EDT 463/563

Games for Impact: The Full Life Cycle
Spring 2015, Thursday 4:30-7:15PM

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Overview

Computer and video games have emerged as one of the most powerful mediums of the 21st Century, generating billions of hours of highly engaging entertainment. A growing body of research is also highlighting the enormous potential of games to help address some of the biggest social, cultural, scientific and economic challenges of the 21st Century. This course will present an impact game publishing methodology, covering the full lifecycle and key considerations associated with using games for impact.

Unlike many other classes you may have encountered, this course will be experienced as an *adventure*. Specifically, you will take on the role of an *Impact Entrepreneur* with the goal of building out a convincing vision for the creation of a games and impact lean startup. This games and impact startup will have as its mission to leverage game-infused products and services to achieve a personally meaningful and socially significant real-world goal.

By the end, you will have completed five *Quests* that draw on lessons and tools from the learning sciences, social impact, tech-enabled services, and, of course, the digital gaming sectors, enabling you to identify a current social problem, review existing interventions, and develop a game-infused solution.

Throughout the adventure you will develop your understanding of games, their design, and potential for impact. Visit the Adventure Game Board (class website) for details online.

Learning Goals

We will work together to achieve the following goals. Adventurers will…

- Articulate why digital games have unique potential for addressing key societal challenges and how the medium differs from other non entertainment-based technology and popular media platforms.
- Recognize the unique challenges involved in turning this *potential* for harnessing the power of games for impact into the *reality* of games-based products and services that can make meaningful impact with sustainable, scalable publishing models.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the full lifecycle and key concepts of games for impact (e.g., such as ecosystem integration, target audience, stakeholder alignment, selection of platform and team, balancing revenue and impact goals, customer development), as well as necessary publishing and optimization methodologies.
- Develop the ability, confidence and commitment in using lessons and tools from the learning sciences sector, social impact sector, tech-enabled services sector, and digital gaming sector to build a games and impact startup that can achieve real-world impact.

Resources & Dispositions

The following materials and resources are important for your success in this course:

- Computer & Printer Access
- Dedicating 8-10 hours to course work each week
- Persistence, resilience, and a passion for a cause
- Willingness to collaborate with peers

Role Overviews

Games and Impact Scholar

- Games and Impact Analysis
- Present an Article to Class
- Games & Impact Company Memo

Critical Idealist

- Complete a Player Impact Guide
- Landscape Analysis
- Logic Model Template

Utopian Entrepreneur

- Double Bottom Line Rationale
- Lean Canvas Business Plan

Impact Designer

- Game Mechanics Analysis
- Games Design Document
- Games and Impact Prototype

CEOs: Advisory Board

- Make your Pitch
- Unlock your Impact

Individual learning trajectories to achieve these learning goals will look different. However, active participation and deep engagement with readings, classroom discussions, and community activities, clear and open communication, and a willingness to play and ask questions will play an important role in your success in this course.

Course Structure

This *Learning Adventure* is composed of four *Quest-Lines*. Each Quest-Line is composed of one or more *quests*, which have *objectives* (tasks) that must be completed to progress in the adventure. Each quest roughly corresponds to one week of the adventure. Because the adventure is subject to time limits, quests must be completed within the week. The quest for the following week will be made available at the end of each class, and posted to the game board the following morning.

Objectives will include the following types of activities:

1. Playing or designing games
2. Reading articles, blog posts, and book chapters (I have tried to limit this to less than 50 pages each week, in weeks where the readings are longer, they are significantly easier to get through)
3. Writing, posting, designing, and visioning
4. Background research, interviews, inquiry
5. Presentations and participation in class

> "*A legendary hero is usually the founder of something—the founder of a new age, the founder of a new religion, the founder of a new city, the founder of a new way of life. In order to found something new, one has to leave the old and go on a quest of the seed idea, a germinal idea that will have the potential of bringing forth that new thing.*"
>
> Joseph Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces

Course Requirements

Course Participation: All adventurers are expected to attend class and participate actively in discussions and other activities. Participation will include:

1. Reading presentations: Adventurers will be assigned to provide brief presentations on the weekly readings. These presentations should include key ideas, but just as importantly, offer questions and issues to spur discussion and deeper understanding. ***Dates for these presentations will first be assigned during the second week of classes.***
2. General participation: Adventurers are expected to attend and actively participate in every class meeting. Missing class will significantly lower your grade, as will frequent late arrivals and leaving early–not due to direct penalty, but because you will miss valuable content.
3. Critical friends: Adventurers will be accepted to be critical friends to fellow adventurers, providing feedback that is honest, direct, and supportive.

Quest-logging (blogging): A good citizen of our society should not only be well informed, but also an active and reliable source of information. As part of practicing good citizenship—but more to the point for games—as a member of an *affinity group,* during many weeks of this adventure you will share reflections about your activities related to the course.

Each adventurer will be responsible for (a) recording and sharing (posting) quest-logs throughout the adventure (see the schedule below) and (b) responding to several other adventurers' quest-logs. This work will primary take place through the wordpress website, although we will may draw on other game-infused infrastructures throughout the course.

Quest *Milestones* (Projects): Milestones are specific moments in the adventure where the adventurer is challenged to demonstrate skills developed during the preceding quests. Milestones are encountered at specific times during the adventure, and are characterized by specific deliverables that will have detailed instructions about the objective(s) and requirements to accomplish those objectives.

Additionally, every adventurer will provide assistance to one other adventurer in preparation for his or her milestone encounter (i.e., before it is due). Who is going to give feedback to whom will be determined by a drawing of your name from a jar for each deliverable. Why use this technique? Because I want to use this as an opportunity for you to use each

other as a resource and get to know each other. You will use a rubric to evaluate and give feedback to each other. This will be the same rubric that will be used to evaluate your final deliverable. (See more information on the website)

1. ***Milestone One, Steve (Games Skeptic) (encountered from 1/14-2/6):*** Each adventurer will complete a written impact guide for one game selected in consultation with the instructor. Convincing Steve the Skeptic will also require submitting a critical game analysis of an impact game using the Games and Impact template. Additionally, you will be expected to read an article about Games and Impact, and presenting on the article to your peers by week 4. Lastly, you will need to write a memo to convince Steve and his team that focusing company funds on "games" is a mission-aligned with the company focus on impact broadly conceived. Guidelines, templates, and an impact guide will be provided.
    - ***Graduate Students*** – 5-8 page proposal with references (2/6).
2. ***Milestone Two, Connie (Critical Idealist) " (encountered by 2/4-2/25)***: Each adventurer is required to develop an understanding of what is meant by impact. It is very easy to confuse outputs and outcomes, and think one achieved success. But, while using fertilizers may cause initial soil quality gains, it can result in dependencies that ultimately leave the family in worse shape over time. You will develop a sophistication with tools like needs analysis, landscape analysis, and build your own game-infused theory of change around your personal impact agenda. Templates will be provided.
    - ***Graduate Students*** – 2-3 page description of logic model with references (2/25).
3. ***Milestone Three, Alan (Utopian Entrepreneur) (encountered by 2/18-3/19)*:** Here is where you learn about lean startup, working with Ash to develop the marketing plan that won't be denied. Or, actually, will be slightly denied but will be lean enough to allow pivots towards brighter futures. You will lean about double-bottom line business, and how to develop a lean business plan for your games and impact agenda. Templates will be available. Also, you will join leanstack.com for more instruction.
    - ***Graduate Students*** – in addition to the template, a budget and budget justification are expected (3/19).
4. ***Milestone Four, Tyler (Impact Designer) (encountered by 3/18-4/17)*** This is the final milestone, and is so important that it is encountered in a progression throughout the Quest-Line. A strategy guide will be provided in advance. Adventurers regale their fellow travelers with a short story (presentation) of their impact design in the Pecha-Kucha format to prepare for the end of the adventure. The PechaKucha is a presentation format that involves presenting your work with 20 images in 5 minutes (each image engrossing the audience for 20 seconds). For more information, visit: http://www.pecha-kucha.org.
    - ***Graduate Students*** – design experiment linking problem to theory to design to implementation (4/17).
5. ***Milestone Five, CEOs (Advisory Board) (encountered by 4/15-4/30)***: The purpose of the impact design pitch is to (1) identify current interventions aimed at addressing a social problem, (2) evaluate their current impact as a foundation for determining the potential need for and success of a new intervention, and (3) articulate a design for that new intervention, and (4) clarify your business plan. In the context of games for impact, you will need to argue for whether a game-centered intervention is desirable and what sort of specific game features might be appropriate for the particular audience, context, and ecosystem of interest.
    - ***Graduate Students*** – write final proposal in response to RFP for funding agency (4/30).

Leveling-Up (Grading)

Think of this entire course as a game: as you complete each quest-line, quest, and objective, you will be developing new skills (advancing in the game) and earning "points".

Below you will find the distribution of points across different tasks:

Quest	**points**
Quest 1 – Games Scholar	94 points
Quest 2 – Critical Idealist	61 points
Quest 3 – Utopian Entrepreneur	44 points
Quest 4 – Game Developer	104 points
Quest 5 – CEO	47 points
Course Participation	50 points
Total:	**400**

Distinguished Level (392-400 points): At this level, the adventurer met all the requirements of the course with excellence and went beyond completing the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and deeply engaged in classroom discussions regularly throughout the semester.

Outstanding Level (381-391 points): At this level, the adventurer met all the requirements of the course with excellence and completed the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and deeply engaged in classroom discussions regularly throughout the semester.

Accomplished Level (376-380 points): At this level, the adventurer met all the requirements of the course almost with excellence and completed the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions most of the time throughout the semester.

Master Level (341-375 points): At this level, the adventurer met all the requirements of the course with high quality and completed the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions most of the time throughout the semester.

Good Sport Level (326-340 points): At this level, the adventurer met all the requirements of the course with acceptable quality and completed the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions infrequently throughout the semester. OR. The adventurer met all the requirements of the course with high quality and completed the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions frequently throughout the semester

Valiant Effort Level (291-325 points): At this level, the adventurer met almost all the requirements of the course with acceptable quality and completed the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions either infrequently or frequently throughout the semester.

Fair Try Level (276-290 points): At this level, the adventurer failed to meet some of the requirements of the course with acceptable quality and/or failed to complete the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions frequently throughout the semester.

Struggling but Promising Level (251-275 points): At this level, the adventurer failed to meet some of the requirements of the course with acceptable quality and/or failed to complete the minimum requirement for community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions infrequently throughout the semester.

Passing Level (226-250 points): At this level, the adventurer failed to meet some of the requirements of the course with acceptable quality and/or failed to complete the minimum requirement for some of the community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions frequently or infrequently throughout the semester.

Initiate Level (225 points or below): At this level, the adventurer failed to meet most of the requirements of the course with acceptable quality and/or failed to complete the minimum requirement for most of the community activities and deliverables. In addition, the adventurer actively participated and engaged deeply in classroom discussions infrequently throughout the semester.

In case it is not entirely obvious, these levels correspond to the grades used for this class, with the "Distinguished Level" being the equivalent of an A+, down to the "Initiate Level" as an F. As the name suggests "Passing Level" is the minimum to pass a course for credit at ASU, or a D. It is my firm belief that if you apply yourself to this course it will feel far more like Plants vs. Zombies than StarCraft II. Also, the gameplay idea is applicable to your own learning. When you find yourself struggling, please reflect on what you've tried and how you might change your gameplay. I am your advocate, and want you all to succeed, so if you aren't finding success, please talk with me about it. I have the "cheat guide."

Expectations & Policies

- While formally a lecture course, our class meetings will actually be quite interactive. ***You must to come to class, with the reading done, and with the ability, confidence, and commitment to participate in class discussions.*** To participate effectively, you should aim to speak in a way that moves a discussion forward and increases the learning for the whole group. Contributions can include questions, insights, and responses to other comments. They can also include provocative mistakes. Being "wrong" but intellectually adventurous can often help jumpstart everyone's thinking. One powerful comment or question is worth more than many less powerful remarks.
- Bring the readings with you to class.
- Milestones are limited time events (they have due dates). Missed opportunities do not return. Don't miss out.
- I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus depending on the class progress, needs, and interests. The changes will be discussed in class.
- I do my best to respond to e-mails within 48 hours. If you don't hear from me within 48 hours, it is your responsibility to follow-up.
- If you have questions, concerns, etc. please communicate them to me. I can (and will) do nothing without information.

Student Code of Conduct

Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately. "Plagiarism" means using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Plagiarism and cheating on assignments may result in failing this class, suspension, or expulsion. "All forms of student academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism," are prohibited conduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and will be taken very seriously. To further review the Code, please refer to the following ASU website: www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/sta/sta104-01.html.

University Support for Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs who require assistance can contact the ASU Office of Student Life; see Disability Resources for Students at http://www.asu.edu/drs/services.htm. Those requesting accommodations/modifications should also be registered with the Disabled Student Resources department here at Arizona State University. If you need accommodations due to disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor, or if need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with the instructor immediately.

Changes to the Syllabus

This game guide (syllabus) is an initial plan only and may be changed at any time to meet Adventure (course), Adventurer (student) or Game Master (instructor) needs. Changes in the game guide will be announced at group meetings (class) or by email. Unless changes have been announced, this guide should be used as the adventurer's central guide to adventure planning and topics of discussion for each meeting.