

# Introduction to Game Studies ART 108

Fall 2025 Sections 01, 80 Hybrid 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/19/2025

## Contact Information

Instructor:	James Morgan
Office Location:	Art 325 / Zoom
Email:	james.morgan@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	M 1530-1730
Class Days/Time:	Section 1 M/W 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm, Art 135 Section 80 Friday 12:30 - 3:15pm, Online

## Course Information

### Course Requirements and Assignments

"Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

### General Advice –

Fail early and fail often. If you take chances in your proposal and draft there is always room to fix it in your final. A mediocre idea that is work-shopped through your peers on time creates a better project than an amazing idea that is attempted the night before.

### Department Advising

For information about majors and minors in Art & Art History, for change of major/minor forms and a list of advisors: <http://www.sjsu.edu/art/> or the Art & Art History department office in ART 116, 408-924-4320, [art@sjsu.edu](mailto:art@sjsu.edu)

**Please note:** Except in cases of documented emergencies, incomplete grades are not given in this course.

"All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades." See University Policy F13-1 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf> for more details.

**Additional Note:**

This syllabus is subject to change, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, or in the case that changes will significantly enhance the quality of the course. Students will collectively have the opportunity to shape the ways in which the course unfolds.

## Course Description and Requisites

Introduction to the systems, design, history, and cultural analysis of games with emphasis on critical studies, development, technological literacy, markets and impact on society.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing or instructor consent.

Letter Graded

## \* Classroom Protocols

### Student Responsibilities

- Students are responsible for all information presented in lectures and demonstrations, and through assigned readings and web related research.
- Students will present and critique their projects, drafts and proposals in class and on-line.
- Students are responsible for actively engaging in the course material by completing all course assignments and readings.
- In the course of the semester we will undoubtedly talk about things, which are not in the mainstream and may be controversial. If at any time you find the subject or content of this course objectionable you are encouraged bring that into the discussion. If you find a presentation offensive you are permitted to quietly, without disrupting the class, excuse yourself. It is then your responsibility to contact the instructor for make-up work.
- Additionally, students are responsible for their own well-being. If you need help, it is your responsibility to ask for it.

### Late Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on time and complete. An assignment will not be considered complete until

all elements are uploaded and fully working. Assignments that are turned in on time may be redone for full credit until the last week of class. It is most important to present your work publicly. Note that project presentation days are mandatory, if a project is not presented on a critique day it may be considered late. Late assignments may receive a one time 10% or one point penalty.

## Program Information

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Department Name: Art and Art History  
Department Office: ART 116  
Department Website: [www.sjsu.edu/art](http://www.sjsu.edu/art)  
Department Email: [art@sjsu.edu](mailto:art@sjsu.edu)  
Department phone number: 408-924-4325

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

L01 Demonstrate an appreciation for the cultural value of the technologies and strategies used in games through writing and projects;

L02 Investigate and research user experiences of their own games and those of others;

L03 Apply researched information to improve player experience;

L04 Speak and write clearly about their own and others' work;

L05 Demonstrate and apply technological and information literacy;

L06 Translate different kinds of subject matter into gaming environments;

L07 Create original and creative content through the medium of games.

## Course Materials

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### Textbook

Introduction to Game Design, Prototyping, and Development, 3rd Edition, Jeremy Gibson Bond, eText <https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/introduction-to-game/9780136619918/>

Please also be aware that the library has tremendous resources relating to games and game studies. We have a lib guide at <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/GameStudies>

### Other technology requirements

Major software products are listed here so that you may make the decision now whether you are willing to

sign up for these accounts. Generally, these software packages have been vetted and are considered safe, however many of them involve online connections and content that is not controlled by the faculty member or school. This is considered fair notice, before the drop date and that there is no penalty for withdrawing from the course at this point.

ADOBE CC - this is provided free to students; you must sign up for an adobe account using your sjsu email and log in via the enterprise option. You can then download the Adobe Cloud Manager and continue to download any of the suite of programs. <https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/adobe/students/index.html>

Discord - this communication tool requires you to create an account. You can then join our semi-private server. You will have control over what handle we see and will be able to easily communicate with your group and the class.

Github - you will need to create an account but are then able to host projects and collaborate with others as well as host public web pages. This is where our portfolios will live.

Trello – you will need to make an account to be able to share project management with your team.

Unity – you will need to make an account to be able to download and run Unity. This is required for the digital prototype in Unity.

Piskel.com - you may need to make an account or download this 2D art tool. This tool makes animations MUCH easier.

Online blog software wordpress.com or medium.com, in order to post your blog publicly, you will need an account. You may use other software, but the requirement is that all of your posts are public, that you can link directly to each post, and that previous posts are easily findable from an existing post.

jackbox.tv – online game play, if you want to host games, you will need to have purchased the game.

Various online game sites. You are always encouraged to question the security of your data and be conservative in creating accounts, but we shall be doing this several times during the semester.

Also, all students will be required to get a standard deck of playing cards. (4 suits, 52 cards total but may have 2 jokers.) <https://www.amazon.com/Bicycle-Standard-Playing-Cards-Colors/dp/B000050GET/>

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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Game labs- 20%

Game labs are structured play or design sessions often followed by brief reflective writing, and in-class discussion. These sessions are done as a group and are very difficult to make up. L02, L03.

Blog - 20%

Students will be asked to maintain a weblog to publicly post writings and responses to readings. Students will write no less than 200 words (approximately one 'typed' page and include images). Points will be given

for both postings and peer review. LO1, LO4, LO5.

Participation - 10%

Active participation within groups and in discussion is expected. Performance can be tracked in CANVAS beginning the second week of class. LO4

Game 1: paper prototype – 10%

Design, play test and turn in a non-digital game using the readings and your group as a development guide. Games will be evaluated according to the game rubric. LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7.

Game 2: videogame prototype - 10%

Design, play test and turn in a digital game using the readings and your group as a development guide. We shall use Unity for this prototype so that we can see the advantages of a toolkit. Games will be evaluated according to the game rubric. LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7.

Exam -10%

The Exam will cover essential vocabulary and concepts. The class will work on a study guide throughout the semester. LO1.

Final - Paper, Presentation, or Game - 20%

The final project of this course will be negotiated between the individual and the instructor. It may be a formal paper, presentation (video or in person). LO7.

A quick note about final presentations, I typically reserve the last day of class and the final period for final presentations. Students are asked to be present at two of these dates and give feedback in addition to presenting their project at one. You may choose which two of the four sessions to attend, two will be on campus and two online. This is intended to give you flexibility during finals.

## ✓ Grading Information

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### Projects

Each project will be evaluated per the following formula:

Completeness(1/3) + Function(1/3) + Aesthetics(1/3)

### Determination of Grades

- Grades will be determined based on the sum of the areas listed above according to the chart below.
- Extra credit options may be offered or requested.
- Late work may be graded down if submitted within a reasonable time, or not accepted if submitted too late. This especially applies to group work.

Late assignments will be accepted under unusual, extenuating, or emergency circumstances. Certain

assignments, like lecture responses are intended to be done the week that they are assigned. We also do exercises in class for the first 10 weeks these are intended to be done in class with peers and are difficult to make up.

#### Numeric grade equivalents:

93% and above	A
92% - 90%	A minus
89% - 88%	B plus
87% - 83%	B
82% - 80%	B minus
79% - 78%	C plus
77% - 73%	C
72% - 70%	C minus
69% - 68%	D plus
67% - 63%	D
62% - 60%	D minus
below 60%	F

## University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

This is for section 1 and section 80. Deadlines should reflect the latest that things can be turned in, for example Lecture 1 will be delivered Friday and then Monday and the reflection is due Monday night. We will generally cover elements the week before but holidays may have a minor impact on that. I will try to make sure you know what we are doing in upcoming classes through announcements.

Fri Aug 22, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Chapter 7: Acting like a designer.</a>	due by 11:59pm
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Mon Aug 25, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 1: Internet Arcade</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Post Your Race to the Finish Game</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 1: What is a Game</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Aug 27, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Chapter 8: Design Goals</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Aug 29, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 2: Session Reports and Boardgame Geek</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Sep 3, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 2: Gam Lab I</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz <a href="#">Chapter 9: Paper Prototyping</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment <a href="#">Game Lab 1 (card / board)</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Sep 8, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Chapter 10: Game Testing</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 3: Prototyping and Design</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Sep 15, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">MDA Reading Quiz</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 4: Prototyping Part II</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Sep 17, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 3: Prototyping</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Sep 19, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Paper Prototype</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Sep 22, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Chapter 11 &amp; 12</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 5: Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Sep 24, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Digital Game Lab (Lab #2)</a>	due by 11:30am
	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 4: Video Game Lab</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz <a href="#">Chapter 14 &amp; 15</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz <a href="#">Unity Team: Who is your team?</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Sep 26, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">paper prototype peer reviews</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sat Sep 27, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Digital Game (design document)</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Sep 29, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 6: Game Engines</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Oct 1, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Chapter 13 Puzzles</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Unity: Scene milestone</a>	due by 11:59pm

Mon Oct 6, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 7: History of Video Games</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Oct 8, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Unity: Animation Milestone</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Oct 13, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 8: Level Design Patterns</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Oct 15, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Unity: WebGL publish</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Oct 20, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 9: RPG, MMO, Simulation &amp; VR</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Oct 22, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Unity Alpha Playtesting: Oct 22</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Oct 24, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 5: First Playable</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Unity Alpha Playtesting: Oct 24</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Oct 27, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Jenkins: Game Design as Narrative Architecture</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 10: Narrative Architecture</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Oct 31, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 6: Video Game Prototype</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment <a href="#">Digital Game: Unity Files</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Unity Prototype: Turn in and Discussion</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Nov 3, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 11: Serious, Casual and Learning in Games</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Nov 5, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Chapters 3, 4 &amp; 5</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment <a href="#">Proposal: Final Project</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Nov 10, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 12: Literacy, Criticism and Science</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Nov 12, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 7: JackBox Game</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Nov 17, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Lecture 13: Fine Art and Games</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Nov 19, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Draft of Final - November 19 / 21</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sat Nov 22, 2025	Quiz <a href="#">Exam Part 2 - Fall 25</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz <a href="#">Game Studies Midterm Fall 25 (part 1: timed)</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sat Nov 29, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 8: Final Project</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Dec 5, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Dec 5 - 1330 (online) Finals</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Dec 8, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Final Dec 8 in Art 135 6pm</a>	due by 11:59pm



Fri Dec 12, 2025	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Final Dec 12 1pm - 3pm (online)</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Dec 15, 2025	Assignment <a href="#">Blog Post 9: Course Reflection</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment <a href="#">final - submit published link here</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">Final Dec 15 (art 135) 530-730pm</a>	due by 11:59pm