



Hogeschool van Amsterdam
University of Applied Sciences

MINOR GAME DESIGN

30 ECTS

Spring semester 23 January – 30 June 2012

CREATING TOMORROW

Minor Game Design

Games are part of our lives. For many people, games are just as important as films or television. For policy makers they are a means to reach large target groups. Games have grown into a mature medium for entertainment and communication. The game industry is expanding in the Netherlands and elsewhere. There is also an increasing need for expertise in games in other disciplines as well, i.e. advertising, public relations and education.

Game design is not about the programming of games but about designing game rules, storytelling, creation of characters and worlds. It's about people who play, about communication, user interactive interfaces and interaction.. Various theories on gaming are discussed and you will learn to understand the ins and outs of the design process of a game (from concept to design).

The minor programme is practically oriented and the final product (a game) will be developed in a team with students of the Game Technology minor.

Research and creativity are key elements of this minor. Understanding of technology is recommended as well as eagerness to master design and graphic software in a short time.

Start of the minor Game Design: 23 January 2012.

More info: Joris Dormans. Email: j.dormans@hva.nl.

COURSE OF THIS MINOR: GAMEPLAY

Workload 4 ECTS

lecturer: Joris Dormans

Gameplay is difficult to define. It's about player perception and the quality of the game. Gameplay is influenced by interaction, rules and psychology. The lectures and workshops cover the most important means of making a game fun and playable.

Programme

1. Topics: playing and forms of play
2. Topics: Psychology of gameplay (challenge, difficulty)
3. Topics: Boardgame (followed by the assignment for the board game project)
4. Topics: Game balance
5. Topics: Rules and Core Mechanics
6. Topics: Interaction and expression
7. Topics: Tight game design (Less is more)
8. Topics / Workshop: Level design

Assessment: Assignments during workshops

Literature: Fundamentals of Game Design

COURSE OF THIS MINOR: GAME ART

Workload: 4 ECTS

lecturer: Dop Terlingen

The design of a game is a very important issue of game perception. Designing games starts with observing and drawing and ends with animation and modelling. Central theme: the way in which design is attuned to concept of play.

Topics:

- Visual analysis
- Art history
- drawing
- modelling in clay
- 2D Tools
- Animation
- 3D modelling

COURSE OF THIS MINOR: GAME THEORY

Game Theory

workload : 3 ECTS

Lecturer: Wally de Munk

Due to an increasing academic interest in games, the expertise on games is gradually growing. These lectures give an overview of the most important themes and developments in this field. The history of games, gamers' views and the most important components of games are covered. The aim of this course is to develop a sharp and analytical vision on games

Programme:

1. Institutional and critical history of games and the game industry
2. Game characters
3. Game worlds
4. Sound and music in games
5. Simulation and the magical circle
6. Game rhetorics
7. Interactive storytelling
8. Gamers, trends and developments in what people want.

assessment: exam

Literature: Fundamentals of Game Design + selection of articles

COURSE OF THIS MINOR: CANON GAMES

Canon Games

workload: 1 ECTS

Lecturer: Joris Dormans + guest lecturers

Computer games have existed for dozens of years now and in recent history a number of games have been made which each game designer should know.

In this series of Canon of Games, we are introduced to a number of these key games. Each lecture focuses on and thoroughly analyses one or more games. These games serve as an illustration of a number of important concepts of game theory. Students also present their own analysis of a game of their choice. This analysis is further elaborated on in a short paper.

Topics

1. Playing: Grand Theft Auto
2. Realism in games: Half-Life and the FPS genre
3. Game Mechanics: board games and Action Games
4. Military Simulation and Strategy games (guest lecture)
5. Classic games
6. Characters and storytelling: Role playing games (from D&D to MMORPGs)
7. Game Worlds: Adventure-games (Zelda series)
8. Level Design: Platform games (Mario, and so on)

Assessment: presentation(s) game, and paper

Literature: one's own selection + the games

FIRST PROJECT

Workload: 2 ECTS

Period: term 3, Week 3 and 4

participants: students Game Design

PROJECT OF THIS MINOR

Project: Game

workload: 15 ECTS

Period: from term 3, week 6 to the end of the minor programme

participants: students Game Design and Game Technology

The game project is what this minor is all about. Students work on a game in teams of five (both game design and game technology students). The choice of the type of game is free and the game must be delivered as a working product at the end of the minor programme.

The project is divided in a number of phases.

First phase: concept phase resulting in a game design document and a proof-of-concept.

Second phase: starts at the beginning of term 4 and ends with the delivery of a prototype in week 4 of term 4. It is of the utmost importance that it is a playable prototype. The prototypes are tested and evaluated by the lecturers of Game Design and Game Technology.

After the delivery of the prototype, the game is finished and readied for presentation at a project fair. Professionals from the game industry are invited to this fair and constitute a panel of judges which will award the top three best games. Next to these awards, the lecturers will evaluate the design, gameplay and technology of the games.