



UNSW
A U S T R A L I A

School of the Arts and Media

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

MDIA3001

Serious Games

Session 2, 2016

Course Outline

Staff Contact Details

Position	Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Convener	Brigid Costello	bm.costello@unsw.edu.au	Mondays 11:30am-12:30pm	Robert Webster room 311P	9385 6805

Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

Phone: (02) 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 face-to-face (F2F) or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.

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, their request 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.

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

All SAM students must make a serious attempt at all assessments in order to pass the course.

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 MDIA1000.

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

1. Identify the social, ethical and cultural contexts of the production and consumption of serious games.
2. Discuss, analyze and evaluate serious games.
3. Produce a concept proposal for a serious game.
4. Collaborate with clients, designers and user-groups to develop a serious game concept.

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 you to give support and feedback to fellow students. This will provide opportunities for you to reflect on the production practices of others and to view your own practice experiences within a broader context. The course will use real-world client briefs and where possible will provide you with an industry client to work with. This is designed to give you experience at developing and maintaining a client relationship. Our past experience shows that this approach can help you start to develop the professional networks that you will need after you 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 discussion posts in order to pass the course. You can also present medical or other documentation to be excused from making a late post.

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

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Length	Due Date	Submission
Online Seminar & Discussion	30%	1000 words plus 2-3 discussion posts that total 500 words.	Seminar: 10pm Tues 23rd August 2016; Discussion posts: 10pm Mon 29th August 2016	Online submission via Moodle
Game Analysis Essay	40%	2000 words +/- 10%	10pm Tues 4th October 2016	Online via Moodle
Serious Game Prototype Package	30%	Various	Various: In-class weeks 7,8,11,12 and 13.	Various: online via Moodle and in-class

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Online Seminar & Discussion

Details: 1000 words plus 2-3 discussion posts (500 words). Students will receive written feedback and a numerical grade.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Learning outcomes:

Assessment 2: Game Analysis Essay

Details: 2000 words +/- 10%. Students will receive written feedback and a numerical grade. This is the final assessment task.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin, students do not see Turnitin similarity reports

Learning outcomes:

- Identify the social, ethical and cultural contexts of the production and consumption of serious games.
- Discuss, analyze and evaluate serious games.

Assessment 3: Serious Game Prototype Package

Details: Group project in teams of 3-5. Submitted components are: 10 minute presentation, 1-4 minute video, game prototype document of 800-1000 words. This is the final assessment task. Students will receive written feedback and a numerical grade.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Learning outcomes:

- Produce a concept proposal for a serious game.
- Collaborate with clients, designers and user-groups to develop a serious game concept.
- Discuss, analyze and evaluate serious games.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their names and student numbers on every page of their assignments.

Turnitin Submission

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 Assessment Penalties

An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).

The late penalty is the loss of 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. Lateness will include weekends and public holidays. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted fourteen days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted twenty-one days after the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

Special Consideration Applications

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances interfere with your assessment performance.

Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- * Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- * Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- * Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,
- * Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

For further details in relation to Special Consideration including 'When to Apply', 'How to Apply' and 'Supporting Documentation' please refer to the Special Consideration website: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

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.

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

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 25 - 29 July	Topic	What are serious games?
	Lecture	Focuses on types of Serious Games and the media industry that develops them.
	Studio	This week we will play some games and discuss what makes them a game.
Week 2: 1 - 5 August	Topic	Mechanics and Dynamics
	Lecture	Looks at ways of defining a game and introduces the theory of Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics.
	Studio	Working in teams you will redesign a mechanic or dynamic within a game and explore the effect this has on the gameplay.
Week 3: 8 - 12 August	Topic	Affect and Engagement
	Lecture	Focuses on player experience, the concept of flow and player types.
	Studio	After forming your game project groups you will design a playable game from scratch and in the process start thinking about the Game Project brief.
Week 4: 15 - 19 August	Topic	Learning and Games
	Lecture	Are learning and games compatible? What types of learning already occur in games? How do you design a game for learning?
	Studio	In your game project groups you will work on analysing the project brief in-depth.
Week 5: 22 - 26 August	Topic	Student Game Analysis Seminars
	Lecture	This week you are all guest lecturers. You will post your game analysis seminar and comment on the seminars of 2-3 other students.
	Studio	Working in your project teams you will start developing concepts for your game.
Week 6: 29 August - 2 September	Topic	Designing your Games
	Lecture	Goes through the production process your team will need to follow to design your game.
	Studio	You will analyse some user test results and use them to improve your game project design.
Week 7: 5 - 9 September	Topic	The Mechanic is the Message
	Lecture	Focuses on the use of game mechanics to communicate the message of a serious game.
	Studio	After rehearsing the process and procedures for your project playtesting, your team will continue to work on your game design.
Week 8: 12 - 16 September	Topic	Game Balance
	Lecture	Discusses ways that you can balance common game characteristics e.g. luck and skill or rewards and punishment.
	Studio	The first groups will playtest their game prototype.
Week 9: 19 - 23 September	Topic	Social Interaction
	Lecture	This week we look at ways to create social interaction within a game and ways to maintain harmonious social relations within a competitive environment.
	Studio	The second groups will playtest their game prototype.
Week 10: 4 - 7 October	Topic	Breaking the Rules and Ethical Play
	Lecture	Is cheating a valid part of gameplay? How do designers break the rules of game design and is this useful for serious games? Which ethical issues can arise in serious gameplay?
	Studio	Public Holiday no Studio

Week 11: 10 - 14 October	Topic	Producing your Prototype Package
	Lecture	Gives advice and tips for producing your game prototype package and preparing your presentation.
	Studio	The first groups will playtest their final game with the tutor.
Week 12: 17 - 21 October	Topic	Wrap-up
	Lecture	A summary of the debates that occurred in your online discussions across the semester, providing key design strategies for all to take away.
	Studio	The second groups will playtest their final game with the tutor.
Week 13: 24 - 28 October	Topic	Final Project Presentations
	Lecture	No Lecture
	Studio	The groups will make their final project presentations to the client.

Resources

Prescribed Resources

All weekly readings, games, and other course content will be available via the course website on Moodle.

Recommended Resources

The UNSW Library has many useful resources on serious game design see for example:

- Adams, E., & Dormans, J. (2012). *Game mechanics : Advanced game design*. Indianapolis, Ind.: New Riders.
- Annetta, L. (2008). *Serious educational games : From theory to practice*. Rotterdam ; Taipei: Sense.
- Fencott, C., Clay, J., Lockyer, M., & Massey, P. (2012). *Game Invaders The Theory and Understanding of Computer Games*. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Davidson, D. (2008). *Beyond fun : Serious games and media*. Pittsburgh, Penn.]: ETC Press.
- Dillon, R. (2010). *On the way to fun : An emotion-based approach to successful game design*. Natick, Mass.: A K Peters.
- Gee, J., & Ebooks Corporation. (2005). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gee, J. (2007). *Good video games + good learning : Collected essays on video games, learning and literacy* (New literacies and digital epistemologies ; v. 27). New York: P. Lang.
- Schell, J. (2008). *The art of game design : A book of lenses*. San Francisco, Calif. : Oxford: Morgan Kaufmann ; Elsevier Science [distributor].
- Schrier, K., & Gibson, D. (2010). *Ethics and game design : Teaching values through play*. Hershey PA: Information Science Reference.
- Trefry, G. (2010). *Casual game design : Designing play for the gamer in all of us* (IT Pro). Burlington, MA : Oxford: Morgan Kaufmann ; Elsevier Science [distributor].

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.