

## INF1005/1006 Information Workshop. Exploring User Experience, Cultural Theory and Gamification through Board Games

**Term:** Winter 2017

**Instructor:** Steve Szigeti, PhD

**Contact Information:** Instructor email: [steve.szigeti@gmail.com](mailto:steve.szigeti@gmail.com)

Text: 416-473-5685

Office hours: By appointment via email

**Course Meeting time:** Tuesday, 1 to 4pm

**Course Location:** Bissell (BL), Room 313. Note on Jan. 19/March 9 the class will meet at *Snakes and Lattes* (489 College Street at Markham, west of Bathurst).

### Course description

This workshop will allow students to explore issues related to user interface, user experience, materiality, gamification and game theory. Board games (as opposed to video games), represent a space to consider social interaction, the use of materials, the role of emotion (and fun), knowledge sharing and the role gamification plays in influencing behaviour.

In the workshop, students will be exposed to professional and research publications related to design, game theory, user experience and game mechanics. In assignments, students will gain experience understanding the underlying assumptions which support board games.

**Goals and Learning Objectives:** This course will use the design and critical evaluation of board games as a framework for understanding concepts that are relevant to the information profession. The workshop is intended to help prepare students for successful careers in the information professions where gamification, design thinking and materiality play an important role. The course is designed to help students understand the terminology used in, and theories behind, game development. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain different game mechanics and their potential role in gamification of various activities;
- Conduct evaluation of game artifacts and present the findings in both written and oral form;
- Apply design thinking as a process in developing activities. This includes developing a plan for evaluating a game artifact, conduct evaluations, and iterating the design.
- Explain and interpret the social dynamics of teamwork as manifested in game play.
- Explain the role of perfect and imperfect information (from game theory), symmetry and asymmetry, and communication
- Demonstrate effective communication both orally and in writing
- Put into practice effectively working on a design team
- Identify opportunities for gamification in the information professions.

**Workshop Structure:** The class will meet for three hours each week. Class sessions will include lectures, discussions, activities and student presentations. On their own time, students must complete weekly readings and the assignments. Note that for every one (1) hour of contact, you can expect to do 2.5 hours of reading and preparation work on your own.

Each student is responsible for keeping up with the workshop material, which includes all of the required readings. Students are expected to attend all workshop sessions, to arrive on time, stay for the duration of the class, and to participate in discussions. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining any information or materials given in class, either from your classmates or online. Unauthorized recording of the lectures is not permitted.

The interaction among students and their collaborative work is essential in making the workshop a success. Students are expected to use the experiences and knowledge they bring into the workshop to help define their learning objectives, contribute to the course content, and complement their own learning experience and that of their classmates.

## Deliverables and Evaluation

Students will be evaluated through three (3) assignments and a participation grade.

Assignment	Assignment Title / Description	Due Dates	Value
<b>Assignment 1</b>	Game Critique (individual grade)	Class 3 (Jan 26 / March 16)	20%
<b>Assignment 2</b>	Game Proposal (two parts) a. Presentation b. Report (group grade)	Class 6 (Feb 16 / April 6)	10% 30%
<b>Assignment 3</b>	Short essay (individual grade)	Two weeks after Class 6 (March 2 / April 20)	30%
<b>Participation</b>	Attendance and participation are important in this workshop (individual grade)		10%

## General Expectations:

1. **General:** Throughout the course, students are expected to practise project management principles in every aspect of their coursework and interactions.
2. **Communication Policy:** Email will be answered within four (4) business days.
3. **Readings:** It is important to complete the required readings before your class in order to fully benefit from the class activities.
4. **Late policy:** Assignments submitted after the deadline date/time will be penalized one grade (e.g., from B+ to B). An additional penalty of one grade will be deducted for every

two days. Submissions will not be accepted after two weeks. Exceptions will be made only when supported by appropriate documentation.

5. **Requests for assignment extensions:** Please make every effort to meet the assignment deadlines. If you absolutely require an extension, please send the instructor a request with the following information: (i) reason for extension, (ii) current status of the assignment, and (iii) due date requested. If an extension is granted, you must include correspondence regarding the request and the reply with your assignment.
6. **Academic Integrity:** The essence of academic life revolves around respect not only for the ideas of others, but also their rights to those ideas and their promulgation. It is therefore essential that all of us engaged in the life of the mind take the utmost care that the ideas and expressions of ideas of other people always be appropriately handled, and, where necessary, cited. For writing assignments, when ideas or materials of others are used, they must be cited. You may use any formal citation format, as long as it is used consistently in your paper, the source material can be located and the citation verified. What is most important is that the material be cited. In any situation, if you have a question, please ask the instructor (and provide adequate time for a reply). Such attention to ideas and acknowledgment of their sources is central not only to academic life, but life in general. Please acquaint yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*:  
<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.
7. **Participation and Attendance:** Discussion and interaction in the classes are important ways to learn. Sharing your experiences and ideas with your classmates is central to your learning experience in this course. As such, you should attend and participate in every class. There will be exercises and discussions that you will participate in within your groups in your class which will be very helpful in completing your assignments.
8. **Students with Special Needs or Health Considerations:** All students are welcome in this course and we will make every effort to ensure a meaningful, respectful and positive learning experience for everyone. If there are special considerations that you require to help you successfully fulfill the requirements of the course, please feel free to see one of the instructors, the Faculty of Information Student Service (<http://www.ischool.utoronto.ca/services/personal-advising>), and/or contact the Accessibility Student Office (<http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/index.htm>) as soon as possible so we can ensure you are able to successfully meet the learning objectives for this course.
9. **Writing Resources:** Please review the material you covered in the Cite it Right presentation and familiarize yourself with:

**How Not to Plagiarize site:** <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

**U of T's policy regarding citation:**

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/governance/policies/academicmisconduct.htm>

**Office of English Language and Writing Support:**

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/english.htm>

## Weekly Schedule

### Class 1: (January 12 / March 2) The mechanics of games

#### Suggested Readings

- Attia, P. (2016). The History of Board Games. <https://medium.com/swlh/the-full-history-of-board-games-5e622811ce89#.lk5lbzajw>

### Class 2: (January 19 / March 9) Game evaluation

NOTE: This class will be held at *Snakes and Lattes* (489 College Street at Markham, just west of Bathurst). The \$6 fee/student will be paid by the Faculty of Information.

#### Required Reading

- The Hotness List. (2017). *Board Game Geek*. <https://boardgamegeek.com/>
- Fullerton, T. (2015). Chapter 2: The Structure of Games. From *Game Design Workshop*. <http://www.sciencedirect.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/science/book/9780240809748>

#### Suggested Readings

- Anania, E. C., Keebler, J. R., Anglin, K. M., & Kring, J. P. (2016, September). Using the Cooperative Board Game Pandemic to Study Teamwork. In *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting* (Vol. 60, No. 1, pp. 1770-1774). SAGE Publications.
- Braverman, M., Etesami, O., & Mossel, E. (2008). Mafia: A theoretical study of players and coalitions in a partial information environment. *The Annals of Applied Probability*, 18(3), 825-846.
- Thompson, D. (2015). Teaching validity and soundness of arguments using the board game: The resistance. *PRIMUS*, 25(6), 542-552.

### **Class 3: (January 26 / March 16) Design thinking and board games**

#### **Required Reading**

- Looney, A. (2011) How I Design A Game. From *The Kobold guide to Board Game Design*. Ed. M. Selinker. Open Design. Kirkland, WA. pp 34-41.

### **Class 4: (February 2 / March 23) Prototype development, part 1**

#### **Required Reading**

- Daviau, R. (2011). Design Intuitively. From *The Kobold guide to Board Game Design*. Ed. M. Selinker. Open Design. Kirkland, WA. pp. 42-49.
- Rettig, M. (1994). Prototyping for Tiny Fingers. *Communications of the ACM*. April 1994. 37 (4).

### **Class 5: (February 9 / March 30) Prototype development, part 2**

#### **Required Reading**

- Barbara, J. (2014). Measuring User Experience in Board Games. *International Journal of Gaming and Computer-Mediated Simulations*. Volume 6, Issue 1, pp. 64 – 79
- Fullerton, T. (2015). Chapter 9: Playtesting. From *Game Design Workshop*. <http://www.sciencedirect.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/science/book/9780240809748>

#### **Suggested Readings**

- Barnum, C. (2011). *Usability Testing Essentials*. Chapter 6: Preparing for Usability Testing. Morgan Kaufman. New York, NY.
- Barnum, C. (2011). *Usability Testing Essentials*. Chapter 7: Conducting a Usability Test. Morgan Kaufman. New York, NY.

### **Class 6: (February 16 / April 6) Game concept presentations and discussion.**

## Resources

### Books

- Burke, B. (2014). *Gamify: How Gamification Motivates People to do Extraordinary Things*. Bibliomotion.
- Costikyan, G. (2015). *Uncertainty in Games: Playful Thinking*. The MIT Press. Cambridge, MA (online via U of T account).
- Salen, K. & Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. The MIT Press. Cambridge, MA.
- Schnell, J. (2003). *The Art of Game Design*. Krause Publications.
- Selinker, M. (ed.) (2011). *The Kobold guide to Board Game Design*. Open Design. Kirkland, WA.
- Tinsman, B. (2003) *The Game Inventor's Guidebook*. Krause Publications, 2003

### Articles

- Anania, E. C., Keebler, J. R., Anglin, K. M., & Kring, J. P. (2016, September). Using the Cooperative Board Game Pandemic to Study Teamwork. In *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting* (Vol. 60, No. 1, pp. 1770-1774). SAGE Publications.
- Attia, P. (2016). The History of Board Games. <https://medium.com/swlh/the-full-history-of-board-games-5e622811ce89#.lk5lhzajw>
- Barbara, J. (2014). Measuring User Experience in Board Games. *International Journal of Gaming and Computer-Mediated Simulations*. Volume 6, Issue 1, pp. 64 – 79
- Bateman, C. (2015). Implicit Game Aesthetics. *Games and Culture*. Sage Publications. 10 (4). pp 311-342.
- Begy, J. (2015). Board Games and the Construction of Cultural Memory. *Games and Culture*. Sage Publications.
- Blakely, G., Skirton, H., Cooper, S., Allum, P. & Nelmes, P. (2010). Use of educational games in the health professions: A mixed-methods study of educators' perspective in the UK. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 12(1), 27–32
- Braverman, M., Etesami, O., & Mossel, E. (2008). Mafia: A theoretical study of players and coalitions in a partial information environment. *The Annals of Applied Probability*, 18(3), 825-846
- Daviau, R. (2011). Design Intuitively. From *The Kobold guide to Board Game Design*. Ed. M. Selinker. Open Design. Kirkland, WA. pp. 42-49.
- Ernest, J. (2011). Strategy is Luck. From *The Kobold guide to Board Game Design*. Ed. M. Selinker. Open Design. Kirkland, WA. pp. 62-65.

Howell, D. (2011). Stealing the Fun. From *The Kobold guide to Board Game Design*. Ed. M. Selinker. Open Design. Kirkland, WA. pp. 84-89.

Lieberoth, A. (2015). Shallow gamification: Testing psychological effects of framing an activity as a game. *Games and Culture*, 10 (3), 229-248.

Looney, A. (2011) How I Design A Game. From *The Kobold guide to Board Game Design*. Ed. M. Selinker. Open Design. Kirkland, WA. pp 34-41.

Rettig, M. (1994). Prototyping for Tiny Fingers. *Communications of the ACM*. April 1994. 37 (4).

Thompson, D. (2015). Teaching validity and soundness of arguments using the board game: The resistance. *PRIMUS*, 25(6), 542-552.

### **Design Related**

Buxton, B. (2007) *Sketching User Experience*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, Waltham, MA, USA

Martin, B. & Hanington, B. (2012) Storyboards. *Universal Methods of Design*. Rockport Publishers. Beverley, MA. pp 170-171

Norman, D. A. (2004). *Emotional Design*. New York: Basic Books.

Norman, D. A. (1988). *The Psychology of Everyday Things*. Toronto: Currency Doubleday.

Snyder, C. (2003) *Paper Prototyping*. Morgan Kaufman Publishers. San Francisco, CA  
[<http://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?6356117>]

### **Online Resources**

Board Game Designer's Forum. <http://www.bgdf.com/>

Board Game Geek. <https://boardgamegeek.com/>

Game Artisan's of Canada. <http://gameartisans.ca/>

Reddit. *Game design*. <https://www.reddit.com/r/gamedesign/>

Toronto Area Board Game Designers. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tabdmembers/>