



MAS 111

Introduction to Video Games

S2 Day 2018

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

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Unit Co-Convenor

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Co-badged with COMP111

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

General Assessment Information

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Active Participation</u>	15%	Yes	Ongoing
<u>Practical Exercises</u>	10%	Yes	Weekly
<u>Game Analysis Task</u>	10%	No	Friday 11.59pm Week 5
<u>Final Essay</u>	35%	No	11:59pm Friday Week 11
<u>Unity Game Task</u>	30%	No	Friday 11:59pm Week 13

Active Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **15%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

The purpose of tutorials is for students to discuss the weekly topics and readings to enrich their understanding. All students are required to actively 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.

This is a hurdle assessment. Satisfactory performance in 8 out of 12 tutorials is required to pass this unit.

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

Practical Exercises

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

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

This is a hurdle assessment. Completion of 8 out of 12 exercises is required to pass the unit.

Note: Exercises can be marked in any week, but demonstrators will not mark more than 2 exercises per class.

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 11.59pm Week 5**

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: **11:59pm Friday Week 11**

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.

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.

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 11:59pm 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: Practicals and tutorials commence in Week 1.

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. **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](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central/) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central/>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and

Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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.

MMCCS Session Remark Application: <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

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

- Active 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

- Active 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
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Assessment tasks

- Active Participation
- Practical Exercises
- Game Analysis Task
- Final Essay
- Unity Game Task

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

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

Changes from Previous Offering

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.

Prac exercises and tutorial participation are now hurdle requirements, necessary to pass the course.

The timing of the Game Analysis and Essay tasks have been changed in order to better space assessment tasks through the semester.

Unit-level Standards

General Assessment Grading Information

GRADE	RANGE	STATUS	DESCRIPTION
HD	85-100	Pass	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality, insight or creativity in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the program.
D	75-84	Pass	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality or creativity in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the program and the audience.
CR	65-74	Pass	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the program.
P	50-64	Pass	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the program; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the program. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes.
F	0-49	Fail	Does not provide evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. There is missing or partial or superficial or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the field of study; missing, undeveloped, inappropriate or confusing argumentation; incomplete, confusing or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the program.

For full assessment rubrics please refer to iLearn

Examples

Where appropriate examples of assessments will be provided in tutorials, or posted on iLearn.

Feedback

Feedback on assessments will be provided through iLearn.

General feedback on student active participation performance will be given by tutors in class, and students are encouraged to talk directly with their tutor, or the unit convenor, if they would like more detailed individual feedback.