

Foundations of Video Game Design

This course focuses on the elements that make computer games compelling — from their rules and simulated worlds to their stories and social experiences. Over the five weeks, students will build a series of games and practice analytical writing about games. Students in the course will be able to [check out game platforms and notable games from the Science and Engineering Library](#). Readings will include both writing about games and the play of freely-available games. Lectures are designed to invite student discussion. The course labs will teach the use of the Twine and Construct web game development environments, as well as provide a place to discuss design ideas, game analysis concepts, and related subjects. No programming experience is necessary.

Details are found in the [daily schedule](#). Please check regularly for assigned reading, playing, and projects.

Course Basics

CMPM 80K Summer 2018: June 25 - July 22

Lecture: Tu/Th 1 - 4:30 pm at N. Sci Annex, 101

Section: W 11 - 12:30 pm at Soc Sci 1, 135 (weeks 2-5 only)

Course web location: [Canvas](#)

Add Deadline: June 28

Drop Deadline: July 2

Withdraw Deadline: July 13

Instructor

April Grow

Email: agrow@ucsc.edu

Office Hours: Tues 10am - 12 noon in E2-393

Teaching Assistants

Max Kreminski

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Office Hours: TBD

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Office Hours: TBD

Materials

- **No purchase required:**

- [Twine](#). We're using version 2 for creating our link-based games. It's free and cross-platform (Linux, Mac, and Windows). You can also use it online.
- [Construct 3](#). This has free and paid versions, but the free version is sufficient for completing the project. Please create an account and verify your email for maximum bandwidth on the free version.
- OPTIONAL: [Unreal Engine 4](#) with Blueprints. This is an alternative to Construct 3 if you are passionately pursuing the game design major. Note that you will not be given any grading leniency for the additional challenge.
- **Please bring your laptop to class**, or make a friend that will let you use theirs. We will be playtesting or playing games nearly every class session. Signing up for eduroam if possible is the most stable wifi.

Grade Breakdown

- **Participation** (30% total)
 - Design & In-class exercises: 20%
 - Play and React Assignments: 10%
- **Readings** (25% total)
 - Regular Reading Discussion Questions: 15%
 - Critical analysis: 10%
- **Game Projects** (45% total)
 - Twine/Link game and analysis: 15%
 - Board/Resource game and analysis: 15%
 - Construct/Graphical game and analysis: 15%

Questions & Contact

- **Course issues and questions.** Questions about course issues and assignments should start at the class forum, the "[Discussions](#)" section of this site. (Do not post phone numbers or other personal information to the forums.) First check to see if a question like yours has already been answered. If it has not, and your question does not raise privacy concerns, post it. If you have a question that requires privacy, or if you are not able to get a satisfactory answer through the forums, ask a TA directly. Sending email and coming to office hours are the best routes. If necessary, you can also ask questions during the office hours of one of the other TAs.
- **Contact timing.** If you have a question about an assignment, please ask at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.
- **Contacting the professor.** To contact the professor directly, the easiest route is to attend her office hours or ask after class for *quick* questions. Prioritize asking the TA first unless it is a dispute with the TA or a course structure-related question.

Illness or emergency

The UCSC health center does not provide medical excuses. In recognition of this, you should simply email your TA before any lecture that you are too ill to attend. If an assignment will be

unavoidably late due to illness, please contact your TA. The same policies apply for family emergencies, transportation failures, and so on.

Accommodations

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter.

I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089, or by email at drc@ucsc.edu. *If you feel comfortable, please also reach out to your TA if you need accommodations in section, or even have less-formal accessibility requests relating to section, TA/tutor instruction, or assignments.*

Academic integrity

Of course, academic integrity is expected of all students. All answers on personal assignments should come from your memory of course material. All ideas and writing in the analysis/reading assignments should be yours unless credited to others (and properly cited). All project work presented as yours should be carried out by you/your team. And so on.

Team problems

If you are having issues with a project partner, please let your TA know *as soon as possible*. Learning about working together as a team is an important part of this course — and learning isn't always easy. If your partner is not pulling their weight, you should let a TA know. We may be able to meet with you to intervene, and we may also be able to do differential grading (which will not be possible if you complain after the class is done).

Attendance

There will be in-class activities with your peers that will act as your attendance. There will be no official attendance taken via clickers or quizzes. Attendance will be taken during the first week if we are pushing the max capacity for the class/room.

Late Assignments

All assignment grades are reduced by 20% for each day late (to 0% after 5 days). This class is so accelerated and has no final buffer week, so we cannot afford allowing assignments to slip. You may also be invited by your TA to re-do an assignment, in which case a specific due date will be provided. As with the illness or emergency, as well as catastrophically broken code, **you must**

contact your TA ASAP and explain the situation to their satisfaction in order to *possibly* waive the late penalty.

Midterm and Final Exams

There are none!

Final Presentations

On the final day of class (Thurs July 26), we will be having presentations on your favorite game(s) from the quarter.

This document is subject to change.