

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

Course Title	Course Code	Semester	Course Hour/Week		Credit	ECTS
			Theory	Practice		
Story Structure in Game Design	GAME 201	3	2	2	3	5
Course Type	Compulsory Course	Department Elective	Faculty Elective	University Elective	CoHE (YÖK) Elective	Other
	X	-	-	-	-	-
Level of Course	Associate Degree (Short Cycle)		Undergraduate (First Cycle)		Graduate/ Doctoral (Second /Third Cycle)	
	-		X		-	

<b>Language of Instruction</b>	English
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<b>Course Instructor(s)</b>	Ali Çağan Uzman	E-mail : ali.uzman@arucad.edu.tr	
<b>Course Objectives</b>	This course explores the fundamentals of game design as well as story structure in different kind of digital games. Practical, Theoretical, analytical and conceptual understanding of storytelling in digital games will be reviewed and discussed. Students will also practice different methods of creating game motivations.		
<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Students will be able to:</b>	<b>Teaching Methods</b>	<b>Evaluation Methods</b>
	Write a comprehensive game treatment defining the narrative premise, character profiles, and player motivations.	Project-Based Learning	Mid-term and Final submission

	Design structural frameworks for both linear and non-linear stories within digital games.	Project-Based Learning	Mid-term and Final submission
	Create original game ideas and narrative prototypes that successfully connect mechanics with player emotions.	Project-Based Learning	Mid-term and Final submission
	Design diverse story structures, main quest lines, and branching side narrative arcs.	Project-Based Learning	Mid-term and Final submission
<b>Course Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Definition of Games</li> <li>• Formal elements of games</li> <li>• Narrative Elements</li> <li>• The three act story structure</li> <li>• Work with Twine.</li> <li>• Represent story procedurally in a game.</li> <li>• Digital Game Concept</li> <li>• Social and Emotional Game Prototype</li> <li>• Linear &amp; non-linear stories.</li> <li>• Aesthetics of feelings in game design</li> </ul>		

<b>COURSE OUTLINE/SCHEDULE</b>			
<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Implementation (theory/practice)</b>	<b>Required Reading, Preliminary preparation</b>
1	Introduction: What is Story in Games? Course workflow & outcomes; Narrative vs. Ludonarrative; Player agency.		
2	Rewards & Punishments; Psychology for Game Story (motivation, loss aversion, competence/autonomy/relatedness).	T/P	Koster, R. (2013). A theory of fun for game design (2nd ed.). O'Reilly Media.

3	Ludonarrative Harmony vs. Dissonance – Case Studies (Red Dead Redemption II, GRIS, Hollow Knight, Limbo/Inside).	T/P	<a href="https://www.gamedesigning.org/learn/game-elements/">https://www.gamedesigning.org/learn/game-elements/</a>  <a href="https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/the-rules-of-play-directing-gamer-and-user-behaviour">https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/the-rules-of-play-directing-gamer-and-user-behaviour</a>
4	Reverse Engineering I – Indie narrative teardown (choose an award-winning indie).	T/P	<a href="https://www.johnyorkestory.com/2020/03/how-to-write-a-video-game-treatment/">https://www.johnyorkestory.com/2020/03/how-to-write-a-video-game-treatment/</a> Lecture’s note and slides.
5	Reverse Engineering II – AAA narrative teardown (choose an acclaimed AAA).	T/P	
6	Synthesis Workshop – Indie vs. AAA comparisons; preparing midterm decks.	T/P	Lecture’s note and slides.
7	MIDTERM WEEK – Teardown Presentations (individual, written exam).	T/P	
8	Original Scenario – Premise & Protagonist (indie-scale constraint).		
9	Core Loop + Reward/Punish Economy for Your Scenario.	T/P	Lecture’s note and slides. <a href="https://brilliantio.com/nonlinear-narrative-and-how-to-use-it-in-your-storytelling/">https://brilliantio.com/nonlinear-narrative-and-how-to-use-it-in-your-storytelling/</a> Aronson, Linda, 1950-. (2010). The 21st century screenplay : a comprehensive guide to writing tomorrow's films / Linda Aronson. Crows Nest, N.S.W. : Allen & Unwin
10	Main Quest Structure – Beats, gates, fail states, and recovery.	T/P	Aronson, Linda, 1950-. (2010). The 21st century screenplay : a comprehensive guide to writing tomorrow's films / Linda Aronson. Crows Nest, N.S.W. : Allen & Unwin
11	Side Quests – Motivations, optional arcs, and world coherence.	T/P	Olive, J., (2018) Playing with Feelings: Video Games and Affect. Aubrey Anable. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
12	Character Web – Motivations, allies/antagonists, archetypes; economy of information.	T/P	Lecture’s note and slides.
13	Pacing, Stressors, and Emotional Arcs – Challenge curves and recovery; avoiding grind.	T/P	Koster, R. (2013). A theory of fun for game design (2nd ed.). O’Reilly Media.

14	Pitch Rehearsal – Deck polish and timing.	T/P	Dille, F., & Zuur Platten, J. (2007). The ultimate guide to video game writing and design. Lone Eagle Publishing.
15	FINAL PRESENTATIONS – Pitch Decks.	T/P	

<p><b>Required Course Material(s) / Reading(s)/ Text Book(s)</b></p>	<p><b>Materials:</b> External hard drive. Sketchbook/Notebook/Laptop/Tablet</p> <p><b>Book:</b> Aronson, Linda, 1950-. (2010). The 21st century screenplay : a comprehensive guide to writing tomorrow's films / Linda Aronson. Crows Nest, N.S.W. : Allen &amp; Unwin Dille, F., &amp; Zuur Platten, J. (2007). The ultimate guide to video game writing and design. Lone Eagle Publishing. Koster, R. (2013). A theory of fun for game design (2nd ed.). O'Reilly Media. Olive, J., (2018) Playing with Feelings: Video Games and Affect. Aubrey Anable. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.</p>
<p><b>Recommended Course Material(s)/ Reading(s) /Other</b></p>	<p><b>Recommended Readings:</b></p> <p>Craig Caldwell, Story Structure and Development A Guide for Animators, VFX Artists, Game Designers, and Virtual Reality, 2017 Tobias Heussner, Toiya Kristen Finley, Jennifer Brandes Hepler, Ann Lemay, The Game Narrative Toolbox, Published June 24, 2015 by Routledge Kalmpourtzis, George, Educational Game Design Fundamentals : a journey to creating intrinsically motivating learning experiences, Publisher: Boca Raton, FL : CRC Press, 2018 Tristan Donovan. Replay : The history of video games, Publisher: Great Britain : Yellow ant , 2010 Zack Hiwiller Players Making Decisions : game design essentials and the art of understanding your players, Publisher New Riders/NRG, 2016</p>

<b>ASSESSMENT</b>		
<b>Learning Activities</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>WEIGHT in %</b>
Mid-Term	1	40%
Quiz		
Assignment		
Project		
Field Study		
Presentation / Seminar		

Studio Practice		
Other / Class participation and Engagement		
<b>Contribution of Final Examination/Final Project/ Dissertation to the Final Grade</b>	1	60%
<b>TOTAL</b>		100%

CONTRIBUTION OF COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES TO PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES						
No	PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES	Level of Contribution (1-lowest/ 5-highest)				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Knows the historical development of the field of communication, basic concepts, theories.	✓				
2	Knows the basic concepts and terminology related to the field of game design.				✓	
3	Has knowledge about the history of computer and video games and developments in this field.					✓
4	Knows game design processes and related applications.					✓
5	Has the ability to utilize various disciplines such as communication, art, music, psychology, mythology, cinema, etc. in the game design process.			✓		
6	Has the ability to analyze analog and digital game genres.					✓
7	Has the ability to use contemporary game engines and problem solving skills.				✓	
8	Has the knowledge of questioning the game designs with an analytic and critical perspective.				✓	
9	Has knowledge about media literacy.	✓				
10	Has the competence to prepare projects based on ethical principles in game development processes.				✓	
11	Has the competence to evaluate games as an art form.				✓	
12	Has the competence to use game design concepts and methods in related fields such as design, software development and media.					✓

13	Has the competence to take part and responsibility in game development teams.					✓
14	Has the competence to collect, analyze and interpret analytical data about games and players.				✓	
15	Has the competence to develop and present a digital game project by using game design practices effectively.					✓
16	Evaluates artificial intelligence applications in their studies with a critical approach in terms of aesthetics and originality, and uses them in accordance with ethical rules.			✓		

**CONTRIBUTION OF COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES TO PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**ECTS / STUDENT WORKLOAD**


















<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>UNIT</b>	<b>HOUR</b>	<b>TOTAL (WORKLOAD)</b>
Course Teaching Hour (X weeks * total course hours)	15		4	60
Preliminary Preparation and self- study	14		2	28
Mid-Term	1		20	20
Quiz				
Assignment				
Project				
Field Study				
Presentation / Seminar				
Studio Practice				
Final Examination/ Final Project/ Dissertation	1		20	20
Other				
<b>TOTAL WORKLOAD</b>				128
<b>TOTAL WORKLOAD / 25</b>				5.12
<b>ECTS</b>				<b>5</b>

**ETHICAL RULES WITH REGARD TO THE COURSE**

**Plagiarism Disclaimer**

Detected and undetected plagiarism is a serious offence at any time and it could have devastating effects on your degree result and future professional lives.

Plagiarism is easy to avoid if you make sure to identify and acknowledge your sources thoroughly and do not copy directly from visual examples, designs, or notes that have in turn been taken word for word from your sources.

	SDG 1: No Poverty	
	SDG 2: Zero Hunger	
	SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being	
	SDG 4: Quality Education	X
	SDG 5: Gender Equality	
	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	
	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	
	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	
	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	X
	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	
	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	
	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	
	SDG 13: Climate Action	
	SDG 14: Life Below Water	
	SDG 15: Life on Land	
	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	
	SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals	

**ASSESSMENT DETAILS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

Final Grades will be determined according to the Course Learning Activities and Final Examination/ Project/ Dissertation Assessment Details as below, and comply by the Education and Examination Regulation set forth by the University.

Throughout the course, students will learn theoretical base of the topic and they will be able to equip themselves with the practical know-how skills of Advertisement production. Also, students are expected to design a creative advertisement piece with the knowledge they have gained in the course.

During the class sessions, participation is very important input for learning process for the students. It is also vital to understand the effect of creativity input for the production process of advertisement.

<b>PREPARED BY</b>	Ali Çağan Uzman
<b>UPDATED</b>	15.10.2025
<b>APPROVED</b>	