

SGD200 Experimental Game Design

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

BLENDED
LEARNING

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to unisc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course examines the theoretical concepts of game design through the lens of experimental practice. In response to a theme, you will work individually to develop unique ways of interacting with gamespaces by rapidly prototyping a series of game ideas. Through focused experimentation, you will create, apply and critique game designs, gameplay and game technology in a variety of contexts and genres.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled face to face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled online workshops (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

- History and approaches to experimental game design practice
- Game design frameworks and game elements
- Minimalism and game design
- Dynamic Difficulty Adjustment (DDA) and Flow theory
- Virtual Sensation – Designing Game Feel
- Embodiment and Tangible media
- Gameplay space and advanced mechanics
- Game balance

2. What level is this course?

200 Level (Developing)

Building on and expanding the scope of introductory knowledge and skills, developing breadth or depth and applying knowledge and skills in a new context. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally, undertaken in the second or third full-time year of an undergraduate programs.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Demonstrate knowledge of theories relating to game design and production, game mechanics, and game elements, and how they integrate to form game experiences.	Knowledgeable
2 Critically analyse games through given frameworks and design theories.	Creative and critical thinker
3 Design and create prototypes of experimental games based on theories of design and game design principles.	Engaged

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

knowledge and skills (where applicable) Beginner knowledge of game design theory and practices.

5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Students will give a 5-minute demonstrations of game prototypes they have designed that respond to a theme. This will provide an opportunity to showcase students' current knowledge and receive feedback from both the tutor and their peers.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Artefact - Creative	Individual	30%	Four game prototypes	Refer to Format	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Artefact - Creative, and Oral	Individual	30%	20 minutes - (4 sessions x 5 minutes)	Refer to Format	Online Self and Peer Assessment
All	3	Journal	Individual	40%	2500 words	Refer to Format	Online Blog, Wiki or Journal

All - Assessment Task 1: Game Prototypes

GOAL:	Develop a range of prototypes that explore and test a variety of game design principles and mechanics.		
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative		
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:			
FORMAT:	Students are required to design and develop a series of prototypes in short development cycles and in response to keywords and themes. Prototypes will be submitted for critique in weeks 4, 7, 11 and 12 during the scheduled critique sessions. Feedback for each prototype will be provided during critique sessions, with a final grade awarded for the submission of all four prototypes in week 12.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrates an understanding of the key concepts covered in the unit lectures, tutorials and workshops.	1 3
	2	The prototypes provide an appropriate and creative response to the keywords and themes of the design brief.	1 3
	3	Game mechanics are unique and demonstrate practical knowledge of game design theory and frameworks.	2 3
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Applying technologies		

All - Assessment Task 2: Critique Sessions with artefact

GOAL:	Critique your own work and present an analysis of the prototyping experience. Explain the chosen design process and production methodologies when presenting results.		
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Oral		
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:			
FORMAT:	Participate and effectively contribute to critique sessions. Critique sessions occur in weeks 4, 7, 11 and 12. Students are required to actively participate in the critique of their own and others work demonstrating an understanding of game design concepts and theories discussed in learning materials. Each session will be worth 7.5% (total of 30%) of the total course marks.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Critically discusses linkages between existing games, game design theories and game-play mechanics.	1 3
	2	Analyses game design and game mechanics while expressing clearly reasoned viewpoints supported with credible evidence.	1 2 3
	3	Uses a range of information resources for a research topic. Critically analyse effectiveness, accuracy and rigour of information sources.	1 2 3
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 3: Reflective Journal

GOAL:	A personalised account of own experience during design challenges. Incorporating reflection of experimental techniques and methodologies as well as the deconstruction and evaluation of other works.		
PRODUCT:	Journal		
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:			
FORMAT:	Design journal reflecting on a series of prototypes, presentation, and game designs. During the development of each prototype and after each critique you will submit a changelog/blog, that summarizes your design goals and reflects on existing game design influences and the feedback provided during the critique sessions. Journals are submitted in weeks 5, 8, 12 and Exam Period.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrates the application of theory to game design and development.	1 2 3
	2	Reflects on learning during practice, clearly articulates decision making and results	1 2 3
	3	Conveys ideas clearly and fluently, in spoken, written and game prototype form.	1 2 3
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Applying technologies, Information literacy		

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

You need regular access to the resource(s) below. Many texts are available as ebooks through the [Library](#) at no additional cost.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Recommended	Jesse Schell	2008	The Art of Game Design	n/a	CRC Press

8.2. Specific requirements

This course requires some commercial software or hardware which is provided at USC campuses for student use. If you elect to do this course online, you may either; attend a campus at which it is available, discuss alternative open source solutions with your course coordinator that would enable you to demonstrate the learning outcomes, or if you prefer you may acquire this software and / or hardware at your own expense. Some experience with game development software is highly recommended.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

- Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
- From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
- More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.5. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- [UniSC Student Central](#)
- [UniSC Adelaide Student Central](#)