

## ARTG 80I - 01 Foundations of Play

Note: this syllabus may be updated periodically during the quarter. We will do our best to post an announcement to point out any changes that we make.

### Course Details

- Course Level: Undergraduate
- Course Credits: 5
- Course Length: 5 weeks
- Course Medium: Asynchronous instruction and discussion with weekly, synchronous, remote section meetings
- [Online Course Listing](#)

### Instruction Team Information

Professor: Tad Leckman  
Office Hours: TBD  
Zoom Link: TBD

Teaching Assistant: TBA  
Office Hours: TBD  
Zoom Link: TBD

### Catalog Description

Understanding the foundations of play through reading influential texts; in-class lectures and activities; designing and "playtesting" games; and the ethnographies of players in the physical world.

This course fulfills the Human Behavior (PE-H code) [general education requirement](#) for its focus on aspects of individual human behavior or the operation of human groups.

### About the Course

ARTG 80I is an introductory course in game design at UCSC. In this class we discuss foundational texts, play games remotely, and make social games using the constraints of remote gameplay. Participating in group discussion and activities are a big part of what this class is all about. There will be reading/listening/viewing assignments that students are expected to complete for each module, in addition to critical writing and game design projects.

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a general understanding of various theories of play and their relationship to game design, culture and social movements.
- Demonstrate a general understanding of the game development process and methods.
- Critically analyze and contextualize games and other forms of play.
- Work collaboratively to design, playtest and document a game intended for remote play by multiple players.
- Write and playtest game rules.
- Understand and apply standard playtest methodologies and implement design changes based on observations and feedback.

## Course Outline

The course will cover two modules per week.

- Module One: Introduction to the Course
- Module Two: What Do We Mean By “Play?”
- Module Three: Value of Play: Learning, Adaptation, Creativity and Community
- Module Four: Art, Design and Constraints
- Module Five: Games in Reaction - Players, Resources, Limitations, Social Movements and Unrest
- Module Six: Designing for Others and Designing for Yourself
- Module Seven: Players and Play: Emotion and Experience
- Module Eight: Game Frameworks - What Are They, and How Are They Useful?
- Module Nine: Players at Play - Playtesting and Iteration
- Module Ten: Bringing it All Together

## Expected Workload

Students are expected put in three hours of work for each credit hour enrolled. Therefore, for this five unit course, it is expected that you put in thirty hours during a 5-week summer session.

## Grade Breakdown

This course is project and research based.

- **Section Game Jam Projects: 25%** - Students will work on their own and in small teams to quickly design and prototype small games that can be played remotely. Assigned at the beginning of each week.
- **Final Game Project: 25%** - Students will work in small teams to collaboratively design, develop, edit and publish a final game that can be played remotely. There will be multiple

milestone assignments associated with the Final Game Project. The final game project will be due at the end of the quarter (during Finals Week in Fall, Winter and Spring Quarter and during the final week of instruction during Summer Session)

- **Critical Writing and Analysis: 20%** - Two short, critical essays related to class reading, viewing, listening and gameplay assignments. Students who are less confident with their critical writing skills can take advantage of the [UCSC Writing Center](#). Essays will be assigned during Module 3 and Module 8.
- **Participation and Attendance: 20%** - Attendance in section is mandatory and will factor into this portion of the grade along with participation in online discussion and students' level of participation in group project work as assessed by their teammates.
- **Quizzes: 10%** - Each module will include a quiz on material covered in lecture recordings and course reading, viewing, listening and gameplay assignments.

## Grading Scheme

**A+** ≥100%

**A** < 99.0% to 93.0%

**A-** < 93.0% to 90.0%

**B+** < 90.0% to 88.0%

**B** < 88.0% to 83.0%

**B-** < 83.0% to 80.0%

**C+** < 80.0% to 78.0%

**C** < 78.0% to 73.0%

**C-** < 73.0% to 70.0%

**D+** < 70.0% to 68.0%

**D** < 68.0% to 63.0%

**D-** < 63.0% to 61.0%

**F** < 61.0% to 0%

### Assignment Due Dates

In an effort to promote healthy work/life balance and to accommodate a variety of student class/work/life schedules, most assignments will be due at 11:59pm on Mondays. There is no section or lecture on Monday, so you will always have this day, in addition to the weekend for work on your assigned coursework (in addition to other time available to you during the week). Assignments are nearly always tied to what we do in lecture and section, so it's important that you try to complete them by the due date.

### Feedback on Coursework

Because we do not have the ability to give you feedback on your work in person, we will use multiple methods to do so in this course. You may receive written feedback, an audio recording, or a video recording with feedback, depending on the needs of the assignment and the preference of the TA or instructor providing feedback. We may also ask that you turn in written assignments as links to editable Google Docs to allow detailed notes and suggestions from multiple reviewers.

### Final Exam

This course does not have a final exam. Instead, students will work on small teams to develop, edit and publish a final game that can be played remotely which will be due at the end of the quarter.

## Late Penalties

Individual assignments (as opposed to group assignments) and quizzes will all have a one-week grace period. This means that individual assignments can be turned in after the assignment's due date/time, until the assignment closes in Canvas, without a penalty. However, assignments will not be accepted after this one-week grace period. Please make every effort to turn in assignments by their due date, but know that if you are ill or otherwise unable to do so, you have additional time to complete your individual work built into the schedule. Also note that some assignments related to making games will involve getting feedback on your work in progress from TAs and the instructor. If you turn in these assignments late, you may not get that feedback in time to apply it to your next game iteration.

In addition, each student's lowest quiz score will be dropped from their final grade calculation.

*Group assignments must be turned in on time.* There is no grace period for group assignments. You will be working with a team of fellow students to complete several group assignments as part of your final project. In order to get your team feedback, and to make sure you complete your project by the end of the quarter, we can not extend a grace period to group assignments. If you are sick or otherwise unable to contribute to an assignment with your teammates, it is your responsibility to communicate with them and arrange other ways for you to fairly contribute to the project. All teammates will receive the same grade on group assignments.

## Lecture Recordings

All lecture recordings and other material will be posted at least a week prior to the beginning of their module. Lecture recordings will have captions, and a PDF of slides will be posted with them. Students are expected to watch all lecture recordings and other media associated with this course unless it is marked as optional.

## Course Materials

Most material for this course will be provided to you, or will be available online or accessible digitally through the [UCSC Library](#).

If you are connecting from outside the US, the best method for accessing library resources may be to use the campus VPN. You can get information on installing and using it here:

<https://its.ucsc.edu/vpn/installation.html>

## Working Together

### Class Conduct

Treat all others in class with respect. Discriminatory or offensive speech and actions are not tolerated. Cheating and plagiarizing are likewise unacceptable. If you have a problem or concern with course, assignments, life, or otherwise, please talk to me. Communication is key.

### Working as Part of a Team

This course involves working collaboratively with others to make games. 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 contributing, not communicating, or is not following the course community standards, 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 we don't find out about issues until after the course is over).

### Diversity

In making games and interactive media in a professional and ethical way, it is important that you consider who is depicted in your pieces and how this work will impact others. What kinds of individuals and communities are represented in your work? Who is included and who is excluded? What point of view does your work express?

### Safer Spaces

In this course, we make a commitment to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. This means that we will issue content warnings as appropriate, use preferred pronouns, and respect self-identifications. While debate and discussion are welcome, please remain aware of the implications of your words and the content that you include in your work. If the instructor or another student points out that something you have said or shared with the group might be offensive, avoid being defensive; this is a valuable opportunity for us to grow and learn together. If you have a concern about any aspect of the course, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### Canvas and Zoom Classroom and Community Standards

Despite being online, Canvas and Zoom are our classroom. We strive for a relaxed atmosphere in this course, but please adhere to the course conduct outlined above. Please keep chat channels safe-for-work, meaning no explicit sexual content, violence, political polemics, your

questionable anime avatar, etc. Likewise, we will not tolerate rudeness or harassment of your fellow students, Tutors, TAs, or faculty. That includes racial, gender, ethnic, or religious discrimination, but also just being an inconsiderate jerk. If you choose to behave that way, you will first get a warning, then you will be banned from discussion areas. We also reserve the right to remove you from teams if you demonstrate that you cannot work with others amicably and respectfully. So be kind, be a mindful citizen, and support one another. We're all in this together.

## UCSC Community Principles

The University of California, Santa Cruz expressly prohibits students from engaging in conduct constituting unlawful discrimination, harassment or bias ([see more here](#)). I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and supports inclusivity. We need to work together to build this community of learning. I ask all members of this class to:

- Be open to and interested in the views of others
- Consider the possibility that your views may change over the course of the term
- Be aware that this course asks you to reconsider some “common sense” notions you may hold
- Honor the unique life experiences of your colleagues
- Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other
- Listen to each other’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- Ground your comments in the texts we are studying. Refer frequently to the texts and make them the focus of your questions, comments, and arguments. This is the single most effective way to ensure respectful discussion and to create a space where we are all learning together.

## Title IX and CARE

The Title IX Office is committed to fostering a campus climate in which members of our community are protected from all forms of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, and gender-based harassment and discrimination. Title IX is a neutral office committed to safety, fairness, trauma-informed practices, and due process.

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential, counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University’s Title IX Office, (831)

459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies call 911.

## Student Support

The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) office provides a variety of counseling services to undergraduate and graduate students including individual counseling, groups and workshops, couple counseling, crisis services, on-campus psychiatry, the Let's Talk program, ADHD assessment, referrals to off-campus therapy, on-line self-help tools such as WellTrack, as well as a wide range of links to self-help resources on topics ranging from academic success, to depression, to general life issues.

## UCSC Writing Center

You can get remote help with your writing from the [Writing Center](#). If you are not very confident with your writing, or if English is your second language, you are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this and other writing resources.

## Questions & Contact

Questions about course issues and assignments should start in the discussion area on Canvas. Do not post phone numbers or other personal information to Canvas. 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 the TA for your section directly via email. If your TA is unable to answer a question, they will bring it up with the instructor and one of us will follow up with you.

## Academic Integrity

This course operates on mutual trust, and with mutual responsibility. As the student, you have the responsibility to perform course work in a timely manner, to the best of your abilities. You will seek help as needed to complete course assignments. Your instructor has the responsibility to provide you with learning materials (lectures, readings, etc.), feedback (quizzes, grading), and access to help (sections, office hours) so that you can be successful in this course.

Mutual trust implies that we each assume the other is acting with integrity. Since "acting with integrity" can seem a bit abstract, more detail is provided below.



Except for team-based assignments, you are expected to perform your own work in this course. For this course specifically, this takes several forms:

- You are expected to perform all assigned readings and gameplay assignments. The readings are very important in this course.
- You are expected to perform the weekly quizzes by yourself. These quizzes are designed to focus your understanding of key issues in the readings and lectures. You are not permitted to share quiz answers.
- You are expected to learn the game making tools and techniques in the course by yourself, and you are expected to understand how your (or your team's) game works. However, you are very welcome to seek help from other students, TAs, tutors, or websites on how to use these tools.
- You are expected to write your own essays and short answer questions.

If you find yourself in a situation where you do not feel you can complete course assignments without resorting to academic dishonesty, please contact your TA or the instructor to discuss a deadline accommodation or ways of getting you additional assistance.

For the official university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other misconduct, please see the [Academic Misconduct Policy for Undergraduates](#).

## Citing Sources

You are a member of an academic community at one of the world's leading research universities. Universities like ours create knowledge that has a lasting impact in the world of ideas and on the lives of others; such knowledge can come from an undergraduate paper as well as the research of an internationally known professor. One of the most important values of an academic community is the balance between the free flow of ideas and respect for the intellectual property of others. Researchers don't use one another's research without attribution because we want to recognize the foundational work we have drawn on in order to create new knowledge; scholars and students always use proper citations in papers; professors may not circulate or publish student papers without the writer's permission; and students may not circulate or post materials (handouts, exams, syllabi— any class materials) from their classes without the written permission of the instructor.

Any test, paper, or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper citation (generally, quotation marks or an indented quotation) and correct attribution.

If you are not clear about the expectations for citing sources, completing an assignment, or taking a test or examination, be sure to consult the library website on citing sources (<https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources> ), and if you are still confused, seek clarification from your instructor or TA before turning in your assignment.

## Intellectual Property

The materials in this course are the intellectual property of their creators. As a student, you have access to many of the materials in the course for the purpose of learning, engaging with your peers in the course, completing assignments, and so on. You have a moral and legal obligation to respect the rights of others by only using course materials for purposes associated with the course. For instance, you are not permitted to share, upload, stream, sell, republish, share the login information for, or otherwise disseminate any of the course materials, such as: video and audio files, assignment prompts, slides, notes, syllabus, simulations, datasets, discussion threads. Conversely, any materials created solely by you (for example, your videos, essays, images, audio files, annotations, notes) are your intellectual property and you may use them as you wish. Specific assignments may allow the use of assets and material from sources that allow such use with proper attribution.

## 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 or section meeting that you are too ill to attend. During group project assignments, be sure to communicate with your team before you miss a section or team meeting. This course has a very generous late assignment policy for individual work and every student, regardless of illness, will have their quiz with the lowest grade dropped from their final grade calculation. If you miss more than one quiz due to illness, please contact your TA. Similarly, if an individual assignment will be unavoidably late by more than a week due to illness, please contact your TA. The same policies apply for family emergencies, internet failures, power outage, and so on.

## Accommodations and the Disability Resources Center (DRC)

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 email your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to the professor and your section TA preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. If there are specific accommodations you'd like to discuss in person, you can request a meeting with us when you email your DRC form to us.

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](mailto: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.

## Land Acknowledgement

While online and remote courses do not gather on campus, the campus land on which we usually gather is the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, comprised of the descendants of indigenous people taken to missions Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista during Spanish colonization of the Central Coast, is today working hard to restore traditional stewardship practices on these lands and heal from historical trauma.