Plagiarism & Academic Integrity website (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/academic-integrity-plagiarism>), in the myUNSW student A-Z: Guide <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism> and in Appendix A of the Student Misconduct Procedure (pdf-<https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf>).

The Learning Centre also provides substantial education written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example:

- Correct referencing practices;
- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

Course schedule

| Week | Topic | Lecture Content | Studio Content |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1: 27-31 July | What are Serious Games? | Focuses on types of Serious Games and the media industry that develops them. | No studio this week. Studios begin in week 2. |
| Week 2: 3-7 August | Mechanics and Dynamics | Looks at ways of defining a game and introduces the theory of Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics. | Working in teams you will redesign a mechanic or dynamic within a game and explore the effect this has on the gameplay. |
| Week 3: 10-14 August | Affect and Engagement | Focuses on player experience, the concept of flow and player types. | You will design a playable game from scratch and in the process start thinking about the Game Project brief. |
| Week 4: 17-21 August | Learning and Games | Are learning and games compatible? What types of learning already occur in games? How do you design a game for learning? | After forming your game project groups you will work on analysing the project brief in-depth. |
| Week 5: 24-28 August | Student Seminars | This week you are all guest lecturers. You will post your game analysis seminar and comment on the seminars of 2-3 other students. | Working in your project teams you will start developing concepts for your game. |
| Week 6: 31 August - 4 September | Designing your Games | Goes through the production process your team will need to follow to design your game. | You will analyse the user test results from this week's lecture activity and use it to improve your game project design. |
| Week 7: 7-11 September | The Mechanic is the Message | Focuses on the use of game mechanics to communicate the message of a serious game. | After rehearsing the process and procedures for your project playtesting, your team will continue to work on your game design. |
| Week 8: 14-18 September | Game Balance | Discusses ways that you can balance common game characteristics e.g. luck and skill or rewards and punishment. | The first groups will playtest their game prototype. |
| Week 9: 21-25 September | Social Interaction | This week we look at ways to create social interaction within a game and ways to maintain harmonious social relations within a competitive environment. | The second groups will playtest their game prototype. |
| Week 10: 6-9 October | Breaking the Rules | Is cheating a valid part of gameplay? How do designers break the rules | Working in your project teams you will be given exercises to help you |

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | of game design and is this useful for serious games? | analyse your playtest results and improve your game prototype design. |
| Week 11: 12-16 October | Producing your Prototype Package | Gives advice and tips for producing your game prototype package and preparing your presentation. | The first groups will playtest their final game with the lecturer. |
| Week 12: 19-23 October | Wrap-up | A summary of the debates that occurred in your online discussions across the semester, providing key design strategies for all to take away. | The second groups will playtest their final game with the lecturer. |
| Week 13: 26-30 October | No Lecture | | Final project presentations to the client. |

Course evaluation and development

Student evaluative feedback on the course is gathered every year. Student feedback is taken seriously, and continual improvements are made to the course based in part on such feedback. You will find out in the first lecture any changes that have been made based on last year's feedback.