Syllabus: GDD 101 Introduction to Game Design Fall 2026
Class meets M/W 9:30 – 10:45 SITE 150
Course website: http://mywebspace.quinnipiac.edu/egbertozzi/101
PROFESSOR: Elena Bertozzi Ph.D. (elena.bertozzi@qu.edu) OFFICE HOURS
M/W 11-12 CAS 1 322
I am 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 answered by the beginning of the following week.

DESCRIPTION

GDD 101. Introduction to Game Design 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the practice of game design (board, card, dice, physical and video games), theories of game design and play, the study of the social effects of games, games for teaching and learning, and production practices in the games industry. Students learn critical analysis of games and the process of design documentation.

OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will learn:

- What play is, how it differs from everyday life, and required elements for games
- How to critically analyze games and game components verbally and in writing
- The design process for new games: brainstorming, prototyping, design documentation, testing
- How to work with others: playing, testing, and improving each other's games.

STRUCTURE

One class meeting a week (Mondays) will be discussion of the concepts and issues raised by the readings, discussions and brainstorming posts. The other class meeting (Wednesdays) will be a student-led session critically analyzing a game. For the Wednesday sessions, each student will select a week to present a game that they feel to be especially interesting and well made. All students will play the game, preferably together for ca. 40 minutes. Then the presenting student will lead a critical analysis and discussion of the game play experience. After each game play session, students will brainstorm ideas for new games.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Points
Pop Quizzes	25 pts. x 3 = 75 pts.
In-Class Game Play Demo	75 pts.
Dice/Card Game Assignment	150 pts.
Critical Analysis of a Game	150 pts.
Notebook	75 pts.
Final Game Miro	75 pts.
Final Game Prototype	125 pts.
Final Game Design Document	100 pts.

Final Game Playtesting	125 pts.
Class participation	50 pts.

SCHEDULE: 15 Weeks see dates in Canvas

WEEK 1: Intros, course logistics and expectations, overview of the course.

Topic: What is Play? What is a Game?

Read before class: Huizinga summary (https://www.gamelevellearn.com/learn)

WEEK 2: Play constraints that often define play (time, space, rules, intentions)

Reading: Game definitions (https://learn.canvas.net/courses/3/pages/level-1-dot-2-games-defined?module_item_id=44517)

Start thinking about Dice/Card assignment

WEEK 3: Rules

Reading: Rule Book Introduction

Due: Dice/Card game Miro

WEEK 4

Reading: Burger on Randomness

Due: Start on Game Miro

WEEK 5

Work on game due on Monday, present justification for random choices

WEEK 6

Due In class we will play all the Dice games.

WEEK 7

Watch: Michael for game loops:

In class : Paper organization exercise

WEEK 8

Due: Paper

Bring your paper to class in hard copy.

WEEK 9

Watch: Extra Credits on Playtesting

WEEK 10,

Due: Start Miro Board for your final game

Reading: Watching for next week: Prototyping

WEEK 11

Due: Miro board for final game due on Friday.

Topic: Prototyping and Iterative Testing

WEEK 12

Topic: Game Narratives, Art, and Audio

Discussion topics: Excellent examples of game audio and voice acting

Week 13

Due: Playable prototypes will be tested in class. Prepare a playtest questionnaire in advance.

Week 14

Due: In-class Playtesting of Final Game Prototypes and collection of playtesting data.

Game Presentation:

Week 15,

Final Exam day: Due: Design Doc and Playtesting summary presentations

SOFTWARE/ HARDWARE

You will turn your coursework in Canvas before the due date/time. For the game presentations: if you are presenting a digital game, you need to make sure that everyone in the class is able to access and play the game. If you are presenting an analog game, you need to make sure that you have all the needed equipment, have asked the professor to reserve any needed fields or gyms, and that there are ways for students not willing or able to do specific physical activities to participate.

STUDENT WORK

You will be creating a GDD Portfolio that collects and displays your best work in the program. If you are especially proud of any assignments you created for this class, upload pdfs to your mywebspace folder so you can link them to your Portfolio.

CLASS 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 extremely disrespectful towards your classmates and will negatively impact your grade. If you persist in using non-class media during class time, you will be asked to leave the room.

GRADING SCALE

All assignments will be graded using 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 (80%), Approaches Expectations (60%), Does Not Meet Expectations (40%), or Not Attempted (0%). The rubric for each

assignment can be found on Canvas. 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 C- or better is required in all departmental prerequisites.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY Our Academic Integrity Policy is based on the five fundamental values outlined by the Center for Academic Integrity: honesty, trust, responsibility, fairness and respect. Quinnipiac expects all members of our community, students, faculty and staff to uphold these five standards and to contribute to our larger culture of integrity. Go to go.qu.edu/policies to view the Academic Integrity Policy. Please also carefully read the QU Policy on the use of AI which is linked on Canvas.

GDD INCLUSIVITY AND EQUITY POLICY

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 difference 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 propagate systemic racism, sexism, bigotry or other inequalities. Games can change the world; let's make sure we are changing it in a positive way.

VPA LATE WORK POLICY

To be eligible for full credit on course assignments, coursework 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 them with the appropriate documentation BEFORE the due date of the assignment. You should turn in at least some portion of the work by the due date. If you wish to improve your grade on an assignment, you can turn in a revision of it before the final exam day for partial credit. If your work is not turned in on time and you have not provided an excuse prior to the due date you will not receive credit for the assignment.

VPA ATTENDANCE 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. There is no distinction between "excused" or "unexcused" absences - missed course work, content and class participation are an issue in any absence and can negatively impact the rest of the class members. 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.

POLICY ON DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who wish to request reasonable accommodations should contact the Office of Student Accessibility in Arnold Bernhard Library north wing at (203) 582-7600 or North Haven at SLE 340 (203)-582-7600 (access@quinnnipiac.edu). Quinnipiac University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

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/

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. 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

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