Foundations of Interactive Game Design (80K)

week one, lecture one
What’s important to a game like *Rock Band 2*?
Technology

- Game software
- Console
- Specialized controllers
Formal system

Rhythm mechanics

Developing context

Collaborative play
Meaningful media

Rock music, well, *rocks*

People have songs and bands they identify with

People like to pretend: air guitar, karaoke, *Guitar Hero*
Social experience

Formal system’s collaborative play

Play in physical space

Formal competition
Understanding computer games
Games are technology

• Physical hardware: consoles (Xbox, Wii, PS3), handhelds (DS, PSP), PCs, arcade cabinets, guitar controllers, etc

• Software engines: Unreal, Source, CryEngine, Flash’s renderer, etc

• Middleware and other components: AI, physics, world management, etc

• Authoring systems: Aurora, Flash, Excel, etc
Games are formal systems

- Game rules: just like card & board games, RPGs, war games, and playground games
- World rules: traditional hide-and-seek gets doors, lighting, gravity (etc) “for free” from the physical world — games have to (and get to) define their own world rules
- Game definitions are based on logical structure
Games are meaningful media

- Games have text, image, sound: metamedium
- Books, albums, and movies are fixed presentations — games are *media machines*
- Games can tell stories, make arguments, do other things media do — traditionally or procedurally
Games are social experiences

- We play with other physically present people (Wii, LAN parties, Rock Band)
- We play with other virtually present people (MMOs, Second Life, Xbox achievements)
- Our experiences of games are deeply shaped by our participation in online and offline game cultures
In this class

- Games as technologies
- Games as formal systems
- Games as meaningful media
- Games as social experiences
- Understanding games and *making* games
Course overview
Course basics

- Syllabus online: http://www.soe.ucsc.edu/classes/cmps080k/Winter09/
- Lecture: MWF 2:00-3:10pm, Media Theater M110
- Labs: weekly, in Baskin Engineering (BE) 109
Grade components

- Making a game: 44% — using Game Maker, no programming experience required!
- Reading quizzes: 16% — given at lecture, readings from game designers & scholars
- Game analysis paper: 15% — using game design and game studies concepts
- Section participation (5%), tutorials (10%), and final exam (10%)
Making a game

• 2 person teams, using Game Maker Pro (installed in labs)

• Each team will make a game based on their strengths — some programming, some art, some writing, some theme knowledge, etc

• Sections will teach Game Maker, discuss game design concepts, give feedback, and include help sessions
Game project phases

• Team selection: due week 3
• Game concept: due week 4
• Work breakdown: due week 5
• Prototype: due week 6
• Progress report: due week 7
• Playtestable version: due week 9
• Final game: due week 10
Sections

• Each includes one TA and two reader/tutors (who did well in 80K earlier years)

• This week’s section takes you through everything you need to know for the first assignment (a customized tutorial)

• If you already missed your section this week, attend another:
Sections

W, 10am-12pm: Chris Lewis, Chelsea Collins, Travis Baugh

W, 12-2pm: Ken Hullett, Christopher Ward, Mary Williams

Th, 12-2pm: Ken Hullett, Max Stokols, Estevan Aguayo

Th, 2-4pm: Chris Lewis, JD Stockford, Sarah Napoli

Th, 4-6pm: Anne Sullivan, Trevor Prater, Alexander Mathew
Not present

Chris Lewis
Lectures

• Readings from *Rules of Play* (required text) or available free online — read for Friday

• Lectures by professor and visiting researchers/developers (Sony, Stanford, etc)

• Goal of inviting discussion — come to lecture with questions you want answered
Science and Engineering Library is developing a collection of computer games.

Can check out NES, SNES, N64, PS2, Wii consoles (have 5 each)
  - Along with games of design distinction
  - Go to checkout desk with student ID to check out games
  - Need to reserve Wii - popular

Classic console lab
  - Important historical consoles
    - NES, SNES, Genesis, PS1, Saturn, N64, Dreamcast, Xbox, GameCube
    - Soon Japanese PS2
  - Get key from checkout desk

260+ titles in collection
  - Deep collection of RPGs and Space Shooters (shmups/STG)

Created specifically for this class, so please take advantage of this resource.
Reaching us

- Prof office hours: E2 271, W 3:30-5pm
- TA office hours: E2 393
  Anne Sullivan: W 3:30-5pm
  Ken Hullett: Th 2:00-3:30
  Chris Lewis: T 3:30-5pm
Questions now?
Finally...

tell your friends!