

DH-414

Game design & prototyping

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Digital Humanities	MA2, MA4	Opt.
Minor in digital humanities, media and society	E	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	4
Session	Summer
Semester	Spring
Exam	During the semester
Workload	120h
Weeks	14
Hours	3 weekly
Courses	2 weekly
TP	1 weekly
Number of positions	

Summary

This course aims to present and discuss various game design methodologies that can be used to analyze and create projects based on interactivity and player engagement. It gives students the opportunity of engaging with the medium of (video) games - its limits and potentials - to widen their toolset.

Content

Considering how many game engines and game development resources have become accessible in the past twenty years, video game creation has become a key avenue for digital humanities engineers. As fundamental tools of citizen science approaches, games can be used to gather data or to raise awareness to a specific issue. Games can also act as a springboard to introduce historical, geographical or sociological data and, by having the players interact with their systems and mechanics, raise questions and kickstart scientific debates.

The course will introduce the basics of game design by presenting selected examples taken from various media (pervasive game, board/card game, role-playing, etc.) and tools (paper or sandbox prototype, game design document, etc). Texts from the academic field of game studies and platform studies will be presented to the students in order to develop their understanding of the specificity of video games as a digital media. The course will thus combine technical aspects such as game prototyping, iterative design and system balancing but also human sciences aspects such as game studies, public history and citizen science. Students are expected during the class to design a game in small groups and to document their research, design process and prototyping in a final paper.

Keywords

game design, prototyping, ideation, game studies, platform studies, game art, interaction design, player engagement, serious games, citizen science, digital humanities

Learning Prerequisites**Recommended courses**

Design research for digital innovation (DH-411)
 Jeu vidéo et Gamification (HUM-380)
 Interaction design (CS-486)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Make an oral presentation based on a game design document
- Design a functioning and balanced game linked to the DH domain: history, sustainability, media, archives, social networks, etc.

- Plan & lead playtesting sessions: observe and interview players, gather feedbacks
- Structure a scientific or technical report based on the playtesting sessions and the design process

Transversal skills

- Set objectives and design an action plan to reach those objectives.
- Use a work methodology appropriate to the task.
- Plan and carry out activities in a way which makes optimal use of available time and other resources.
- Identify the different roles that are involved in well-functioning teams and assume different roles, including leadership roles.
- Take responsibility for health and safety of self and others in a working context.
- Demonstrate a capacity for creativity.
- Take feedback (critique) and respond in an appropriate manner.
- Write a scientific or technical report.

Teaching methods

Lectures, flipped classroom lectures, hands-on practice, case studies

Expected student activities

Attend lectures, read the assigned articles, participate actively in class discussions, design and conduct a project

Assessment methods

1. Project (80%): an oral presentation (30%) and one final report (50%)
- 2.

Class discussion (20%): students' individual engagement in group activities such as ideation, prototyping, peer evaluation, playtesting, etc., will also be evaluated to determine individual performance.