

"When we play games, we aren't suffering." -- Jane McGonigal

come out and play:

playing and designing games outside

Theater 98 / 198, 1 unit DeCal
40 students (20 lower + 20 upper division)

Tues + Thurs, 3-4 pm
Classroom TBA

Facilitator: Robert Yang ([robertyang\[at\]berkeley.edu](mailto:robertyang@berkeley.edu))

Faculty sponsor: Gail De Kosnik ([dekosnik\[at\]berkeley.edu](mailto:dekosnik@berkeley.edu))

> THE COURSE

What do Grand Theft Auto, football, and poker have in common? *More than you think.*

All games are similar to each other in that they are games, unique worlds with systems of laws, designed with intent. This is a core tenet of game design; that we can learn something about “Monopoly” by playing football - *that a game is a game*, whether played on a field, at a table or in front of a screen. We will study outdoor games (and thus, all games) via three modes of inquiry:

(1) DESIGNING GAMES:

What is an "optimal" set of rules to engineer a "fun" gameplay experience? How do you quantify “fun?” Are there different kinds of "fun?" If so, how do we engineer those?

(2) PLAYING GAMES:

What is a player's relationship to the game's rules, a social contract of "sportsmanship?" What happens if you cheat? If others are watching, do we "perform" or do we play?

(3) PLAYING GAMES ON CAMPUS:

What is the built environment's effect – e.g. how does the layout of the field determine how you play football? How does the layout of Memorial Glade affect a game of “Tag?”

> ASSESSMENT

To pass: all assignments must be complete and on-time + follow the absence policy:

You get three (3) unexcused absences. E-mail me a *good* excuse before class and it'll only count as half an absence. To make-up further absences, you can:

- Write a 1/2 - 1 page “player aid” for another group’s game.
- Put yours / someone else’s game on Ludocity.org, a wiki of nondigital games.
- Bring your own prop for your game + bring 2 friends to a playtest.
- Run a playtest of your game for Cal Day. (Talk to me first.)
- Drastic emergencies will be accommodated, of course. **E-mail me.**

> **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

Week 1, Introduction, Groups, “Theory” Lottery (mandatory)
Playing: Human Snake, Human Blackjack, J’Accuse, Octopus Tag, RPS Tag

Week 2, “Theory” Workshop, “Theory” ruleset due.
Playing: Bootleggers, Lose the Tail

Week 3, “Prototype” Workshop, “Prototype” ruleset due.
Playing: Cruel 2 B Kind, The Lost Sport of Olympia

Weeks 4-6, Playtest “Prototype” games
Playing: “Prototype” student games - 3 or 4 a week

Week 7, “Theft” workshop, “Theft” ruleset due.
Playing: Ministry of Silence, Day of the Thing, Lose the Tail

Weeks 8-10, Playtest “Theft” games
Playing: “Theft” student games - 3 or 4 a week

Week 11, “Final” workshop, “Final” ruleset due.
Playing: Holla-Lulu, Soho Stag Hunt

Weeks 12-13, Playtest “Final” games
Playing: “Final” student games, 5 or 6 a week

Week 14, Fiesta Week
Playing: Freeplay (class vote to play favorite past games, bringing guests = extra votes)

> **CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:**

“Theory” (due on Week 2)
Provided some props and a set of constraints, work with your group to write the initial design of your game.

“Prototype” (due on Week 3)
The only way to find out if a game is fun is to playtest it! We will polish your “Theory” design into something playable – and then as a class, we’ll actually go and play the first version of your group’s game and then discuss it afterwards, offering feedback and hugs.

“Theft” (due on Week 7)
Think you can do better than another group? “Steal” another group’s design and improve upon it. We’ll play your (possibly better) version and discuss it.

“Final” (due on Week 11)
How did the other group change your game in “Theft”? Was it better or worse? Polish your original “Prototype” and knock our socks off. If it’s especially awesome, it’ll get incorporated into the course curriculum for next semester!