

COURSE: **GDD 495 Senior Project & Seminar**
Spring 2024
Class meets MW 10:30am – 11:45 am Tator Hall 129
Course website: <http://mywebspace.quinnipiac.edu/egbertozzi/495>

INSTRUCTOR: Elena Bertozzi, Ph.D. (elena.bertozzi@qu.edu)

OFFICE HOURS: Monday 1-2:20pm and by appointment.

DESCRIPTION **GDD 495 Senior Project & Seminar** **3 Credits**

This course is the senior capstone in the major. Students reflect on how their academic experience and extracurricular activities during their undergraduate years have shaped their personal goals and aspirations. Students refine and polish their portfolio, produce a resume and other professional materials and prepare for their careers after graduation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students in this course will:

- Produce, refine, and polish their professional portfolio of work, CV, and business cards
- Conduct a job search to identify available positions for which they are qualified and apply for them
- Practice interviewing both as an applicant and as an employer
- Reflect on how their experience at QU has shaped their goals and prepared them to achieve them
- Build a network of mentors, mentees, and professional contacts leveraging all available media.
- Be responsible for organizing and running the QU booth at PAX East

STRUCTURE

The course is designed to prepare you to launch your career after graduation. During the first third of the class, you will prepare your portfolio, CV, and business cards and assemble a list of job openings. Then the class will review and critique each other's materials and go through the process of preparing and submitting applications. The final third of the class will focus on building networks and mock interviews. We will also be going on field trips to potential employers.

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 is extremely disrespectful towards your classmates and will negatively impact your grade. If you are participating in the class via Zoom, you should be present and engaged for the duration of the class.

ASSIGNMENTS & WEIGHTS (detailed descriptions in appendix and on Blackboard)

- Weekly Blog Posts (10 pts. each x 10 = 100 pts.)
- Job list with cover letters & submission status (200 pts.)
- Self-representation graphic, resume, business card, cover letter (150 pts.)
- Portfolio (150 pts.)
- Mentorship/Network building (150 pts.)
- Mock Interview Process (150 pts.)
- Class citizenship & interaction with guest speakers (100 pts.)

SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC	Deliverables
week 1	Work on Portfolio	Identify desired guest speakers
week 2	Self Rep & Portfolio	Blog post #1, Self Rep.
week 3	Work on CV, Job list	Blog post #2, Resume
week 4	Work on Job List	Blog post #3, Portfolio
week 5	Cover letter template	Blog post #4, Business card
week 6	Social Media/ Mentorship	Blog post #5, Job List Update
week 7 (PAX)	Guest Lecture #1 – integrate critiques	Blog post #6, Mentorship web update
week 8 (GDC)	Guest Lecture #2 – integrate critiques	Blog post #7, Job list update
week 9	Guest Lecture #3 – integrate critiques	Blog post #8
week 10	Guest Lecture #4 – integrate critiques	Blog post #9, Mentorship web update
week 11	Guest Lecture #5 – integrate critiques	Blog post #10
week 12	Mock Interviews	Mock Interview Feedback 1
week 13	Mock Interviews	Mock Interview Feedback 2
week 14		Mentorship Web, Job List
Finals	Final Exam	Present to GDD Faculty & Guests

GRADING RUBRICS

Each assignment will be graded using the following categories:

Exceeds Expectations (100%)

Meets Expectations (80%)

Does Not Meet Expectations (40%)

Not Attempted (0%).

The rubric for each assignment can be found on Blackboard

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. Missed or failed assignments can be re-submitted at any time up to the date of the final exam. 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.

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, 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

Appendix

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Self-Representation & Business Card and One-page Resume (150 pts.)

Create a graphic element that represents you that you can use to link your web portfolio, resume, and business card so that you have a coherent design that links all your job-seeking materials. See examples on the class website. Integrate this design into a business card with your name and contact info.

Produce a one-page resume that summarizes your skills, experience, education, and best work. This should be focused on demonstrating that you have the requirements for the jobs you seek. If you are applying for more than one type of job, you may need more than one resume. The design of the CV should relate to your portfolio and your card. See an example here:

<https://www.stevenbischoff.com/resume.html>.

Portfolio published to the web (150 pts.)

Your portfolio should demonstrate your skills and achievements in more detail. It should look polished and professional and work equally well on mobile and PC widths. You can code your own or use a service such as Squarespace or Word Press. The portfolio should include only your very best work and specifically demonstrate that you have the requirements for the positions that you are applying for. You will need this portfolio throughout your professional career so you should consider purchasing a domain name and hosting. Examples are linked from games.qu.edu

Job List with Cover Letters and Submission Status (100 pts.)

Create a shared folder on OneDrive that has a spreadsheet where you will list a minimum of 20 jobs that you will apply to over the course of the semester. If the application requires a cover letter, you should have that letter in the folder. Update the spreadsheet as you apply to jobs, hear back from them (or not), and interview. A sample spreadsheet is linked from the website and available on Blackboard.

Mentorship / Networking Web (150 pts.)

In your shared OneDrive folder, create a spreadsheet to document your Networking Web. The spreadsheet should include the following:

- Names of at least 2 people you would like to hear from as Guest Speakers
- Names of at least 2 GDD alumni you will contact and ask to engage with you as mentors
- Names of at least 2 GDD freshmen/sophomores you will reach out to be your mentees
- Number of LinkedIn contacts you have at the start of the semester. Challenge yourself to multiply this number by at least 3 by the end of the semester
- Reach out over LinkedIn to HR personnel at the companies where you are applying
- Document your connections with industry professionals on other social media: Twitch, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.

In the spreadsheet, you should document your interactions with all these people and how you plan to keep expanding your network.

Blog Posts (200 pts.)

The goal of this assignment is to familiarize you with common interview questions and practice formulating thoughtful responses.

1. Why do you want to be a _____?

Discuss specific experiences you had working on games that helped you understand why/how you would be good at this role.

Identify details of games you play that inspired you to want this role.

Discuss how experiences/ readings/ game projects you worked on over the last 4 years provided you with the skills to enable you to do it.

2. Tell me about yourself.

In the context of the role you trying to get at a company (look carefully at the desired skills) describe yourself in a way that demonstrates you are the kind of person they are looking for.

What kinds of things (games, books, movies, etc) interested you and how did they point you toward your desired career?

Which activities did you engage in that prepared you? (leadership/membership in clubs or teams, writing/drawing/coming up with ideas for games, hackathons/game jams, etc.)

3. What are your strengths?

This question is really asking what you bring to their organization. Look carefully at the job description and focus on the areas where you really shine. Provide specific examples – i.e. if they are seeking a project lead... “I am proud of my leadership skills. I have been the team lead on 3 game projects which have produced games we are really proud of. I also lead a guild of 45 people on WOW that....”

4. What are your weaknesses?

Be honest, but don't overshare. Frame two weaknesses in the context of what you are doing to improve in these areas. For example: “Public speaking is something I have been working on during my academic career. I am still nervous about standing in front of a group and presenting my work, but I've gotten a lot better at it and have a strategy for practicing feeling more confident.

5. What are you passionate about/ what motivates you?

Talk about hobbies and passions – especially good idea to tie them to your skills and how they make you

more interesting... "I have always been fascinated by spiders. I took some classes in college that helped me understand how spiders impact their environments and have included them in my games." "I collect action figures and have them cataloged by year and type. This attention to detail translates well to project management"

6. Describe a situation where you made a mistake on a project and how you dealt with it. Frame this as a growth opportunity and what you learned that makes you smarter.

7. Describe a situation where you disagreed with a decision that was made on a team project and how you dealt with it.

This is where an employer wants to understand how you deal with conflict. We have all been on teams where people disagreed or could not figure out how to work together. Even if a particular project did not work out well due to conflict, you could discuss how that impacted future projects. For example: "Sophomore year I worked in a group with 3 people. Halfway through, one member of the team felt that he was being overworked and stopped participating. We held several meetings to try to understand his concerns and then we reassigned the workload so that he didn't feel that others weren't doing their share. I learned that it's really important to make tasks and expectations clear from the start. Now when I work on a project, we make a Gant chart that shows everyone what the workload is and how it will be shared."

8. How do you deal with time pressure, deadlines, and stressful situations?

Discuss strategies that demonstrate your skills in planning, forecasting, and preparing for unexpected occurrences. You can tie this into the question about how you prefer to be managed. Employers want to hire people they can count on to show up on time and complete tasks by deadline. However, given the pandemic, there is a new emphasis on self-care so it's fine to talk about being anxious and how you are able to both manage your time and manage the expectations you are supposed to meet.

9. How do you like to be managed?

Do you prefer to have as little oversight as possible or a very structured list of expectations? Again, use examples of projects you have worked on and how you discovered the way you can work most productively. Use this question to demonstrate your knowledge of the places you are applying to work. "I know that as a small indie game developer, your company has small agile teams and this is an environment that I find suits my way of working..."

10. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Here you could talk about what you would like to learn from the role that you are applying for and how you would like to work your way up in the organization. You don't want to suggest that this role is just a stepping stone for you, but you want to show that you plan to improve your skills and have a plan for your future.

Mock Interview Process (150 pts.)

Learning how to interview successfully is a challenge. The more you practice, the better you get at it. It is also very helpful to practice interviewing from the employer perspective. For this assignment, you will conduct two mock interviews as an employer and two as an applicant.

As Employer: Research the company you represent, pick a role at that company and a position that you need filled. For example, you could be a Project Lead at the SIMs who needs to hire an Asst. Producer, or a Programming Lead at an Indie game company that is hiring a Junior Programmer.

Prepare interview questions

Come up with an appropriate skills test (programming challenge, art challenge, etc.)

Conduct interview

Write up summary and assessment of candidate

As Applicant:

Research the company and person who will be interviewing you.

Conduct interview

Write up self-assessment of performance and where you need to improve.

Deliverables: turn in 2 self-assessments and 2 candidate assessments within one week of the in-class interviews.

Citizenship and Interaction with Guest Speakers (100 pts.)

This class is a seminar and can only be successful if you participate. Please provide thoughtful critiques of your colleagues' materials and engage with the speakers that we bring in to address the class. You should plan to ask at least two questions of each speaker.