Big Games

What happens to games when they escape the boundaries of our tabletops and desktops and TV screens and living rooms? From massively multiplayer online games to networked objects that turn the city into a gigantic game grid, new forms of super-sized gaming are expanding at an alarming rate and opening up vast new spaces in which to play. Whether these games are measured in terms of number of players, geographical dimensions, or temporal scope, they represent a new trend in which the "little world" created by a game threatens to swallow up the "real world" in which it is situated. This class is a hands-on workshop that is focused on the particular design problems of large-scale games. In this class students: develop a foundation of basic game design understanding from which to approach the specific issues particular to big games; analyze existing digital and non-digital large-scale games, taking them apart to understand how they work; as interactive systems; and work on a series of design exercises that explore the social, technological, and creative possibilities of large-scale games.

Contact
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Office Hours: Tuesday after class, 9 to 9:30 PM or by appointment

Assignments
- Weekly comments on reading – due every Sunday at 10 PM
  - 1-2 paragraphs with observations about readings
- Game Presentation on a Big Game
  - 10 minute in class presentation
  - 4-5 page paper
- Mini-project 1
- Mini-project 2
- Mid-term Team Project
- Final Team Project

Readings
We will be reading a number of different articles and chapters from different books. I will hand out the readings for the next week in class.

Expectations:
- Attend the class and talk – For every two absences your grade will be lowered one letter grade
- Do all of the reading
- Turn in all assignments on time and complete. For each week your project is late you lose one letter grade.

Grading
- 15% In-class discussion and weekly blog comments
Class Schedule

1. **January 20 – Class Intro**
   a. What are Big Games
   b. What do people think they are
   c. My expectations for the class

2. **January 27 – Game Design Basics**
   *Readings*
   a. Greg Costikyan, “I have no words I must design,”

3. **February 3 – Folk Games**
   *Due*
   a. Mini-Project 1 - Make a game for everyone in class to play
   *Readings*
   b. Linda Hughes, *Beyond the rules of the game, Why Are Rooie Rules Nice?*, *Game Design Reader*, page 504-517

4. **February 10 – Sports – The original big games?**
   *Readings*

5. **February 17 – Role-Playing – Getting players into the game**
   *Readings*
   a. Roll up a character

6. **February 24 – Mobile Games – Untethering play**
   *Due*
   a. Mini-Project 2 – Design a new sport

7. **March 3 – Location – Designing games and experiences for specific locations**

8. **March 10 – Mid-term Projects Due and Reviewed**
   *Due*
   a. Design a street game
9. March 24 – ARGs – Designing Alternate Reality Games and Distributed Experiences  
   *Readings*  

10. March 31 – MMOs – Playing with Crowds  
   *Readings*  

11. April 7 – Walking Tours & Scavenger Hunts

12. April 14 – Persistent & Pervasive Games – Designing to play all the time  
   *Readings*  

13. April 21 – Finals Workshop

14. April 28 – Finals Review  
   *Due*  
   a. Final games due