EDST210/IDEA209
Educational Gaming Lab: Project-Based, Gameful Pedagogy Approaches – FALL 2024

Class: Mondays, 7:10-10:00 pm
Weekly Game Session: Every Monday, 4:30-6:30 pm |Fisk 208
(the final class meeting, on Monday 12/02, will be held in RLL Common Room)

Instructor: **Camilla Zamboni** czamboni@wesleyan.edu
Special consultant: **Alessia Caviglia** acaviglia@wesleyan.edu
Course Assistants: **Jasper Chattra, Maze Labowitz, Shannon Lin**

Course description

In the past two decades, crowdfunding and renewed interest in games (board games, role-playing games, digital games, and instructional games) have created an increased and diverse gaming production, which has become the subject of several studies, articles, and projects related to all areas of education, from hard sciences to language learning and the arts. In an effort to explore how a game-informed pedagogy can work in various types of courses and to highlight tabletop (*non digital*) gaming approaches that have worked inside and outside the classroom, this course will explore the basics of Game-Based Learning (GBL) and Game Design. "Educational Gaming Lab" is designed as a project-based gaming laboratory that will focus on why and how tabletop games can be effective tools for pedagogy: examples will include board games, tabletop role-playing games, and escape games. Participants will discuss the application of gaming principles to various subjects and types of classrooms, and then create a final project: a learning game. Students may adapt an existing game for a specific learning outcome or create a brand new game. The course offers students the opportunity to reflect on innovative and radical pedagogy, and to develop critical knowledge within the rising and innovative field of Game-Based Learning. The course will be conducted in English, and games will be created in English (or in the relevant target language, if the game is for language learning).

Course objectives

Students will:
- develop the vocabulary and critical understanding to describe and analyze games and their components, as well as the influence and application of games to different educational settings;
- create a game (or adapt an existing one) from concept to playable prototype;
- expand their concept of pedagogy to include radical and unconventional approaches;
- engage in meaningful discussion about gaming and education;
- engage in reflective practice.

Required Texts|Materials
- **All activities and materials provided by the instructor** online on the class Moodle website**.**
- **All games provided by the instructor** at the CES building or in class - check out our game library!

Criteria for assessment

Experience: (in-class participation)	25%
Side Quests (all turn-in assignments)	15%
Bard Songs (in-class presentations of readings)	10%
Community Chat (weekly participation in our Discord server)	10%
Final Boss and Minions (final project and earlier drafts)	40%

Extra credit for experience: Weekly Game sessions (at least three before Week 12)

Grading scale

The course can be graded with a letter grade or CR/U (**recommended**).

If the student opts for a letter grade, the observed scale will be as follows:

100-98 A+	89-87 B+	79-77 C+	69-67 D+	Below 50 F
97-94 A	86-84 B	76-74 C	66-64 D	
93-90 A-	83-80 B-	73-70 C-	63-60 D-	

Class Meetings + Weekly Game sessions

- **Class** meets once weekly, on Mondays, from 7:10 to 10 pm at Fisk Hall 208.
- **Weekly Game sessions** will be held at Fisk 208 every Monday from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.

Experience (Attendance)

If you want experience points, you have to come to class. EDST210 relies on collaboration, discussion, and feedback. Therefore, attendance and participation in class are necessary, and students will lose points if they accumulate absences. All absences are considered unexcused unless they fall within these categories:

- religious observance (please email ahead of time)
- university-sponsored athletic or academic activity (with a note from the coach or professor)
- serious accident or illness / Covid positive test
- emergency in the immediate family

Each student may accumulate **ONE** absence over the course of the semester with no effect on their grade. Repeated tardiness will count toward an absence (i.e., four late arrivals of about ten minutes will equal one absence).

If students accumulate **two** absences before the semester break, an Unsatisfactory Progress Report will be filed with the Dean. If students accumulate more than four absences, they will be invited to withdraw from the course. In the event of an absence, students are responsible for contacting the instructor or their classmates as soon as possible, and for finding out about the topics covered in class as well as the assigned homework.

Gathering Experience and Leveling Up (In-class participation)

Nobody wants to stay a noob forever. The good thing is that you can level up just by coming to class and actively participating in discussion.

Outstanding participation involves:

- Being on time and using the restroom before the class starts or after it ends;
- Voluntarily and actively engaging in the activities proposed including collaboration with other students;
- Taking notes and focusing on class activities;
- Not using cell phones, laptops or other distracting devices in class, unless required by the class activities;

Bard Songs (In-class playful presentations of readings)

Why follow when you can lead – and dance like a Bard? At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up to present one or more of the assigned readings for a specific Experience Level – and you will be free to introduce the reading in any way you find most playful and effective. On the Friday before the class, you will email Professor Zamboni with your chosen reading. You will work in a group of two or three, following these instructions. More information on how to sign up will be given on the first day of class.

Side quests (Assignments)

In order to gain experience, one must explore. For almost each class, there will be Side Quests to do, in the form of assignments to complete at home. It will be emailed to you after class, it will be posted on the Moodle calendar, and it will consist of creative exercises (creating or adapting elements of games), activities created by the instructor, or readings to be discussed – sometimes all of this.

Before each class, it is important to:
- **Complete all assigned readings** on Moodle**.**
- **Review the material** (notes) from the previous class.
- **Complete assignments** and, if needed, be ready to turn them in.

Community Chat (Discord server)

Throughout the class, as you interact with games critically, you will share ideas online, on the **Community Chat** (our Discord discussions). You will post on the Server chat each week (unless specified), commenting on assigned readings or proposing meaningful questions on the assigned material, the games played in class, or your game development process. Either proposing a new topic of conversation or replying to one will count as participation on the Server chat. **You must post on Discord at least once by Sunday at 11:59pm.**

Additionally, I recommend that you note down ideas, thoughts, and critiques in a **Game Journal**. The Game Journal can be digital or analog (paper-based) and can take various forms: a series of blog posts, creative reflections, visual journaling, post it notes, and so on. It will serve as a guide for you as you develop your game idea. **The Game Journal is optional, but I truly recommend that you keep track of your ideas.**

Final Boss + Minions

The Final Boss (project) for the class will be either the adaptation of an existing game for a specific discipline or learning outcome, or the creation of a new game. Throughout the class, you will learn about gaming principles and different kinds of tabletop games (board games, role-playing games, and escape games among others). You will then choose a format for your project and will develop it with a group over several weeks, with constant editing, feedback, and playtesting. At the end of the semester, with your group you will present your projects in class. Finally, in order to defeat / tackle / befriend / seduce (you choose your approach!) the Final Boss, you will upload your project to the class website, where it will be freely available for a larger community of learners and instructors.

The Final Boss minions (elements) are:
- a 1500-words (or 6 pages double-spaced) critical introduction for your final game project (submitted individually to the instructor)
- the rules and materials of your final game project (posted on the website)
- a slide presentation in which you explain how to play your final game project (also posted on the website)

More detailed instructions about the Final Boss + Minions will be distributed in class during Week 7.

Moodle

You are expected to check our Moodle website to learn about the homework assigned for the next class. Course documents, exercises, useful links, course policies, announcements and more will be posted on Moodle.

Student Hours

Need help along your quest this semester? It is a great idea to make an appointment and discuss questions and doubts from the class, or get help in planning your final game projects. Prof. Zamboni's hours are by appointment (just email or DM on Discord), Alessia's hours are every Monday 2-4 pm at RLL 210 or by appointment.

Course Assistants

Our Course Assistants for this semester will be **Jasper Chattra** (jchattra@wesleyan.edu), **Maze Labowitz** (mlabowitz@wesleyan.edu), and **Shannon Lin** (slin01@wesleyan.edu) – they will help run the games in class, and might be at the weekly Game sessions. Please feel free to reach out to them on Discord or via email if you need extra help!

Mandatory extra meetings

- **Analog DevCafé - Date/time to be determined through appointments**
  Meetings organized by Alessia and dedicated to discussing and receiving feedback on your game projects. Each meeting will have a particular focus (e.g. refining the target audience and learning goal, presenting the game to educators, expanding the game) and provide insights to improve and further develop your educational games. Each group will schedule at least one meeting (and ideally more) with Alessia between October and November, coordinating what to work on in advance.
- **Playtest workshop: how to playtest your educational game - December 3, 5:30-7:30pm**
  Workshop aimed at reassessing your game projects after in-class playtests and final presentations. The workshop will focus on debriefing the feedback received in class and adding final touches and edits before submitting the final project.

Recommended extra-curricular activities

- **Weekly Game sessions** will be every Monday from 4:30 to 6:30 pm **| at Fisk 208.** These sessions can count as extra-credit for the class: come at least three times and you will be able to help your Participation evaluation. Optional but recommended!
- **The Board Game Club** is a fantastic resource on campus! You can join the BG club and play lots of board games on Friday and Saturday nights at 300 High Street. Optional but recommended! https://wesleyan.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/boardgames
- **Other talks in the College of Education Studies or the College of Design and Engineering Studies:** attending one (or more) of the talks is a wonderful opportunity to further explore relevant issues in Education Studies and listen to an expert in the field. Participation is optional but strongly encouraged. **The dates and times of the talks will be announced in class.**
- Other events might be announced in class. **Please feel welcome to propose your own gaming initiatives** – just email Professor Zamboni or one of the CAs.

_____ COURSE POLICIES

Honor Code

All students of Wesleyan University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council – Office of Student Affairs. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). The Office of Student Affairs has more information. You will also sign a pledge statement for this class,

indicating your intention to comply with the Honor Code as well as with the course policies.

Accommodations Statement

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact Accessibility Services in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/218, or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-2332).

Religious Observances

I will make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required assignments/attendance. If this applies to you, please speak with me directly as soon as possible at the beginning of the term.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have the responsibility to maintain an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, ability, and nationality.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. **I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester (see the form below) so that I may make appropriate changes to my records**.

Discrimination and Harassment

Wesleyan University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. Wesleyan will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this Wesleyan policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office for Equity and Inclusion at 860-685-4771.

Use of AI in this class

Use of Generative AI software such as ChatGPT, MidJourney, or DALL-E is explicitly prohibited for the text, images, and other media submitted as part of this class' assignments. These tools draw from previously published materials without citation, thus using AI-generated content constitutes plagiarism. **AI may be used solely for research and planning, but all words, images, and media submitted for evaluation must be your own work.** Please be aware that information gathered through AI is often incorrect or incomplete. Any use of AI on an assignment must be disclosed in writing. Any assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized AI tools will constitute a violation of the Honor Code and may receive a zero and / or be reported for academic misconduct.

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That's all for now!
Please review the syllabus, and complete and sign the following part.

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This part of the syllabus is to be <u>shown</u> to the instructor, completed and signed.

NAME (printed): _____

1. **PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS**

a. In the classroom: _____

b. Outside the classroom: _____

2. **HONOR CODE PLEDGE**

I pledge that I will complete this course without aid and that all work will be my own.

Name _____   Date _____

Signature _____

3. **SYLLABUS ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I have read this syllabus in its entirety, and I accept its stipulations.

Name _____   Date _____

Signature _____