CMPM 80K, Foundations of Video Game Design

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Summary

This accelerated course equips students to "read", critique, and create interactive media, especially games. We explore a variety of critical perspectives that can be brought to bear on these complex systems, focusing on those which address how interactivity itself is used for rhetorical purposes or to evoke emotional or physiological responses in players. During the course, every student will design three analog "person-to-person" games and three digital games emphasizing different aspects of game design, giving and receiving constructive design feedback on these game projects. Students will also play several games illustrating key concepts and explicate these to their peers. Finally, students will write a deep critical analysis comparing two games from the three main perspectives we cover in the course: operational logics, procedural rhetorics, and mechanics/dynamics/aesthetics. No prior experience in computer programming, visual arts, or music is required, but ample opportunities will be available for students to exercise all of these.

All course materials (readings, etc) will be provided on Canvas.

Scheduling

• Class is Tu/Th 9:00-12:30 in Physical Sciences 110.

• Lab is recommended; Wednesdays in Soc Sci 1 PC Lab, one at 2:00 PM and one at 3:00 PM. Show up on time!

• Free play time after class on Tu/Th until 3:00 PM in Engineering 2 room 393.

Grade breakdown

• In-class exercises: 15%

• Design exercises: 15%

• Play and React Assignments: 10%

• Link-based (narrative) game and analysis: 15%

• Critical analysis: 15%

• Resource (simulation) game and analysis: 15%

• Graphical (game feel) game and analysis: 15%