

DANM 146 Syllabus  
Game Design in Participatory Performance

**Class Meeting:** Tues/Thurs 9:50-11:25am

**Class Location:** Remote

**Instructor:** Carl Erez

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1-3pm and by appointment.

**Course Description:**

As understandings of performance have developed, so too has the relationship between how the audience and the performers should interact. Some have been inspired by the possibility of immersive fiction, and have worked towards creating fantastical spaces where the audience can explore and participate in worlds other than their own. Others have been more focused on the power of embodied agency, creating frameworks through which the audience can seize control of the narrative and practice enacting the change they might wish to see in their own lives. Artists all across the globe have been exploring these spaces and their possibilities, finding ways to build compassion, form new understandings of history, create communities, and reveal the human connections between audience members and performers that are so frequently pushed aside by the darkened auditoriums used in so much media.

In this course, students will get a grounding in the fundamentals of game design and character driven performance. Meetings will focus on a combination of understanding current practice across various styles of interactivity, and practice of participatory performance culminating in a short group, online performance with participatory elements.

**Course Goals:**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate ability to define, plan, and execute a collaborative inter-medium performance.
- Utilize techniques of game design and analysis to design participatory components for live performances.
- Create characters that can respond to unexpected narrative developments during performances.

**Course Schedule:**

Meeting	Topic	Required Reading and Assignments
W1D1	Introduction and Syllabus Overview of Participatory Performance	

	Styles	
W1D2	What is game design?	"Procedural Rhetoric" by Bogost
W2D1	Narrative and Affordances	"Act Natural': Instructions, Compliance and Accountability in Ambulatory Experiences" by Blast Theory
W2D2	Pleasures and Fantasies	Selection from <i>Performance Studies: An Introduction</i> by Schechner
W3D1	Group Formation LARP Part 1	#Feminism: A Nano Game Anthology by various
W3D2	LARP Part 2; Platforms	Selection from <i>Netprov</i> by Wittig START: Durational Netprov
W4D1	Theater of the Oppressed Improv Part 1: "Yes, and?"	Selection from <i>Theater of the Oppressed</i> by Boal
W4D2	Performance Outlines Improv Part 2: Microscope	DUE: Performance Outline
W5D1	Improv Part 3: Additional Games	
W5D2	Gob Squad; <i>Plays with Participation</i>	<i>The Majority</i> by Drummond
W6D1	Escape Rooms	
W6D2	Rough Draft Performances	DUE: Rough Draft Performance
W7D1	Autumn Knight <i>The (M)others</i>	"I Know How it is When Nobody Sees You" by Yeboah DUE: Group Project Reflection 1
W7D2	Punchdrunk and Immersive Theater Special Guest: Laura Boutros	"Immersive Theater and the Reception Process" by Carlson DUE: Playtest Report
W8D1	ZU-UK and Blast Theory	"The post-immersive manifesto" by Ramos et. al.
W8D2	Final Performances	DUE: Final Performance
Final	No Meeting	DUE: Group Project Reflection 2

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

**Attendance:** It is of vital importance to attend meetings to be present for discussions and group work. If you are unable to attend a meeting for any reason, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. *5 points per meeting / 100 points total (10%).*

**Reading Responses:** For each of the 10 readings during the course, students will write a response of at least 250 words reflecting on the reading and how it does or does not relate to previous experience and learning as well as other material in the course. These are not formal essays, but instead an opportunity to consider each work and better understand its position in larger discourses. Points will be earned for submission of the response. *10 points per response / 100 points total (10%).*

**Durational Netprov:** During Week 3, students will engage in an individual netprov exercise using Canvas' discussion feature. Over the course of the following week, students will be expected to post, and respond to the posts of others, "in character". Points will be awarded for both creating and responding. *100 points total (10%).*

**Group Project:** In week 3 students will form groups of 2-4 individuals. These groups will then propose, design, and perform a short (10-20 min) digital performance incorporating elements learned from readings and group discussions. Points for this larger project will be divided into a series of smaller assignments, listed below:

- **Performance Outline:** In week 4, each group will give a 10 minute pitch of their performance, describing elements such as included mechanics, interaction style, etc. *100 points total (10%).*
- **Rough Draft Performance:** In week 6, each group will present a "rough draft" of their performance, followed by group discussion and feedback. *100 points total (10%).*
- **Playtest Report:** By week 7, each group will have completed a "playtest" of their performance outside of a class meeting and composed a playtest report documenting the feedback from that performance. *100 points total (10%).*
- **Final Performance:** In week 8, each group will present a "final draft" of their performance, followed by group discussion and feedback. *100 points total (10%).*
- **Reflections:** Following the rough draft and final performances, each student will individually reflect on their group project. The first portion of this reflection will be about their process, describing in their opinion what has worked well with their project and what they view as areas for improvement. The second portion of the reflection will focus on group dynamics, describing group practices that have been beneficial to work on the project and practices that could be improved. *150 points each / 300 points total (30%).*

### **Team Problems:**

If you are having issues with a project partner, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. Learning to work with a team is an important part of this course, but it will not always be easy. If a partner is not pulling their weight, or is otherwise causing an unhealthy group dynamic, it is important to let the instructor know if they need to intervene or do differential grading if necessary.

### **Weekly Hours:**

Systemwide Senate Regulation 760 specifies that one academic credit corresponds to a total of 30 hours of work for the median student over a quarter (e.g., 3 hours per week for a 10-week quarter). For this course, students should expect approximately 3 hours of lecture, 6 hours of readings, and 9.75 hours of homework, such as rehearsal.

### **Syllabus is Subject to Change.**

If any changes are made, all students will be notified in advance.

### **Academic Integrity and Collaboration:**

All members of the UCSC community benefit from an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. You are expected to present your own work and acknowledge the work of others in order to preserve the integrity of scholarship.

Academic integrity includes:

- Incorporating proper citation of all sources of information
- Submitting your own original work

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own
- Plagiarism, including use of Internet material without proper citation
- Submitting your own work in one class that was completed for another class (self-plagiarism) without prior permission from the instructor.

Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the Academic Misconduct page at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

### **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 during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. 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).

**Title IX Office:**

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