GAME DESIGN

SHGS/GDSC1 — INTRODUCTION TO GAME STUDIES
→   Contexts

This unit provides a contextual, historical, and theoretical basis for the study of game design. Students will be exposed to the various experiences of games, including player cultures and politics. Students will also be introduced to ways of classifying game types, platforms, and technologies to inform game design and practice and will be provided with the critical tools to analyse the mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics of games. Students will draw knowledge from games they have played and identify historical and cultural contexts and game design conventions within them.

GDSP1 — FOUNDATIONAL GAME ELEMENTS
→   Principles

Students will learn foundational elements of game design, including the rules and mechanics of play and game design tools. Students will explore the ways these elements interact across a range of game genres, including tabletop games, role-playing games, and puzzles, and provide students with an opportunity to explore how play can function as a creative art. Students will be introduced to game design terminology and processes as they develop an awareness of how to design short-form games and will then create their own short-form game displaying their understanding of the tools and skills learned throughout the unit.

GDSC2 — GAME CULTURE & COMMUNITIES
→   Contexts

In this unit, students examine the relationship between game cultures, communities, and industries to understand how game design exists within broader contexts. This unit explores participatory culture and practices related to fandom, co-creation, and the sharing of open- source game designs. Students will choose an aspect of this culture and discuss how players can participate and express themselves within games. Students will also analyse games and be given the opportunity to reflect on ethical issues in game cultures. The aim of this unit is to provide students with an awareness of the social responsibility of game design.

GDSP2 — INTERACTIVE NARRATIVE DESIGN
→   Principles

In this unit, students will examine the fundamental principles and conventions of story structure that support narrative systems for immersive and interactive world-building across media. Students will gain an understanding of the dynamics between story and plot and the breadth of possible approaches to narrative structure and their elements. This unit explores the construction of time and space in narratives to consider beginnings, endings, and plot organization in linear, non-linear, and interactive narratives. Using interactive narrative design tools and software, students will pitch an interactive narrative game concept and then develop this initial concept throughout the unit.

GDSPR1 — UX: DESIGNING FOR PLAY
→   Practice

Students will examine how components such as interfaces, navigation tools, play difficulty, and ergonomics work to enhance the play experience for all types of player abilities. Students will consider the role of positive and negative reinforcement in the user experience and how this relates to game design. Using industry game design software, students will design a game prototype and test this using game evaluation methods.

CRFCRFS – Creative Foundations
→Industry awareness

Creativity is more than just inspiration; it is a skill, a discipline, and an essential tool for navigating the complexities of the modern world. In this unit, you will explore creativity's role across diverse disciplines and communities, gaining valuable insight into the ethical and cultural values that shape creative practice. You will develop critical skills to evaluate information, articulate ideas, and confidently reflect on creative work. By engaging with a dynamic community of students from across Collarts, you will have the opportunity to explore your creative potential and establish a strong foundation for your studies and future career in the creative industries.

GDSPR2 — INTERFACE DESIGN
→   Practice

Students will gain practical experience in interface design as they examine various types and scales of interfaces based on various output devices, including desktop computers, home and handheld consoles, smartphones, and household appliances. In this unit, students are encouraged to think about the relationships between the interfaces and narratives in game design and the immersive player experience.
Students will focus on design practice within constraints for everyday application, considering the implications of interface scale and device limitation, with consideration of how touch screens, readability, fonts, feel, and input devices impact accessibility in the user experience.

CRFIFOS – Industry Foundations
→Industry awareness

In this unit, you will immerse yourself in the world of the creative industries and explore the many pathways to transforming your passion into a profession. Through insights from industry professionals and hands-on creative activities, you will develop a deeper understanding of how your industry operates while reflecting on your career aspirations and creative potential. From generating ideas to bringing them to life, you will experiment with flexible approaches to creative collaboration, working on cross-disciplinary projects that mirror real-world creative environments. By gaining a clearer perspective on the industry landscape, you will be better equipped to carve out your place as a creative professional and make confident, informed career choices..

GDSC3 — SERIOUS GAMES
→   Contexts

Students will learn about the various applications of game design beyond entertainment through the practice of serious games in this unit. They will explore how games can be used as a medium for communicating a message through persuasion and rhetoric and evaluate the factors involved in representing that message and the purpose of serious games. Students will be provided with a range of serious game examples that have been used in health, education, social activism, and marketing to discuss how games can have a positive or negative social impact. Students will use this knowledge to create a game proposal addressing a social issue they care about.

GDSP3 — WRITING FOR GAMES 1
→   Principles

This unit establishes the importance of writing skills within game design and will help students develop their knowledge and skills in interactive narrative design. Students will explore the various aspects of writing involved in game design, such as writing cut scenes, narrator writing, dialogue writing for playable characters (PC) and non-playable characters (NPC), quest writing, puzzle writing, and level writing.

GDSPR3 — ENVIRONMENT DESIGN
→   Practice

In this unit, students will gain knowledge and skills in the tools, technologies, and practices of virtual environment design for digital games. Students will explore the techniques of environmental storytelling and how spatial restriction can impact the play experience based on the game genre. This unit provides students with the opportunity to produce their own game level and work through the entire creative process, from initial stages to a playable game with finished environment art.

GADDGD3 — DIGITALGAME DEVELOPMENT
→   Industry Awareness

Using an industry standard game engine students work towards completing a functioning game level. Through this process they become familiar with the fundamentals of digital game development, digital production pipeline, asset management and integration with the game engine. Their game is to be backed up with functionality supported through node based scripting within the game engine, removing the need for direct coding.

GDT4 — CONTEMPORARY ART, DESIGN & CULTURAL HISTORY
→   Contexts

In this unit, students will learn about art history and major artistic trends. They will research and review various aspects of design history, theory, and aesthetics. Students will examine the historical backgrounds and theoretical frameworks that underpin creativity, culture and innovation.
Students will select a period of history they're interested in and create a presentation that illustrates the influence of this period on game design.

GDSP4 — WRITING FOR GAMES 2
→   Principles

Students will deepen their knowledge and skills in writing for games through a self-devised interactive narrative design project where they conceive, pitch, playtest, and workshop through peer review. This project will provide students with the opportunity to explore their own creative interests and consider more complex narrative questions related to character personality and psychology, the culture and ideology of narrative worlds, and the aesthetics of interactivity and audience experience. Industry-standard design and screenwriting software will be used to create a storyboard that visually communicates their game concept.

GDSPR4 — CHARACTER DESIGN
→   Practice

Students will gain technical skills with the tools, techniques, and technologies of character design, including concept art, modelling, rigging, and animation. Students will explore the relationship between interactive characters, the virtual environment, and the player as it relates to the design process. Students will create a character from the conceptual stage, initial development and review, and then use digital design software to show their finished character and how they interact with the world.

GADIER4 — Introduction to Extended Reality (XR)
→   Industry Awareness

Using accessible methods students have the opportunity to create Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) experiences. In learning to understand the technology students can discover how these emerging tools can be used to engage audiences within their disciplines as well as broaden audience appeal into other areas.

GDSC5 — DESIGN LAW, ETHICS & REGULATION
→   Contexts

Students will explore aspects of design law as it relates to design rights, copyright, trademarks, asset protection, patents, and product development and consider the interactions between design law and intellectual property law. This unit will provide students with a practical understanding of how to register a design, report an infringement using appropriate regulatory processes, and negotiate contracting and licensing. Students will also be given the opportunity to reflect on the question of moral rights in design and consider the ethics of responsibility in design practice.

GDSP5 — GAME MARKETING: BUSINESS & AUDIENCE
→   Principles

Students will extend their concept development for games and consider how their games can be packaged, branded, and communicated to an audience. Students will learn how to prepare a game treatment and gain experience pitching a game concept. They will prepare a press kit for a game concept they have created. This unit will also explore the various pathways available for game publishing and funding based on concept and intended audience.

GDSPR5 — GAME DESIGN CAPSTONE DEVELOPMENT
→   Practice

In this unit, students will develop a game design concept that they will produce in their Capstone unit in the final stage of the course. Students will propose a concept that reflects their specific interest in game design and showcases their theoretical, technical, and creative knowledge of game design acquired in the course. Under close guidance, students will develop their concept and plan a development and production schedule and will refine this through feedback on their process, progress, and creative experimentation. Students will conclude this unit with a fully developed concept, design plan, and pre-production elements ready to produce in the Game Design Capstone Project unit.

TRIMESTER 6 - Bachelor only units

GDSC6 — CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
→   Contexts

This unit is about enhancing the skills and knowledge most often associated with successful entrepreneurs, with emphasis being placed on the skills and knowledge required to successfully analyse and plan new businesses. Students will draw upon the inspired thought and entrepreneurial accomplishments of leaders they admire to better understand creative entrepreneurship through an investigation of personal profiles and case studies. Students will be given the opportunity to finetune their own career plans as they progress through the unit and to anticipate decision-making and ethical challenges.

GDSP6 — GAME DESIGN CAPSTONE DEVELOPMENT
→   Principles & Practice

This unit follows on from the Game Design Capstone Development unit and takes the game design project from concept to production. Through this process, students will use their knowledge and skills developed throughout the course to produce a short game of professional quality that can be used in their portfolios. Under close guidance, students will be expected to plan and follow a production schedule and maintain a professional conduct. Students will critically reflect on their projects and processes.

CRFPPF – Professional Portfolio
→   Industry Awareness

This unit provides an opportunity to complete your degree with a professional portfolio that highlights your skills, creativity, and artistic vision. You will explore the art of portfolio development and its importance within your creative field. By analysing a range of professional examples, you will gain valuable insights into industry standards—covering everything from formatting and presentation to the overall quality of your creative assets. Whether your aim is to impress potential employers or attract new audiences, this unit will support you in crafting a portfolio that authentically represents you as an emerging creative professional and serves as a powerful tool for advancing your career in the creative industries.

CRFIPL – Industry Placement
→   Industry Awareness

This unit offers the opportunity to move beyond the classroom and into the workplace, allowing you to apply your skills, explore your strengths, and identify areas for growth as you gain real-world experience in your chosen industry. In a supervised role, you will engage with daily operations, refining your abilities through observation, analysis, and hands-on work. This placement enables you to align your experience with your career goals and build confidence in a professional setting.

While securing a placement is your responsibility, academic mentors and career advisors are available to support you in finding the right opportunities. This invaluable experience will help you prepare for the next step in your creative career.

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