

# GDD 411: Game Lab 6 – Teams

---

## COURSE INFO

GDD 411  
Spring 2023  
Monday - Wednesday, 9:00 am - 10:15 am  
Tator Hall, Room 129  
<http://mywebspace.quinnipiac.edu/jbwarren/411>

## INSTRUCTOR INFO

Jonah Warren  
[jonah.warren@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:jonah.warren@quinnipiac.edu)  
203.582.7921  
CAS I 339

## OFFICE HOURS

My office hours are:  
Tuesday, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

All other times by appointment. I'm available via email during the week (Monday-Friday) and will try to respond to emails within 48 hours. Emails received on the weekend will be responded to by the beginning of the following week.

## DESCRIPTION

In this course, teams complete working versions of games begun in Game Lab V. Students manage the life cycle of the game development process for a specific platform including troubleshooting, playtesting, usability testing and final revisions. Teams prepare a report that summarizes plans for distribution, software standards, software testing and quality assurance. At the end of the semester, teams present a working prototype and provide documentation of their design and development process.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students in GDD 411 will:

- Learn about and practice creating a Minimum Viable Product;
- Learn about and practice the SCRUM development process;
- Explore the process of making games through practice: iterative design, playtesting, and analysis;
- Learn how to present game ideas clearly, critically evaluate games, and give clear feedback;
- Practice working in teams.

## PHILOSOPHY

Predicting the behavior of complex systems like games is difficult. The only way to know whether or not a game idea will make for a meaningful experience is by building it. We will focus on the process of iteration: we'll build prototypes, test them, fix problems, and build again. Mistakes and incorrect assumptions are to be embraced as a part of the process.

Being an active participant in the creation of games is essential to studying it as a medium. Not only do game labs give students the opportunity to explore the process themselves, but by sharing that exploration with the class, it gives your classmates the opportunity to be meaningful participants in your development

process as well.

#### STRUCTURE

The first two weeks of the semester will consist of an individual assignment that will be an opportunity for students to refine an existing game to make it portfolio-ready. After this, the class will turn into a more traditional design lab, where class time will be dedicated to one large project, working in teams. These larger projects will consist of presentations, design documents, playtesting, critique, and reflection.

#### TEAMS

Much of your work will be team-based. It is crucial to be respectful of your teammates, their perspectives, and obligations. Part of your grade is how you handle yourself as a teammate. Each team will identify a lead. It is the team lead's responsibility to ensure the team is communicating properly and resolve any disputes. Should a situation prove impossible to resolve, the team lead should contact the professor, who will serve as mediator. Do not expect the professor to resolve disputes that occur outside the classroom. It is recommended for teams to write up a simple agreement of expectations before the start of a project.

#### WEBSITES

Our class website is:  
<http://mywebspace.quinnipiac.edu/jbwarren/411>

A shortcut to the site is: <http://bit.ly/gdd-411>. Students must post assignments to their website on mywebspace. Please create a folder for the class named 411.

#### SOFTWARE

For the most part, we will be using Unity to create games. If you'd like to use Unreal or some other engine, that should be fine, but please let me know. You can find Unity here: <http://unity3d.com/unity/download>. You may also complete coursework working in the lab. Each workstation in the GDD Lab has all the software needed to complete required assignments.

#### GDD STORAGE

GDD is a program in which you will be generating a great deal of digital content. Safe storage of this material is essential to your success in the GDD program. We recommend using One Drive, accessible through your Outlook email account, but it is essential that you also have your own external drive in which you keep current and backup files for all of your work. Do not leave materials on the hard drives of the machines in the lab as these machines can crash or have the drives wiped unpredictably. As professionals in this field we expect you to understand that lost or damaged files are not an excuse for missing or late work. Backup your work and archive it regularly.

#### STUDENT WORK

GDD keeps an archive of student work which may be displayed on the program website and used to publicize and promote our students and our program. At the end of each semester, you are responsible for turning in your completed projects with all associated code and media, to your professor. For your final project, you should also turn in a video of gameplay. Make sure all media is accurately credited. You should also have a website that GDD will link to from the student page of the GDD site that provides links to your bio and completed projects.

#### LAB RULES

No eating in the lab. No cellphone use during class time. No working on projects, browsing the web or watching YouTube while other students are making presentations or during class discussions. This is extremely disrespectful towards

your classmates and will negatively impact your grade.

#### SCHEDULE

WEEK 1	Intros, Course Structure
WEEK 2	Polish Assignment
WEEK 3	Polish Assignment
WEEK 4	Polish Assignment
WEEK 5	Main Project: Research + Game Idea Presentations
WEEK 6	Main Project: Game Design Document + Prototype Development
WEEK 7	Main Project: Playtest and Iterate
WEEK 8	Main Project: Playtest and Iterate
WEEK 9	Main Project: Playtest and Iterate
WEEK 10	Main Project: Midterm Presentation
WEEK 11	Main Project: Playtest and Iterate
WEEK 12	Main Project: Playtest and Iterate
WEEK 13	Main Project: Final Games
WEEK 14	Main Project: Marketing
FINAL	Main Project: Final Presentations

#### FINAL

We will meet during the scheduled exam period for final project presentations. Attendance is required, so make your travel plans accordingly.

#### GRADE BREAKDOWN

Your total grade will be calculated as follows:

200	Revise and Polish Assignment
300	Project: Weekly Grades (10 × 30pts each)
100	Playtest Feedback
50	Project: Midterm
200	Project: Final
50	Project: Publishing Materials
100	Professionalism

If you do not show up for your final presentation without notifying me prior, you will fail the final project. This often means failing the class.

If there is a change in this breakdown during the course of the semester, I will notify the class and repost an updated syllabus.

#### GRADING RUBRICS

Each grade you get will be broken down into categories. Each of those categories will be evaluated using the following metrics: Exceeds Expectations (100%), Meets Expectations (85%), Approaches Expectations (65%), Does Not Meet Expectations (40%), or Not Attempted (0%). The rubric for each assignment can be found on Blackboard. Here's an example rubric for assignment grades.

	Does Not Meet Expectations (40%)	Approaches Expectations (65%)	Meets Expectations (85%)	Exceeds Expectations (100%)
Creativity (20%)	Feels like a copy of an existing game.	Close to an existing game. Potentially entails small alterations that aren't meaningfully significant.	Combining existing ideas effectively. Feels like its own experience.	Unique and different. Combining ideas in new and interesting ways, resulting in unanticipated opportunities.

Implementation (10%)	There are game breaking bugs.	Although playable, there are bugs and/or implementation issues that significantly interfere with the experience.	No major bugs. Functions as intended.	A bug-free, seamless experience. Uncommon/incorrect user actions are handled gracefully. Well-written, flexible code.
Experience (30%)	A repetitive, tedious, or unintentionally confusing experience.	Has moments which keep the player's attention, but fails to do so for an extended period of time. Possible usability, level design, feedback, and/or progression issues.	A nicely designed, engaging experience. The player is incentivized to continue playing. Good in-game player feedback.	Provides a very engaging experience through thoughtful, well-designed gameplay and feedback. Keeps the player's attention by progressively providing increasingly interesting challenges and/or choices.
Usability (10%)	There is little to no indication of what to do or how to do it.	Challenging to navigate. Goals and rules could be more clearly articulated. Poorly designed interfaces.	Intuitive interfaces. Clear goals and instructions. Easy to pick up and play.	All user interface is well-designed and intuitive. Rules are impeccably explained through thoughtful gameplay or interactive tutorials.
Aesthetics (20%)	Crudely rendered, minimal artwork with many missing screens/scenes.	Inconsistent artwork that feels unfinished in places. Potentially has stylistic inconsistencies, perspective issues, blurry images, and/or illegible text.	Clearly rendered, aesthetically pleasing artwork with a consistent style and color palette. Each game screen is considered. Well-balanced, effective sound.	Beautiful, detail-oriented artwork. Stylistically consistent, meaningful sound and music. Thoughtful font choices and layout.
Professionalism (10%)	Hastily-made, sloppy work.	Looking for more attention and care. Inconsistent and unprofessional.	Good attention to detail. No cut off UI, blurry text, or sloppy, un-commented code.	Exceptional attention to detail. All screens are well-designed, code is well-written and commented, and its design consistent and considered.

Here is an example grade, worth 200pts:

Creativity (20%) × Meets Expectations (85%) × 200 = 34pts  
 Implementation (10%) × Approaches Expectations (65%) × 200 = 13pts  
 Experience (30%) × Meets Expectations (85%) × 200 = 51pts  
 Usability (10%) × Approaches Expectations (65%) × 200 = 13pts  
 Aesthetics (20%) × Meets Expectations (85%) × 200 = 34pts  
 Professionalism (10%) × Exceeds Expectations (100%) × 200 = 20pts

-----  
165pts (82.5%)

**\*Project Grades:**

Your main project grade will be made up of shared grades (~50%) and individual grades (~50%). The exact breakdown will be determined when the project begins (and how many weeks we have). Although you will be contributing in different ways (e.g., art, programming, UI), it is essential that all teammates document

their work on a weekly basis on Trello (or some other project management software). Documentation should entail posting artwork, screenshots, code, descriptions, and builds. I use this documentation to determine your weekly grades, so if nothing is posted, you will receive a zero. You will be graded on the quantity and quality of your work. There should be five hours of work documented each week.

**\*\*Professionalism Grades:**

Your professionalism grade will use the Quinnipiac Grading Scale below and be based on your conduct in class, attendance, punctuality, participation, general engagement, respect for the learning environment and respect for your classmates and your teammates. If do not contribute, watch YouTube videos during critique, or are regularly disrespectful of your teammates do not expect a passing grade. You will lose two points from this grade if you have your phone out during class discussion.

**CHECKING GRADES**

It is your responsibility to keep track of your grades throughout the semester. Grades will be posted on Blackboard and may be checked at any time. If you are not doing as well as you would like to be, you can meet with me to discuss extra credit projects BEFORE the semester ends. If you feel that I have made a mistake recording a grade or failed to enter a grade that you earned correctly, please email me so that I can correct it. Do not contact me just because you want a higher grade on a graded assignment.

**GRADING SCALE**

Your final letter grade is based on the Quinnipiac Grading Scale as follows:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89	B- 80-82	C 73-76	D 60-69
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C+ 77-79	C- 70-72	F 0-59

NOTE: A grade of C- or better is required in all game design and development courses and prerequisites. Students with a GPA of less than 2.0 will be put on probation. After two semesters on probation, students will be advised to change majors.

**PLAGIARISM**

All the work you do for class must be your own unless you cite it. Clearly provide links to any code, art, music, or sound you use to complete assignments. This is especially important regarding the use of tutorials and using other people's code. If you use a tutorial from the web that includes code, I expect you to be able to explain how each line of code works, notify me that you are using a tutorial, and provide a link to that tutorial. If you fail to cite your sources, it will be assumed that you are trying to pass off the work as your own and it will be considered plagiarism. This will result in a zero on the assignment, notifying the Academic Integrity Board and a permanent record in your file. See below for more information about Quinnipiac's Academic Integrity policy.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

At Quinnipiac, our community has chosen integrity as one of its guiding principles. Our academic integrity policy is based on the five fundamental values outlined by the Center for Academic Integrity: honesty, trust, responsibility, fairness and respect. "Double Dipping" (Multiple Uses of the Same Work) or presenting the same or substantially the same written work (or portion thereof) as part of the course requirement for more than one project or course, requires the express prior written permission of the instructor(s) involved. Any violation

will be dealt with according to the Integrity policy, which can be found at:

<https://myq.quinnipiac.edu/Academics/Academic%20Integrity/Pages/default.aspx>

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

The Quinnipiac University Student Handbook is intended to serve as a source of information on the many services, activities and policies of Quinnipiac. The handbook can be found at:

<http://www.quinnipiac.edu/student-experience/health-and-safety/student-handbook/>

**VPA ABSENCE POLICY**

You are expected to be in class ready to work at the beginning of the scheduled class time. **PROMPT ARRIVAL TO CLASS IS EXPECTED.** Three late arrivals to class will equal one absence. **PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU HAVE 6 OR MORE ABSENCES YOU MAY BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COURSE. 7 ABSENCES DURING THE SEMESTER WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE.** Attendance for the last class meeting scheduled during Finals Week is required. In the case of extenuating circumstances, such as an ongoing illness or the death of a loved one, the professor should be consulted as soon as possible, and documentation from the Student Affairs office may be required. In such circumstances the faculty and student can negotiate the possibility of granting an "Incomplete." In the rare cases where a student is allowed to take an "Incomplete" as the result of extenuating circumstances, the student must follow the guidelines and timelines stipulated in the University catalog.

**LATE WORK POLICY**

The assignments for this class must be turned in complete and on-time. If you have a medical or family emergency which will prevent you from getting your work done, it is your obligation to notify the professor of this fact and provide him/her with the appropriate documentation **BEFORE** the due date of the assignment. If your work is not turned in on time and you have not provided an excuse prior to the due date, do **NOT** email the professor with justifications. You will simply not receive credit for the assignment.

**INCLUSION STATEMENT**

GDD is committed to maintaining an environment in which all members are treated equitably, feel fairly represented, and are comfortable discussing topics, particularly controversial ones, with civility and open-mindedness. We are working to build a community of diverse individuals who can celebrate our differences while building on what we have in common. Game design is a creative practice, so we encourage wide-ranging explorations of what is possible while respecting practices that work toward the greater good. We ask all members of the community to think about the work they are producing and ask themselves if they are consciously or unconsciously reproducing or reinforcing stereotypes, bias, or other elements that reinforce systemic racism, sexism, bigotry or other inequalities. Games can change the world; let's make sure we are changing it in a positive way.

**POLICY ON DISABILITIES**

Quinnipiac University is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me.

If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also want to meet with the Office of Student Accessibility, to begin this conversation or to request reasonable accommodations. Quinnipiac University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Please contact the Office of Student Accessibility by emailing [access@qu.edu](mailto:access@qu.edu), or by calling (203) 582 – 7600. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Office of Student Accessibility, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

#### LEARNING COMMONS

The Learning Commons is a place for students to go when they want to achieve a level of performance they can't reach on their own. In a setting of practice and growth, student resources are provided through Peer Educator programs, the Office of Student Accessibility, and Academic Development & Outreach professional staff. The Learning Commons can be found at the Mount Carmel Campus in the North wing of the Arnold Bernhard Library; and at the North Haven Campus on the third floor of the Law School (SLE-340). Students are encouraged to visit The Learning Commons for support with class content, to improve study skills, to consult on academic success strategies, and for general developmental advising needs.

Phone: 203-582-8628

Email: [LearningCommons@Quinnipiac.edu](mailto:LearningCommons@Quinnipiac.edu)

Website: <https://www.qu.edu/student-resources/academic-support.html>