GAM-310-JJ1: Special Topics in Game Design
Historical Case Studies – Fall 2023
Course Syllabus

Meeting Time and Location: Friday, 1:10-4:10 PM, Fine Arts 249
Instructor: Matthew DiMatteo (he/him)
Email: mdimatteo@rider.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30, Friday 12-1 or by appointment, Fine Arts 214

Contents

Mutual respect and a commitment to inclusiveness are crucial to a positive learning environment. In this course, we will honor the diversity of all members of the Rider community by fostering a learning environment that is respectful of other classmates based on their identities and past experiences, including race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexuality, age, religion, culture, veteran status, and disability. I encourage any student who has concerns about the climate of this classroom or the behavior of others in the class to discuss matters with the instructor or the chair of the instructor's department.

Health and Wellness Resources

Student Health Center: Poyda Hall – healthcenter@rider.edu **609-896-5060**
Counseling Center: Zoerner House – counseling@rider.edu **609-896-5157**
Healthy Broncs Portal – Appointments, Medical Forms
National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: **Dial 988**
Local Therapy Resources: https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/
Report an Incident

Tutoring and Accessibility Support

Academic Success Center: Bart Luedeke Center, Suite 237, academicsuccesscenter@rider.edu
Student Accessibility and Support Services: Bart Luedeke Center, Suite 201, accessibility@rider.edu

Course Description

This course examines historically successful video game franchises such as *The Legend of Zelda*, *Pokémon*, and others to distill what makes them great. Students will analyze and critique design strategies used in these games and construct an original game concept informed by their findings.

Course Learning Goals

Students will:
1. Examine several successful video game franchises, evaluating the designs of key titles in terms of game mechanics, level design, world-building, narrative, theme, challenge, and fun.
2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses, along with successes and failures, of games in each franchise.
3. Engage in class discussions regarding the merits and shortcomings of key titles.
4. Complete small writing assignments responding to questions focused on different aspects of the design of games in various franchises.
5. Research one video game franchise not discussed in class and present findings.
6. Construct, communicate, and pitch an original game concept utilizing the strong design principles found in the franchises studied.

Course Requirements

1. Students will be expected to arrive to class on time, participate in class discussions and workshops, present, discuss, and defend ideas, and complete assignments by the date due. In the event of absence, students are responsible for communicating with the instructor in a timely manner, catching up on material covered in class, and completing any missed assignments.
2. Students should expect to spend a few hours per week outside of class time to complete assignments. Students are strongly encouraged to work consistently throughout the semester. Always take into account lab hours and possible technical problems when planning the time you will spend on assignments.
3. Students are responsible for saving and backing up their work, and are strongly encouraged to utilize multiple backup locations, such as external hard drives and cloud storage services (such as Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.) in addition to personal computers. Because students are expected to routinely back up their files, the loss of data is not considered an acceptable excuse for late or missing work.

Course Materials

1. **Canvas** – Resources such as class slides and other materials will be posted in the Files section. Assignment instructions and submission can be found in the Assignments section. The Announcements section will be used to post notifications on weather-related scheduling changes or any other news relevant to the class. Any announcements made will also be copied as a class-wide email.
2. **External Storage** – Highly recommended for storing and transferring files (useful not only for this course). A personal Google account includes 15 GB of free cloud storage. iCloud and Microsoft OneDrive offer 5 GB of free cloud storage. A physical external storage device is also recommended. A 1 TB drive can be a good personal investment for storing files beyond the scope of this course. Keep in mind that these drives may need to be formatted. View these slides on Canvas for detailed instructions on the formatting process.
3. **Sketchbook/Notebook** – Recommended for sketching out concepts, jotting down notes.

Assignments

Individual students' grades will be determined by performance on the following assignments:

- **Discussion Questions (300 pts / 50% of Semester Grade)** – Students will answer ten (10) discussion questions (one each week) regarding the game franchise being studied. Students will choose 4 of 10 questions on *The Legend of Zelda*, 4 of 11 on *Pokémon*, 1 of 5 on *Donkey Kong Country*, and 1 of 2 on *Kirby*.
- **Original Game Concept Presentation (150 pts / 25% of Semester Grade)** – Students will work toward an end-of-semester deliverable encompassing an original game concept inspired by positive aspects of games studied throughout the semester. Students will give a pitch presentation at the final exam period explaining their concept, supported by visuals such as level designs, concept art, UX flowcharts, UI wireframes, etc.
- **Game Franchise Research Presentation (90 pts / 15% of Semester Grade)** – Students will choose one game franchise not covered in class and prepare a short research presentation covering the franchise's history, successful titles, and overall impact on the game industry and society.
- **Participation (60 pts / 10% of Semester Grade)** – Students are expected to attend class on time, treat others with respect, pay attention during lectures and presentations, complete assignments regularly, and contribute to discussions. View the full criteria on Canvas.

Download Assignments Guide

View the Assignments section on Canvas for full assignment instructions

Late Work Policy

- All assignments (unless otherwise specified) must be submitted electronically to Canvas by 11:59 PM on the date due.
- Assignments turned in **less than one week late** will be subject to a **5% late penalty**.
- Assignments turned in **more than one week late** will be subject to a **10% late penalty**.
  - This *late penalty is capped at 10%, meaning students can still receive up to 90% credit on any late assignment no matter how late it is. Late work will be accepted until the end of the semester*.
  - My goal is to give students every opportunity to benefit from coursework. Please note that late work policies will likely differ in your other courses and are determined by individual instructors.
- Assignments not turned in at all will receive a grade of 0.

Extra Credit

- Students may complete up to ten (10) additional discussion questions for 12 pts (2%) extra credit each.

Grading Scale

A   93.50-100%
A-   89.50-93.49%
B+   86.50-89.49%
B   83.50-86.59%
B-   79.50-83.49%
C+   76.50-79.49%
C   73.50-76.49%
C-   69.50-73.49%
D   59.50-69.49%
F   0-59.49%

Students must earn a **D or higher to pass the course** and receive credit; however, students are strongly encouraged to earn a C or higher in each of their courses in order to maintain the necessary Grade Point Average of 2.0 or higher to avoid being placed on Academic Probation.

Assignments List

Legend of Zelda Discussion Questions – Choose 4 of 10 at 30 pts / 5% each (120 pts / 20% of Semester Grade)

Due Sep. 22:   Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #1   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
Due Sep. 29:   Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #2   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
Due Oct. 6:   Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #3   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
Due Oct. 13:   Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #4   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Pokémon Discussion Questions – Choose 4 of 11 at 30 pts / 5% each (120 pts / 20% of Semester Grade)

Due Oct. 20:   Pokémon Discussion Question #1   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
Due Oct. 27:   Pokémon Discussion Question #2   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
Due Nov. 3:   Pokémon Discussion Question #3   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
Due Nov. 10:   Pokémon Discussion Question #4   (5% of Semester Grade)

Other Discussion Questions – (2 at 30 pts / 5% each | 60 pts / 10% of Semester Grade)

Due Nov. 17:   DKC Discussion Question (Choose 1 of 5)   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
Due Dec. 1:   Kirby Discussion Question (Choose 1 of 2)   (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Projects (240 pts / 40% of Semester Grade)

Due Dec. 1:   Game Franchise Research Presentation   (90 pts / 15% of Semester Grade)
Due Dec. 15:   Original Game Concept Presentation   (150 pts / 25% of Semester Grade)

Participation (60 pts / 10% of Semester Grade)

No submission; assessed at end of semester – view criteria on Canvas   (60 pts / 10% of Semester Grade)

Legend of Zelda Discussion Questions

120 pts / 20% of Semester Grade (30 pts / 5% each)

Due Sep. 22, Sep. 29, Oct. 6, Oct. 13

Choose 4 of the following 10 and respond in about 250-500 words each. Please post your response to Canvas by 11:59 PM on each of the due dates listed above.

- **Option 1**: Choose one gameplay mechanic from a Zelda game that you feel is effective. What makes it work well, and how might other action-adventure games benefit from a similar mechanic?
- **Option 2**: What is your favorite item in a Zelda game? How does this item work, and does it have multiple functions? How is the item obtained? If through a dungeon, how does it change gameplay? What obstacles can now be overcome? How is this item useful in the overworld? Does it open up any new paths?
- **Option 3**: What is your favorite dungeon in a Zelda game, and why? What item(s) or abilities must the player rely on to proceed? Discuss the role of combat, puzzle-solving, and navigation in the dungeon. Is one of these emphasized over the others? How does the boss battle work, and what makes it a satisfying challenge to overcome?
- **Option 4**: Why do you think Nintendo has returned to 2D for entries such as the *Oracle* games and *A Link Between Worlds*? Is there something about 2D gameplay that is lost in 3D?
- **Option 5**: Choose a Zelda game whose narrative elements enhance the experience. How do these elements make the game better, and how do they relate to the gameplay?
- **Option 6**: How does the existence of an overarching timeline connecting the games together impact the series?
- **Option 7**: Do you want to see a game where Zelda is the player character instead of Link? How could this work?
- **Option 8**: Do you feel adherence to the traditional Zelda "formula" is a good thing, or does it hold the series back? What aspects have become stale, and what aspects are integral to a positive experience?
- **Option 9**: Compare and contrast how the "dual/parallel worlds" convention works in games like *A Link to the Past*, *Ocarina of Time*, the *Oracle* games, and *A Link Between Worlds*. What unique gameplay does each offer?
- **Option 10**: How does *Breath of the Wild* break traditional series conventions? In what ways does this benefit the game, and what is lost in this departure that you would like to see return to future Zelda games? How far does *Tears of the Kingdom* go in providing a compromise between BotW and more classic elements?

Grading Criteria

10 pts: Completeness & Detail

10 pts: Thoughtfulness & Originality

10 pts: Clarity & Organization

Pokémon Discussion Questions

120 pts / 20% of Semester Grade (30 pts / 5% each)

Due Oct. 20, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, Nov. 10

Choose 4 of the following 11 and respond in about 250-500 words each. Please post your response to Canvas by 11:59 PM on each of the due dates listed above.

- **Option 1**: Which generation of Pokemon games do you feel represents the height of the franchise? Why? What innovations in terms of gameplay, narrative, quality of life, etc. were made on top of the existing formula?
- **Option 2**: How do you feel about the departure from several series conventions in Generation 7? Would you like to see Island Challenges replace Gyms again, or are you glad that was only explored once (so far)?
- **Option 3**: How do you feel about "one-off" mechanics such as Mega Evolution, Z-Moves, Dynamaxing, and Terastalization? Do you wish any of these features became permanent? How would you implement one of these features in a future Pokemon game? Or, do you have an idea for a future "one-off" or permanent mechanic?
- **Option 4**: How do you feel about the visual designs of Pokémon over the years? Do you prefer any era or generation's designs over any other? Compare newer Pokémon designs to the original 151. What differences do you notice?
- **Option 5**: Compare the narrative and overall flow of newer Pokémon games with that of older ones. What differences do you notice? How do the games keep the player "on track" and prevent them from accessing areas they are not intended to yet? Is this a good or a bad thing?
- **Option 6**: Do some research on the competitive Pokémon scene. What considerations do competitive players make that casual players do not? How has the meta-game changed with the addition of new Pokémon and new features each generation? What challenges does Nintendo face in balancing the meta-game? What measures has the competitive community taken to keep the meta fair and balanced?
- **Option 7**: Choose a Pokémon spinoff game such as *Pokémon Snap*, *Pokémon Stadium*, the *Mystery Dungeon* series, *Pokken Tournament*, *Pokémon Unite*, etc. What aspects of this game are appealing to you, and why?
- **Option 8**: Do some research on fan-made Pokémon games. Choose one that stands out to you because of its novelty, features, or overall appeal. What does this game do that official Pokémon games do not? Why do you think Nintendo has never done this with a Pokémon game?
- **Option 9**: What does the launch controversy of *Scarlet* and *Violet* teach us? Are these games wonderful, horrible, or both? What gameplay elements or features are good additions on top of the existing framework? What aspects of the games don't work as well? What else would you have liked to see in these games?
- **Option 10**: What do you think the future of the Pokémon franchise looks like? Will open-world elements be here to stay? Would you like to see gameplay like that featured in *Legends Arceus* carried over to mainline titles? How many Pokémon is too many–where will it end? Or, how will Nintendo keep this franchise fresh indefinitely?
- **Option 11**: Contrast the 1998 slogan "Gotta catch 'em all" with the current number of Pokémon. Is it even possible to catch them all in modern Pokémon games? What does the "Dexit" controversy of Gen. 8 tell us

about the developers' intentions in this area? Is this a good or a bad thing? Why do you think so? How do modern games try to reconcile the number of Pokémon with the goal of completing the Pokédex? What else could they do?

Grading Criteria
10 pts: Completeness & Detail
10 pts: Thoughtfulness & Originality
10 pts: Clarity & Organization

Donkey Kong Country Discussion Question
30 pts (5% of Semester Grade)
Due Nov. 17

Choose 1 of the following 5 and please post your response to Canvas by 11:59 PM on the due date listed above.

- **Option 1**: Examine some of the early levels in various DKC games. How does the level design teach the player new mechanics in each? What can you learn from this approach?
- **Option 2**: Which animal buddy do you feel adds the most interesting gameplay? How are levels built around the abilities of this animal buddy?
- **Option 3**: Examine the level designs from various DKC games. How do they provide players with interesting choices despite their general linearity? What can you learn from this approach?
- **Option 4**: How are DKC levels themed? How is the theme manifest in the gameplay? For example, what mechanics are possible because of different environmental settings? How does the music reflect this theme and keep the player motivated/in a state of flow?
- **Option 5**: How do *DKC Returns* and *Tropical Freeze* innovate on top of the classic DKC gameplay? What kinds of platforming gameplay do we see that was absent from the SNES games?

Grading Criteria
10 pts: Completeness & Detail
10 pts: Thoughtfulness & Originality
10 pts: Clarity & Organization

Kirby Discussion Question

30 pts (5% of Semester Grade)

Due Dec. 1

Choose 1 of the following 2 and please post your response to Canvas by 11:59 PM on the due date listed above.

- **Option 1**: How has the Copy ability become more complex over the years? Do you have a favorite implementation of it? Why?
- **Option 2**: Why do you think it took until 2022 for a Kirby game with true 3D gameplay to be released? What is possible in three-dimensions that is not in two? Or, do you feel *Kirby and the Forgotten Land* adequately takes advantage of its 3D? What else would you like to see in a Kirby 3D platformer? You might compare with other franchises such as *Crash Bandicoot*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, etc.

Grading Criteria

10 pts: Completeness & Detail

10 pts: Thoughtfulness & Originality

10 pts: Clarity & Organization

Game Franchise Research Presentation

90 pts (15% of Semester Grade)

Due Dec. 1

Choose a game franchise that we have not discussed in class this semester. Research this franchise and prepare a **10-minute presentation** covering its **history**, **key titles**, **successes** and **failures**, styles of **gameplay**, **narrative** elements, and overall **impact** on the **game industry** and **society**. Why is this a franchise worth studying? What **factors** contributed to its success or failure? What can we **learn** from examining these games? Though I've stuck exclusively to Nintendo franchises in this class, please feel free to choose any franchise found on other platforms.

Organize your presentation as a **slideshow** using Google Slides, PowerPoint, Keynote, or any other tool you prefer. Use **imagery**, **statistics**, **video** footage, etc. to support your discussion. No written component will be required; however, you may find it helpful to include **notes** for yourself for each slide.

Upload your slideshow to Canvas **by class time** on the due date listed above. Be sure to **share** any Google slides with me.

Grading Criteria

10 pts: History – Franchise history explained clearly and thoroughly

10 pts: Titles – Key titles listed; reasons for their success or failure presented clearly

10 pts: Gameplay – Gameplay styles discussed clearly

10 pts: Narrative – Narrative elements (where relevant), and what they add to the franchise, are discussed clearly

10 pts: Impact – Impact on the industry and society discussed clearly

10 pts: Conclusion – Thoughtful takeaway provided on why this franchise is meaningful and worth studying

10 pts: Imagery – Imagery/video footage supports talking points

20 pts: Presentation Clarity – Overall presentation style is clear and conducive to communicating key points

Original Game Concept Presentation

150 pts (25% of Semester Grade)

Due Dec. 15

Individually, develop a concept for an original **digital** game inspired by what you've learned from the game franchises studied in class this semester. This should not be a fan game for any of these franchises but rather a wholly original concept whose design is informed by the strong practices involved in the development of the games studied.

You will **present your concept to the class** during the **final exam period**. Please prepare a **10-minute presentation** communicating your design. Provide a high-level description of your game's **gameplay goals**, **premise**, **target audience**, and **technical requirements** (will you require multiplayer networking, custom hardware, or any other special considerations?) and support your concept with **visuals**. Treat this as a hypothetical "**pitch**" – **persuade** us why this is a concept that deserves further exploration.

 Support your pitch with **visuals**. Include **one of each** of the following:
- A **level design** or **world map**
- At least one piece of **concept art** depicting a key **character**, **location**, **object**, etc.
- A **storyboard**, **flowchart**, or **diagram** depicting the **player experience flow** (how does a player **navigate** between **screens** and **gameplay**?)
- At least one **UI wireframe** depicting a game screen (this could be the **HUD** or a **menu** screen)
- **Reference material** – provide at least one visual of a similar game whose art style inspires or informs your own game's aesthetic

Also include in your presentation a particular aspect of one of the games studied this semester which you sought to apply to your original concept. For example, you might say your game seeks to incorporate exploration and discovery similar to the *Legend of Zelda* series, or inspire players to collect in a way that the Pokémon games do.

Organize your presentation as a **slideshow** using Google Slides, PowerPoint, Keynote, or any other tool that you prefer. Use **imagery** to support your discussion. No written component will be required; however, you may find it helpful to include **notes** for yourself for each slide.

Upload your slideshow to Canvas **by class time** on the due date listed above. Be sure to **share** any Google slides with me.

Grading Criteria

10 pts: Gameplay Goals – the presentation clearly explains what the player will be able to do in your game, how it relates to resolving the game's primary conflict, and what types of movement, environments, items/abilities will facilitate this; while not required, a control table may greatly help communicate how gameplay will work

10 pts: Premise and Narrative – the presentation clearly discusses the game setting, protagonist and key characters, world, and conflict; if there is an overarching story that develops over the course of the game, a concise summary should be provided as well

10 pts: Technical Requirements – the presentation clearly notes any special considerations required for your game to work, such as multiplayer networking, custom hardware, an exclusive platform, etc.); the target audience should also be included here

10 pts: Level Design/World Map – at least one sketch or diagram depicting the layout of the game world is included

10 pts: Concept Art – at least one piece of artwork depicting a key character, location, or object is included

10 pts: Player Experience Flow – a storyboard, flowchart, or diagram clearly depicts how a player can navigate between the screens present in your game

10 pts: UI Wireframe – a wireframe clearly depicts at least one screen in your game, such as the heads-up display or a menu

10 pts: Reference Material – at least one visual is provided of a game whose art style influenced your aesthetic

10 pts: Inspiration – the presentation includes a brief discussion of what gameplay elements or player experience goals from a franchise we studied this semester influenced your concept

20 pts: Pitch Persuasiveness – the presentation "sells" the game concept as something worth further exploration

20 pts: Originality of Concept – the game concept, while inspired by an existing game or franchise, stands on its own as something truly original, taking a gameplay mechanic, convention, narrative aspect, or any other aspect of the player experience and doing something new with it

20 pts: Presentation Clarity – Overall presentation style is clear and conducive to communicating key points

Participation

60 pts (10% of Semester Grade)

No submission

Assessed at end of semester

Students are expected to:

- **5 pts**: Arrive to class **on time**
- **10 pts**: Treat others with **respect**
- **10 pts**: Display a **positive attitude**
- **10 pts**: **Pay attention** during lectures
- **10 pts**: Complete **assignments** by the date due
- **5 pts**: Participate in **discussions** and **workshops**
- **5 pts**: Keep noise distractions to a **minimum**
- **5 pts**: **Communicate** with the instructor in a timely manner regarding any questions, absences and making up work

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Download as PDF

Week 1 (Sep. 8) – Course Overview

Lecture/Discussion:

- Introductions
- Course Materials and Expectations

OPTIONAL Student Stress Factors Survey – this will help me understand any challenges you may be facing outside of class but will not factor into your grade

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Week 2 (Sep. 15) — The Legend of Zelda 2D Gameplay

Lecture/Discussion:

- *The Legend of Zelda* – Total Freedom, Nonlinearity
- *A Link to the Past* – 8-way movement, Parallel Worlds
- *Link's Awakening*, *Oracle of Seasons*, *Oracle of Ages*
- *A Link Between Worlds* – The Dimension of Height, Wall Merging Mechanic, Designing for Nonlinearity

Assignment: Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #1 (Due Week 3, Sep. 22)

Week 3 (Sep. 22) — The Legend of Zelda 3D Gameplay

Due: Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #1 (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:

- *Ocarina of Time* – Translating 2D into 3D, Music as a Mechanic, Time Travel and Gameplay
- *Majora's Mask* – A Purposefully Uncomfortable Atmosphere, Transformation Masks, Bombers' Notebook
- *The Wind Waker* – A Primitive Open World, Wind as a Mechanic
- *Twilight Princess* – Wolf Mode, Horseback Combat, Dungeons & Items, Sword Skills
- *Skyward Sword* – Motion Controls, Linear Progression, Timeshift Stones, Flight, Silent Realm

Assignment: Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #2 (Due Week 4, Sep. 29)

Week 4 (Sep. 29) — The Legend of Zelda Narrative and Lore

Due: Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #2 (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:

- Link as a protagonist for player agency
- Princess Zelda as the "Damsel in Distress"
- The Message of *Majora's Mask*
- *The Wind Waker* and Character – Link and Family; Ganondorf as a Sympathetic Villain
- Midna's Redemption Arc in *Twilight Princess*
- *Skyward Sword* and the Timeline
- *Breath of the Wild*'s Timeline Placement
- *Tears of the Kingdom*'s soft reboot

Assignments:
- [Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #3](#) (Due Week 5, Oct. 6)
- [Mid-Semester Student Feedback Survey](#) (Due Week 5, Oct. 6)

Week 5 (Oct. 6) — The Legend of Zelda "Formula"

Due:
- [Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #3](#) (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)
- [Mid-Semester Student Feedback Survey](#)

Lecture/Discussion:
- Defining the Zelda "formula"
- Is the "formula" a good thing or a bad thing?
- How *Breath of the Wild* challenged the "formula"
- The Future of the Zelda Series

Assignment: [Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #4](#) (Due Week 6, Oct. 13)

Week 6 (Oct. 13) — Pokémon Generations 1 & 2

Due: [Legend of Zelda Discussion Question #4](#) (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:
- The Pokémon Phenomenon of the Late 1990s – Merchandising, Anime, Trading Card Game
- "Gotta catch 'em all"
- Gen. 1 Mechanics, Glitches & Speedrunning
- Gen. 2 Expands the Pokédex and Game World

Assignment: [Pokémon Discussion Question #1](#) (Due Week 7, Oct. 20)

Week 7 (Oct. 20) — Pokémon Generations 3-5

Due: [Pokémon Discussion Question #1](#) (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:
- Gen. 3 – Double Battles, National Pokédex, the First Remakes
- Gen. 4 – the Physical/Special Split
- Gen. 5 – Triple Battles, a Pokédex "reboot"
- The Height of the Series?
- The Evolution of Pokemon Designs

Assignment: [Pokémon Discussion Question #2](#) (Due Week 8, Oct. 27)

Week 8 (Oct. 27) — Pokémon Generations 6-8

Due: [Pokémon Discussion Question #2](#) (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:
- Gen. 6 – Mega Evolution and "One-Off" Mechanics
- Gen. 7 – Z Moves, Island Challenges vs. Gyms
- Gen. 8 – "Dexit," Dynamaxing, DLC

Assignment: Pokémon Discussion Question #3 (Due Week 9, Nov. 3)

Week 9 (Nov. 3) — Modern Pokémon

Due: Pokémon Discussion Question #3 (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:

- *Legends Arceus* and Open World
- Gen. 9 – The Broken Launch of *Scarlet* and *Violet*
- Competitive Pokémon
- How many Pokémon is too many? When will it end?

Assignment: Pokémon Discussion Question #4 (Due Week 10, Nov. 10)

Week 10 (Nov. 10) — Donkey Kong Country

Due: Pokémon Discussion Question #4 (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:

- Level Design – Linear Progression with Choices; Built around Kong Abilities, Animal Buddies
- Environmental Themes and Emergent Platforming Mechanics

Assignments:

- Donkey Kong Country Discussion Question (Due Week 11, Nov. 17)
- Start Game Franchise Research Presentation (Due Week 12, Dec. 1)

Note: Course Withdrawal Deadline is Nov. 14

Week 11 (Nov. 17) — Kirby

Due: Donkey Kong Country Discussion Question (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Lecture/Discussion:

- An Unusual Platforming Ability: Kirby's Power of Flight
- Iterations of the Copy Ability
- 2D vs. 3D – *Kirby and the Forgotten Land*: Why not until 2022?

Assignments:

- Finish Game Franchise Research Presentation (Due Week 12, Dec. 1)
- Kirby Discussion Question (Due Week 12, Dec. 1)

No Class Nov. 24 (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 12 (Dec. 1) — Game Franchise Research Presentations

Due:

- Game Franchise Research Presentation (90 pts / 15% of Semester Grade)
- Kirby Discussion Question (30 pts / 5% of Semester Grade)

Assignment: Start Original Game Concept Presentation (Due Dec. 15)

Week 13 (Dec. 8) — Final Project Workshop

Workshop:

- Project Status
- Lab Time & Questions

Assignment: Finish Original Game Concept Presentation (Due Dec. 15)

Note: If you wish to request a grade of Incomplete for this course, you must do so by Dec. 8

Final Exam Period (Dec. 15) — Original Game Concept Presentations

Please note that this class meeting will take place Friday, Dec. 15 from 1:00-3:00 PM

Due: Original Game Concept Presentation (150 pts / 25% of Semester Grade)

Please submit any missing work no later than Monday, 12/18 – have a wonderful winter break!

Academic Policies

Policy on Academic Integrity and Cases of Academic Dishonesty
This class will follow the policies of Rider University regarding Academic Integrity, as well as the procedures in addressing cases of Academic Dishonesty. The College's policies on such matters can be found in their entirety at: http://catalog.rider.edu/policies/code-academic-integrity/. Academic Dishonesty refers to a misrepresentation of the source or permissions related to the submission of written and creative works. In the area of digital design, this includes visual work, audio work, and written work. If in doubt, feel free to discuss sources with me before submission of work.

Academic Success Center
Students needing supplemental help beyond the scope of this class are encouraged to contact the Academic Success Center in Suite 237 of the Bart Luedeke Center. The center's services include a writing studio, success coaching and the potential for tutoring services. Email academicsuccesscenter@rider.edu.

Academic Disability Policy
Rider University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all students with disabilities. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of Sample Syllabus Statements-Disabilities April 2021 1973, you are required to register with Student Accessibility and Support Services office (SASS) at the Bart Luedeke Center, Suite 201. SASS can be contacted by email at accessibility@rider.edu or by phone at 609-895-5492, To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper accommodation form from SASS and meet with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss your accommodations.

Class Absence Notice
It is the student's responsibility to inform instructors of the nature and extent of an actual or anticipated absence. If that is impossible, or if the absence is or will be more than three (3) consecutive class sessions (seven (7) calendar days), the student should contact the Office of the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@rider.edu or 609-896-5101. Then the dean's office will notify the appropriate faculty member. More information about the procedure for notifying the dean's office of absences can be found at https://www.rider.edu/about/offices-services/student-affairs/dean-of-students/info-for-students/class-absence-notice

Incomplete Grades
Students who, as a result of extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete the required work of a course within the term, may request an extension of time from a faculty member. Such extensions of time can be granted only in cases in which illness or another serious emergency has prevented the student from completing the course requirements or from taking a final examination. The request for extension of time must be made prior to the last scheduled class meeting, except in those unusual situations in which prior notification is impossible.

The faculty member shall determine whether to grant the request for a time extension and the type of verification (if any) required to support the request. The faculty member shall specify the time, up to four weeks from the last day of the term, as specified in the academic calendar, by which work must be completed by the student. If the faculty member does agree to the request, the notation "I" (Incomplete) shall be submitted on the grade roll. In those situations where the faculty member has not received a request for an extension of time, the notation "I" (Incomplete) may be submitted on the grade roll by the faculty member when, in his or her judgment, such a determination appears justified. Upon submission of completed required work the faculty member shall submit a Change of Grade form to the Registrar.

Students who, as a result of extenuating circumstances, are unable to submit the completed required work at the end of the four-week period may request an extension of the incomplete grade. The request for an extension of the incomplete must be made prior to the expiration of the four-week period. If the faculty member agrees to the request for an extension of the incomplete, the faculty member shall specify the time, up to a maximum of two weeks from the date of expiration of the four-week period (i.e., six weeks from the last day of the term) by which work must be completed by the student and shall submit an Extension of Incomplete form to the Registrar.

Upon submission of completed required work, the faculty member shall submit a Change of Grade form to the Registrar and assign the course grade. Failure of the Registrar to receive from the faculty member a Change of Grade form or an Extension of Incomplete form at the end of the four-week period, or a Change of Grade form at the end of the six-week period shall result in the automatic assignment of the grade "F," "Z," or "U" by the Registrar.

Students who receive an incomplete in a course that is part of a course sequence must obtain permission from the department chairperson to remain enrolled in the next course in the sequence or they will be removed from that next course.

More information on grade reports can be found here:
http://catalog.rider.edu/policies/undergraduate/grades/

Courses – Adding, Dropping, Withdrawing, Auditing, Repeating
Students may add courses through the first week of the regular semester at their own discretion provided the course is still open for registration. Students may drop courses through the second week of the regular semester at their own discretion. In such cases, the courses are deleted from the student's record. After the second week of the semester, a withdrawal from the course is necessary and a 'W' is recorded on the transcript.

Students may withdraw from courses and receive a grade of 'W' during the third through tenth weeks of the semester. The student's academic advisor and financial aid counselor will be notified of class withdrawals by email. View the course drop/withdrawal policy:
https://www.rider.edu/tuition-aid/financial-aid/payment-billing/drop-withdrawal-policy

Fall 2023 withdrawal dates can be found here:
http://catalog.rider.edu/academic-calendar/#Fall%20Semester%202017

More information on course processes can be found here:

http://catalog.rider.edu/policies/undergraduate/courses-add-drop/

Registrar forms can be found here: https://www.rider.edu/academics/academic-support/registrar/forms