

## *Course Syllabus*

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### **Course Information:**

### **ATEC 3351.002: GAME DESIGN I**

Friday 10:00 am – 12:45 pm

ATC 1.305

Fall 2016

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### **Professor Contact Information**

Instructor: Clayton Harper

Email: rch150330@utdallas.edu

Email MUST have atec3351 in subject line.

Office: ATC 3.309

Office Hours: Appointment only

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### **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

ATEC 2382 and (CS 1337 or CS 2336)

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### **Course Description**

ATEC 3351 Game Design I (3 semester hours) provides introductory experience in game play design and development. Students will work in teams to create a number of individual games. Students will participate in class discussions about types and characteristics of game play mechanics, both analogue and digital. Topics will vary from basic game types to types of social structures within games. As this course is heavily project oriented, attendance and participation will be crucial to your success.

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### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

**Students will learn to think critically about games and gaming issues**

**Students will work in teams to develop original playable games**

**Students will learn how to critically analyze games made by themselves and others**

**Students will research and discuss social issues as they relate to games**

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### **Required Textbooks and Materials**

Additional online readings may be provided

### **Suggested Course Materials**

Raph Koster, *A Theory of Fun for Game Design*

Fullerton, Swain, and Hoffman, *Game Design Workshop*

Mike Selinker, *The Kobold Guide to Board Game Design*

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## Assignments & Academic Calendar

Aug 26:  
Play Cheapass games  
Game 1 assigned

Sept 2:  
Play Alphas  
Game 1 Alpha Due

Sept 9:  
Game 1 Final Due

Sept 16:  
Play and discuss non-random games of perfect information  
Game 2 assigned

Sept 23:  
Play Alphas  
Game 2 Alpha due

Sept 30:  
Game 2 Final Due

Oct 7:  
Play and discuss an asymmetric game, *Descent* for example.  
Game 3 assigned

Oct 14:  
Play Alphas  
Game 3 Alpha Due

Oct 21:  
Spreadsheet Day

Oct 28:  
Game 3 Final Due

Nov 4:  
Game 4 assigned

Nov 11:  
Play Alphas  
Game 4 Alpha Due

Nov 18:  
Spreadsheet Day

Nov 25:  
NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

Nov 32:  
Special Topics Day

December 9:  
Game 4 Final Due

### **On Due Dates:**

On days when game versions are due, groups will pair up to test each other's games. One member from each group will stay behind to watch and take written note of how the partner group plays, look for balance issues, watch for confusing rules, etc.

On Alpha days, the watcher should stay out as much as possible, but may intervene if there is rule confusion or something preventing play.

On Beta days, the watcher is **not** allowed to intervene at all. You will not pair up with the same group from Alpha day.

The watcher ideally should be the member of the group who best understands the rules of the game.

### **Postmortems:**

Postmortems are divided into 2 parts:

Part 1 is a short list the group puts together about each member's role and contribution to the project. This goes at the top of every postmortem.

Part 2 is individual. Write at least a page, no more than 2, about your contributions, how you felt about the performance of your team, how you think the game turned out, problems you noticed, etc.

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### **Grading Policy:**

Participation	10%
Postmortems	15%
Game 1	10%
Game 2	15%
Game 3	20%
Game 4	30%

Game grades are broken down into the following elements:

Art:	15%
Assets:	15%
Mechanics	35%
Rules	30%
Packaging	5%

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**Art:**

Not all groups will have artists, so games are not expected to be perfect works of art. Presentation is still an important part of game publishing, so games should at least be aesthetically coherent and look as though effort was put into them.

**Assets:**

All necessary assets should be present in the game box and in good repair. They should also be of high enough quality to withstand use, and any relevant text should be typed (card text, rule text, etc.)

**Mechanics:**

Games should follow the mechanical and thematic restrictions laid out by each assignment. They should exhibit a level of balance in strategic or statistical elements that reflects testing and forethought on the part of the group.

**Rules:**

Rules should be clear and grammatically correct. They should effectively communicate the process of playing the game in no more than two pages (unless otherwise noted) of 12-point font and relevant diagrams.

**Packaging:**

Boxes should be of reasonable size to fit on storage shelf in a home. The box should include the title of the game, the names of the group members, and the group number in a legible fashion. If there are multiple pieces or decks of cards, the box should contain some method of organizing those pieces so they don't scatter everywhere.

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**Course & Instructor Policies**

Late assignments will be docked 10% per day late.

If a student misses an alpha day, their final participation grade will be reduced 50%.

If a student misses a beta day, their final participation grade will be reduced 100%.

On beta days, for each minute that a game is late, 1% will be deducted from the game's final grade.

Students are responsible for determining what assignments they miss if they are absent.

Students must contact the professor about absences. After two absences, 30% will be deducted from the participation grade (this is 3 points off of the final grade total).

Requirements and schedule are subject to change at the discretion of the instructors (all changes will be furnished to students in writing).

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**Information on university policies and procedures: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>**