# COMP111

## Introduction to Video Games

S2 Day 2016

*Dept of Computing*

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# General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Co-Convenor
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Unit Co-Convenor
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Credit points
3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status
Co-badged with MAS111

Unit description
Video games provide the only real example of the promise of interactive entertainment held out by modern technologies. Video games provide a rapidly growing form of entertainment and are also used for educational and business purposes. This unit provides an introduction to the design and study of computer and console games. Topics covered include: the history of games; the cultural and aesthetic study of games; and the game development process. The assessment includes a project using a game development package.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

# Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a good knowledge of the video games studies discipline
- Communicate clearly and effectively, a range of ideas, in a variety of media forms
- Identify and distinguish different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis
- Apply game design skills and methodologies to the production of basic video games

# Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Due |
|---|---|---|
| Participation | 15% | Ongoing |
| Practical Exercises | 10% | Weekly |
| Game Analysis Task | 10% | Friday 5pm Week 8 |
| Final Essay | 35% | 5pm Friday Week 12 |
| Unity Game Task | 30% | Friday 5pm Week 13 |

## Participation

Due: **Ongoing**
Weighting: **15%**

The purpose of tutorials is for students to discuss the weekly topics and readings to enrich their understanding. All students are required to participate in tutorial discussion. This means arriving at tutorials having completed set readings and being prepared to discuss issues arising.

You will be assessed on: in-class multiple choice exercises, individual participation in class discussions, and group work.

You will be assessed on four criteria:

- Engagement with the readings
- Engagement with lecture material
- Ability to relate key theoretical ideas to previous readings and/or independent research
- Willingness to contribute to class discussion by asking relevant questions, answering other students' questions, treating other students with respect and behaving appropriately (e.g. not talking whilst tutor or other students talking)

Attendance is not the same as participation. Students receive no marks for simply attending tutorials.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Identify and distinguish different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis

## Practical Exercises

Due: **Weekly**
Weighting: **10%**

In class exercises using the Unity game engine. These exercises are designed to introduce students to the basics of game development.

You will be judged against the following criteria:

- Able to implement small game projects, with small elements of design
- Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to use the game engine
- Demonstrate some limited ability to apply basic game design concepts such as difficulty progression, challenge hierarchy, player engagement and world coherence

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply game design skills and methodologies to the production of basic video games

## Game Analysis Task

Due: **Friday 5pm Week 8**
Weighting: **10%**

A short answer online quiz, analysing the design of a game (to be provided) using the ideas taught in class. This exercise is designed to demonstrate students' understanding of the concepts taught and their ability to apply them to analysing a game.

You will be judged against the following criteria:

- Awareness of the design concepts such as game mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics, and the different kinds of game experience.
- Ability to use these concepts to understand how a simple game is designed.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Communicate clearly and effectively, a range of ideas, in a variety of media forms
- Apply game design skills and methodologies to the production of basic video games

## Final Essay

Due: **5pm Friday Week 12**
Weighting: **35%**

Write a 1500 word essay critically analysing a video game or game community of your choosing (your choice must be approved by your tutor). Your analysis must build upon, critique and/or extend the argument of one or more of the unit readings. Not all unit readings are permissible

here, some are better suited to this task than others. A list of the permitted unit readings to use for this task will be available on iLearn.

You must also use academic theory from beyond the unit (i.e. work not set as readings) to support the argument. In total you must reference at least three **academic** sources, including at least one from the permitted unit readings and at least one from your own research.

You must identify the key theoretical ideas and assumptions associated with your chosen reading and apply them to your chosen game/community.

Given this is a relatively short piece of writing, you need to focus on analysis rather than description. You should only describe the game/community enough to make your argument make sense for a reader unfamiliar with the it, you do not need to describe every aspect of it. You also don't need to comprehensively analyse the entire game/community, it may be preferable that you focus on a particular section or element of the game/community.

Your analysis should be written in a scholarly form (with references). It needs one central argument underpinning all sections. It needs to be formal in tone and academic (not journalistic) in style.You must analyse not just describe the chosen game/community.

The essay must use media studies, cultural studies, and/or game studies academic texts, and develop an argument in line with these approaches. If you are unsure what this means please ask your tutor.

You can go a maximum of 10% over the word count without penalty.

At the top of your submission you must have the following information:

- Tutor's Name
- Tutorial day and time
- The unit reading (or readings) you are building upon/critiquing
- Game/game community you are analysing
- A one sentence statement outlining your argument

This task will be assessed on five criteria:

- Understanding of the theoretical contexts of the chosen topic
- Strength and clarity of argument
- Depth of engagement with appropriate academic material
- Referencing
- Style, structure and presentation

To Be Submitted Via iLearn only.

Late Penalties are 10% per day.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a good knowledge of the video games studies discipline

- Communicate clearly and effectively, a range of ideas, in a variety of media forms
- Identify and distinguish different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis

## Unity Game Task

Due: **Friday 5pm Week 13**
Weighting: **30%**

A design task using the Unity game engine. You will design a level for a simple video game and write a 1-2 page document describing the engine features you use and how they contribute towards your design. To be submitted via iLearn, but only marked after in-class discussion with practical demonstrator.

You will be judged against the following criteria:

- Ability to use various features of the Unity engine, including cameras, modelling, lighting, sound, and terrain.
- Ability to apply this features creatively to achieve particular effect in your game.
- Ability to communicate your design choices.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Communicate clearly and effectively, a range of ideas, in a variety of media forms
- Apply game design skills and methodologies to the production of basic video games

# Delivery and Resources

**Classes**

Each week you should attend a one hour lecture, a one hour tutorial, and a two hour practical. For details of days, times and rooms consult the timetables webpage. http://timetables.mq.edu.au

Note that practicals and tutorials commence in Week 2.

You should have selected a tutorial and a practical at enrolment. You should attend the tutorial and practical you are enrolled in. If you do not have a class, or if you wish to change one, you should see the enrolment operators in the E7B courtyard during the first two weeks of the semester. Thereafter you should go to the Student Centre.

**Resources to assist your learning**

Textbook:

Adams, E. (2010) Fundamentals of game design is a recommended text for this subject but it is not required. It is, however, strongly recommended that students who are proceeding with the BIT Game Design and Development or the BA major in Games and Interactivity buy this book as

it will be a useful reference throughout your degree. It can be purchased through the Co-Op Bookshop.

The MAS111/COMP111 reader will be provided online, so need not be purchased.

### Website

The website for this unit is provided through the University's iLearn system. iLearn can be found at http://ilearn.mq.edu.au. If you are enrolled in this unit you should have access to the material on iLearn once you log on.

### Discussion Boards

The discussion board for this unit can be accessed through the iLearn site.

### Technologies Employed:

Game Design Environment: the Unity3D game engine will be used to create your game. This is a free download and runs on both PCs and Macs.

### Changes Made to Previous Offerings of the Unit

The topics in this unit have been updated to reflect the changing nature of contemporary video gaming. Recent academic material has been added to this unit in order to best offer students up-to-date insights into this media form.

### Consultation Times

The full contact details and consultation times of convenors Rowan Tulloch and Malcolm Ryan are available on the iLearn site.

## Unit Schedule

The week by week schedule and details of the readings are available through the MAS111/COMP111 iLearn site: http://ilearn.mq.edu.au.

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

**New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016** http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Additional information

MMCCS website

https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/department_of_media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914

Information is correct at the time of publication

# Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops

- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

# Graduate Capabilities

## Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcome

- Apply game design skills and methodologies to the production of basic video games

### Assessment tasks

- Practical Exercises
- Game Analysis Task
- Unity Game Task

## Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate a good knowledge of the video games studies discipline
- Identify and distinguish different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis

### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Final Essay

## Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate a good knowledge of the video games studies discipline
- Communicate clearly and effectively, a range of ideas, in a variety of media forms
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### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Game Analysis Task
- Final Essay
- Unity Game Task

## Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate a good knowledge of the video games studies discipline
- Communicate clearly and effectively, a range of ideas, in a variety of media forms

- Identify and distinguish different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis
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### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Practical Exercises
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- Final Essay
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## Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcome

- Communicate clearly and effectively, a range of ideas, in a variety of media forms

### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Game Analysis Task
- Final Essay
- Unity Game Task

# Unit-level Standards

The final mark for the unit will be calculated by combining the marks for all assessment tasks according to the percentage weightings shown in the assessment summary.

The following standards will be applied in determining your final grade in this unit

**Pass**

- Demonstrate an understanding of a range of the different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis
- Demonstrate noticeable evidence of being able to critically evaluate and analyse ideas and concepts in video games using the approaches presented in the unit
- Able to design, implement and document small game projects
- Demonstrate in the game design/implementations noticeable ability to apply basic game

design concepts such as difficulty progression, challenge hierarchy, player engagement and world coherence

**Credit**

- Demonstrate breadth and depth of understanding of the different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis
- Demonstrate sustained evidence of being able to critically evaluate and analyse ideas and concepts in video games using the approaches presented in the unit.
- Able to successfully design, implement and document small game projects
- Demonstrate in the game design/implementations sustained ability to apply basic game design concepts such as difficulty progression, challenge hierarchy, player engagement and world coherence
- Demonstrate at least some creativity and innovation in design

**Distinction**

- Demonstrate breadth and depth of understanding of the different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis
- Demonstrate sustained evidence of being able to critically evaluate and analyse ideas and concepts in video games using the approaches presented in the unit.
- Demonstrate noticeable originality and insight in evaluation and analysis
- Able to successfully design, implement and document small game projects
- Demonstrate in the game design/implementations sustained ability to apply basic game design concepts such as difficulty progression, challenge hierarchy, player engagement and world coherence
- Demonstrate substantial creativity and innovation in design

**High Distinction**

- Demonstrate breadth and depth of understanding of the different disciplinary approaches to video game analysis
- Demonstrate sustained evidence of being able to critically evaluate and analyse ideas and concepts in video games using the approaches presented in the unit.
- Demonstrate substantial originality and insight in evaluation and analysis
- Able to successfully design, implement and document small game projects

- Demonstrate in the game design/implementations sustained ability to apply basic game design concepts such as difficulty progression, challenge hierarchy, player engagement and world coherence
- Demonstrate sustained, high-level, creativity and innovation in design