CS 40 Course Outline as of Fall 2020

CATALOG INFORMATION

Dept and Nbr: CS 40 Title: HISTORY OF GAMES
Full Title: History of Games
Last Reviewed: 1/13/2025

Units		Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks	Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	6	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00 Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category:	AA Degree Applicable
Grading:	Grade or P/NP
Repeatability:	00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP
Also Listed As:	
Formerly:	CS 74.40

Catalog Description:
This course includes a comprehensive study of the evolution of games throughout human history, with an emphasis on early games' impact and influence on video games. Review of the technological and artistic antecedents, with analysis of how video games reflect the beliefs, aspirations and values of the cultures where they flourish. Study includes gameplay experience and analysis of notable game genres, identifying significant artistic and technological innovations. Students will investigate gameplay and create a non-digital game that is informed by the study of game history.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended Preparation:
Eligibility for ENGL 1A or equivalent

Limits on Enrollment:

Schedule of Classes Information:
Description: This course includes a comprehensive study of the evolution of games throughout human history, with an emphasis on early games' impact and influence on video games. Review

of the technological and artistic antecedents, with analysis of how video games reflect the beliefs, aspirations and values of the cultures where they flourish. Study includes gameplay experience and analysis of notable game genres, identifying significant artistic and technological innovations. Students will investigate gameplay and create a non-digital game that is informed by the study of game history. (Grade or P/NP)
Prerequisites/Corequisites:
Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 1A or equivalent
Limits on Enrollment:
Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.
Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	**Area**		Effective:	Inactive:
	E	Humanities	Fall 2025	
	L3	Arts and Humanities		
	E	Humanities	Fall 2019	Fall 2025
CSU GE:	**Transfer Area**		Effective:	Inactive:
IGETC:	**Transfer Area**		Effective:	Inactive:

CSU Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 2019	Inactive:
UC Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 2020	Inactive:

CID:

Certificate/Major Applicable:
Both Certificate and Major Applicable

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:
At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:
1. Interpret the interaction of society and culture with games throughout history and construct comprehensive analyses of the impact of video games on popular culture.
2. Analyze how technological innovations furthered the use of video games as a platform for artistic expression.
3. Compare and contrast video game styles and genres throughout time.

Objectives:
At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:
1. Discuss the history of games throughout human history using chronological reasoning.
2. Demonstrate higher-order thinking skills including evaluation and use of evidence about issues, problems, and explanations for the influence of video games on popular culture.
3. Explore problems in the history of game design and, where possible, solve them.
4. Develop, test, and evaluate rival hypotheses from primary sources about the history of video games.
5. Construct sound arguments and interpretation about video games and popular culture; and evaluate the arguments and interpretation of others.

Topics and Scope:

I. Understanding Games and Culture
- A. The relevance of games
- B. Children's games
- C. Games and human nature
- D. Definitions of games
- E. Games as closed systems
- F. The field of play
- G. A working definition of games
- H. Elements of traditional games
- I. Terminology of traditional games
- J. Applications of play

II. The Historical Origins of Game Forms
- A. Games, play and culture
  1. Prehistoric games
  2. Knucklebones
- B. Ancient board games
  1. Mancala
  2. Royal Game of Ur
  3. Knossos
  4. Games of ancient Egypt
  5. Games of ancient India
  6. Games of ancient China
  7. Games of ancient Rome
- C. History of playing cards
  1. Chinese origins of playing cards
  2. Mamluk playing cards
  3. Cards in Europe
  4. Suit systems in Europe
  5. Tarot cards
  6. Prohibitions on cards and gambling
  7. Hanafuda cards
  8. Mahjong
- D. Development of war games
  1. Games and warfare
  2. Rome and war
  3. Gladiator game
  4. Jousting
  5. Yabusame
  6. Buzkashi
  7. Aztec flower wars
  8. Koenigspiel
  9. Modern war games
  10. Hobby tabletop war gaming

III. The Evolution of Games
- A. The rise of commercial board games
  1. The Industrial Revolution and game publishers
  2. Snakes and Ladders
  3. The first American board game
  4. The Mansion of Happiness
  5. The Game of Life
  6. Education and games

        7. Monopoly
        8. The advent of narrative gaming
        9. Dungeons & Dragons
    B. The morality of gaming
        1. Milton Bradley
        2. Parker Brothers
        3. 20th Century: competition, collapse and consolidation
IV. The Birth of Electronic Gaming
    A. 1940s - 1960s: Pioneers
        1. William Higinbotham and Tennis For Two
        2. Steve Russell and Spacewar!
    B. 1961 - 1972: Early visionaries
        1. Ralph Baer and the Odyssey
        2. Nolan Bushnell and Computer Space
V. 1972 - 1976: Atari and the Rise of Arcade Games
    A. Al Alcorn and Pong
    B. Competition emerges
VI. 1977 - 1979: An Industry Matures
    A. Video games become a consumer project
    B. Gaming in Japan and the growth of Nintendo - Hiroshi Yamaguchi
VII. 1980 - 1982: High Water Mark
    A. Golden age of arcade games
    B. Game designers recognized as creative artists
VIII. 1983 - 1985: Crash and Recovery
    A. Demise of Atari: lessons learned
    B. Nintendo in Japan and North America
        1. Nintendo's NES and its impact
        2. Shigero Miyamoto
    C. Legal status of video games: significant legal decisions
    D. Behind the Iron Curtain: Alexey Pajitnov and Tetris
IX. 1986 - 1991: The Console Wars Continue
    A. Nintendo vs Sega
    B. Yuji Naka and Sonic the Hedgehog
    C. Differences between Japanese and North American consumers
    D. Gunpei Yokoi and the Gameboy
X. 1992 - 1994: The Arrival of 32-Bit Consoles
    A. Controversies, Congress and the ESRB
    B. Sony and the PlayStation
    C. Evolution of PC Games
XI. 1995 - 1999: 64-Bit and the Birth of Online Gaming
XII. 2000 - 2001: Sony, Sega, Sims and Sixth Generation Consoles
    A. PlayStation leads the pack
    B. Demise of Sega: Death of Dreamcast
    C. Xbox and GameCube arrive
    D. Will Wright and The Sims
XIII. 2001 and Beyond: Challenges in the New Millennium
    A. New platforms and business models emerge
        1. Social, mobile, and free-to-play
        2. The Wii and its broad appeal
        3. Rebirth of casual gaming
    B. Serious games as a creative platform
    C. Online software distribution

D. Indie games go mainstream - Markus Person and Minecraft
E. Edu-gaming
F. Gamification
G. Ethics, controversies, and challenges
1. Violence in games
2. Inclusivity: race, gender, and LGBTQ+
3. Industry workplace issues
4. Addiction

XIV. Games in Film, Television, Music and Print
A. The fear of technology as expressed in films about AI and games
1. 2001: A Space Odyssey
2. Tron
3. WarGames
B. Utopian and dystopian visions of virtual reality in film, books, and popular culture
1. The Matrix
2. Black Mirror “Santa Rosa” episode
3. William Gibson
C. Commodification and popularization of game characters in music and popular culture
1. Character franchises of Nintendo and Sega
2. Integration of popular music in console titles

XV. The Aesthetics of Video Game Design
A. Ludology vs narratology
B. Game aesthetics shared with other art forms
C. Playtesting and the aesthetics of interactivity

XVI. Non-Digital Game Design
A. MDA: mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics
1. Mechanics
2. Dynamics
3. Aesthetics
B. Game design documents

XVII. The Future of the Video Game Industry

Assignment:

1. Read approximately 25-30 pages a week from course textbook and/or instructor-provided reading materials
2. Create one to three (1-3) timelines of periods in the history of games, such as the rise of home gaming consoles
3. Prepare five to seven (5-7) written documents that address the influence of historical facts, relevant court cases, social movements, and technological advances, on specific games or trends in the history of games, three to seven (3-7) pages each
4. Regular participation in zero to fourteen (0-14) online discussion forums
5. Playtest six to ten (6-10) online versions of traditional and/or modern games and provide analysis on game mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics
6. Midterm and final exams

Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

Writing: Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Timelines and written documents	Writing 30 - 60%

Problem Solving: Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Playtesting analyses	Problem solving 10 - 40%

Skill Demonstrations: All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

None	Skill Demonstrations 0 - 0%

Exams: All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Mid-term and final exams	Exams 10 - 20%

Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Attendance, participation, and/or discussion posts	Other Category 0 - 10%

Representative Textbooks and Materials:
Game On!: Video Game History from Pong to Pac-Man to Mario, Minecraft and More. Hansen, Dustin. Macmillan Publishing Group, 2016
Replay: The History of Video Games. Donovan, Tristan. Yellow Ant. 2010. (classic)
Instructor prepared materials