video game level design

ART PRACTICE 98 / 198, 2 UNITS

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What's a "fun" level? A "good" level? Are they the same thing?
Could we relate levels to real-world architecture or even *society?!*
Professional game developers think about these questions every day.

You'll learn how to **(1)** analyze game design, **(2)** build levels, and **(3)** think like a designer.

sound cool? well, here's what you need:

(1) Moderate computer literacy
(e.g. you use Microsoft Office, you can organize your photos)

(2) A wirelessly networked laptop
(Bought within the last few years = usually good enough)

(3) A legal copy of *Counter-Strike: Source*
(Only users with legal copies can download the level design tools)

(4) Experience playing first person shooters on PC
("WASD" controls + *Unreal, Quake, Call of Duty, Battlefield*, etc.)

~~**(5)** Programming experience or Y chromosomes~~
(No programming necessary! All majors & all genders are welcome!)

"how do i pass?"

- ✓ turn in **all** of your assignments, **completed** and **on-time**!
- ✓ **actively participate**!
- ✓ **follow the absence policy!**

(exceptions, though not guaranteed, can be made to accommodate students and their extenuating situations; just e-mail me!)

"can i plagiarize?"

No! What kind of silly question is that?! Plagiarism is ANY direct, intentional, and uncredited use of another designer's work.

It's easy to detect plagiarism – *when caught, you'll automatically fail the class*. Always ask me if you're not sure about using something.

class schedule* and assignments:

WEEK 1 Aug 26	*No class.*	**how to turn-in your work:** ✓ **Compile** with VVIS & VRAD ✓ **Include** both .BSP & .VMF files ✓ **Upload** via bSpace "Dropbox" ✓ **Turn-in** before class starts (or earlier!) whether you attend or not!	
WEEK 2 Sep 2	Orientation, demo **(mandatory)** **(Don't bring laptops yet!)**		
WEEK 3 Sep 9	Construction: Introduction **(Start bringing laptops!)**		
WEEK 4 Sep 16	Construction: Textures / Entities **Playtest**	**DUE:** **Basic1**	Tests basic construction skills.
WEEK 5 Sep 23	Construction: Room building **Playtest**	**DUE:** **Basic2**	Tests other basic construction skills.
WEEK 6 Sep 30	Construction: Floorplans Gameplay: Readable Layouts		
WEEK 7 Oct 7	Gameplay: Landmarks **Workshop / Critique**	**DRAFT DUE:** **Skeleton**	Construct a bare-bones Counter-Strike map, concentrating on your layout and gameplay – *not visual details!*
WEEK 8 Oct 14	Construction: Displacements **Playtest**	**FINAL DUE:** **Skeleton**	
WEEK 9 Oct 21	Construction: Advanced building **Playtest**	**DUE:** **DustRedux**	Redecorate / modify the classic de_dust.
WEEK 10 Oct 28	Construction: Review **Workshop / Critique**	**DRAFT DUE:** **Dblcrossing**	With *someone else's* Skeleton map as a base, fix gameplay problems and refine the level's architecture / lighting.
WEEK 11 Nov 4	Visual theory: Referencing **Playtest**	**FINAL DUE:** **Dblcrossing**	
WEEK 12 Nov 18	Visual theory: Architecture **Playtest**	**DUE:** **Facsimile**	Analyze and construct a building on campus.
WEEK 13 Nov 25	Visual theory: Light **Workshop / Critique**	**DRAFT DUE:** **Crossing**	Now with your own Skeleton map as a base, fix gameplay problems and refine the level's architecture / lighting.
WEEK 14 Dec 2	The big picture **Playtest**	**FINAL DUE:** **Crossing**	
WEEK 15 Dec 9	**Farewell Fiesta** **Playtest**	**GOOD LUCK WITH FINALS!**	

** syllabus / schedule is subject to change at facilitator's discretion*

Revision #509

<u>ABSENCE POLICY</u>: "Achievements!"

Every **four** achievements will earn you another absence. If you overspend your absences, you must earn enough to compensate by the end of the semester.

1) "I Kan Reed!!"
You attended the first class!

2) "Connect Five"
Attend five classes in a row.

3) "Ten-acious You!"
Attend ten classes, total.

4) "Boot Camp"
Turn in your Basic2 map, on-time! Suit up, soldier!

5) "Do You Feel a Draft"
Turn in your Skeleton map draft, on-time!

6) "First Blood"
Volunteer to play your level first in a playtest.

7) "Dust Yo' Shoulders"
Complete the "DustRedux" assignment OR win a challenge so you don't have to.

8) "Facssmiliated"
Complete the "Facsimile" assignment OR win a challenge so you don't have to.

9) "MVP! MVP!"
Be the top player on the leaderboard during the opening lesson skirmish.

10 & 11) "Well Played"
Be voted by your classmates into the top 3 for Skeleton, Dblcrossing, or Crossing.

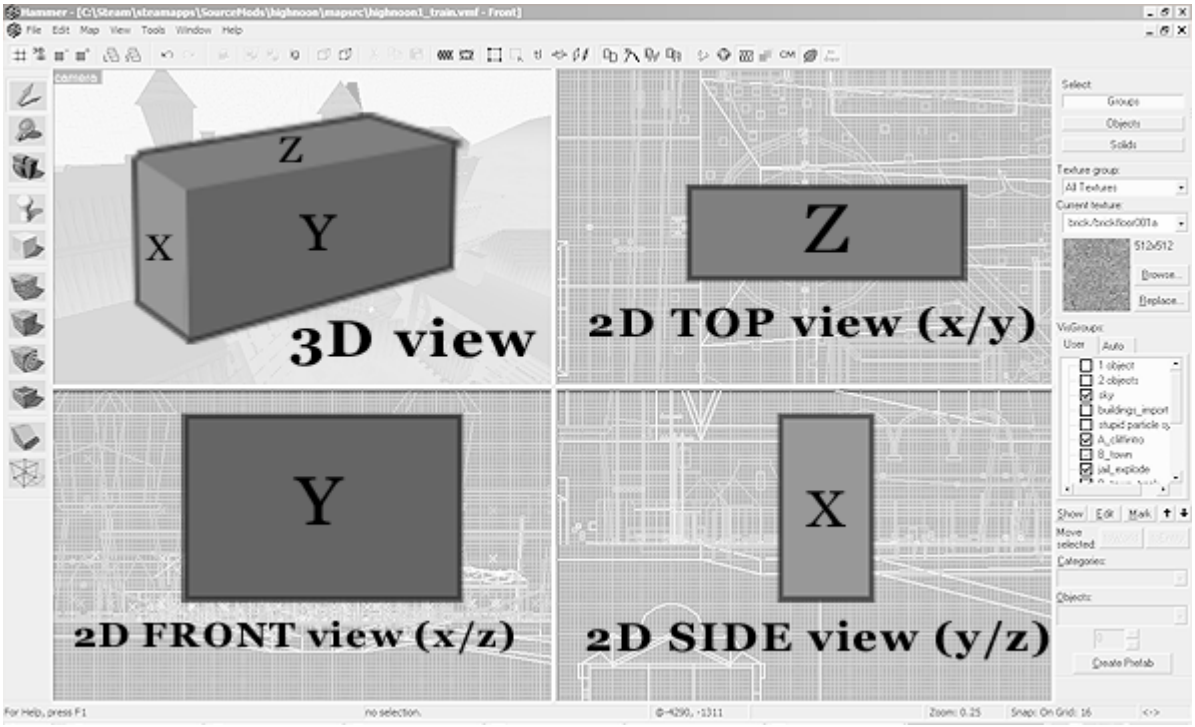
12) "Miss Congeniality"
Be the bottom player on the leaderboard with at least 3 deaths in a skirmish.

13) "Femur-iffic!"
Turn in your Skeleton map. On-time, preferably.

14) "Doublicious!"
Turn in your Dblcrossing map.

15) "Crosstastic!"
Turn in your Crossing map.

16 & 17) "Until the End"
Come to Fiesta, the last day.

<u>REFERENCE</u>: Useful keyboard shortcuts / interface tips

CTRL + E	Focus 2D views on selected object	**[ ] (brackets)**	Increase / decrease grid size
CTRL + SHIFT + E	Focus 3D view on selected object	**(mouse wheel scroll)**	Zoom in / zoom out
Z	Activate mouselook in 3D view	**CTRL+Z**	Undo last action(s)