FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION

DIGITAL GAME DESIGN DEPARTMENT FINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

SECTION ONE
General Framework

This guideline defines the scope, methodology, and evaluation criteria for all project work to be carried out within the scope of the Digital Game Design Department GAME403-GAME404 Final Project. The primary objective of the course is for students to develop an original, user-centered, and professional-quality digital game project that is playable, systematic, theoretically grounded, and professional in nature, based on a game idea, theme, or problem selected by the student over two semesters.

The final project addresses not only game production but also comprehensively covers the design thinking behind the game idea, the theoretical framework, mechanical decisions, user (player) experience, and the development process. The student is responsible for explaining in academic language why the game was designed in this way, what design problems it addresses, and what methods were used to develop it. The process begins with problem definition, target player analysis, and concept development stages. Then, game mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetic elements (MDA framework), level design, narrative structure, and interaction decisions are developed. The project progresses through iterative prototyping and game testing; it is continuously improved based on the feedback received.

At the end of the term, the student submits a project package consisting of a playable game prototype, along with a game design document (GDD), audiovisual materials, gameplay videos, and supporting documents. The project is presented to the Final Jury with a professional presentation.

SECTION TWO
Project Types

Each student can develop an integrated project that covers one or more of the following categories, depending on their area of interest and specialization.

1. Digital Game Projects

Students create an original work in groups through a 2D or 3D digital game, a single-player or multiplayer game prototype, a PC, mobile, or web-based game, story-focused, mechanic-focused, or experimental games.

Possible outputs:

(1) Playable game prototype
(2) Level designs
(3) Core game mechanics and systems
(4) UI/HUD designs
(5) Player interaction flows

2. Serious Games

Students can develop a game project related to education and/or social awareness with themes such as health, culture, history, or the environment.

Possible outputs:

(1) Playable prototype
(2) Relationship between learning objectives and game mechanics
(3) Target user analysis
(4) In-game feedback systems

3. Narrative-Focused Game Projects

Students can develop story-based games to create experimental projects on interactive narratives and choice-based game structures.

Possible outputs:

(1) Game scenario
(2) Branched narrative structures
(3) Character and world design
(4) Story flow diagrams

4. Gamification Projects

Within this scope, design solutions can be developed that aim to increase education and user participation through gamification systems for digital platforms.

Possible outputs:

(1) Gamification model
(2) Points, badges, progress systems
(3) User experience scenarios VR/AR
(4) Interactive story platform
(5) Web-based digital narrative
(6) Interactive comic book / motion comic

Students can choose one type or develop a combined integrated project.

SECTION THREE
Project Proposal

5. The student presents a project proposal consisting of the following headings to the jury within the first 7 weeks and receives feedback:
(1) Project Title
(2) Game Type and Platform
(3) Target Player / Player Profile
(4) Theoretical Background (game theory, similar games, literature)
(5) Core Game Mechanics
(6) Narrative (if applicable)

(7) Visual and audio style approach
(8) Expected outputs
(9) Preliminary timeline
(10) Initial prototype and/or concept sketches, models, audio recordings

SECTION FOUR
Project Development Process (Midterm Jury)

The project development process aims to systematically advance research, analysis, problem definition, and design decisions in line with the topic chosen by the student. These stages are carried out in parallel with the weekly flow of the course syllabus and ensure that the project is fundamentally sound, well-reasoned, and shaped to meet user needs.

6. Methods and Tools

Students utilize the following methods and tools in the game design process:

(1) Player research and testing
(2) Personas and player scenarios
(3) MDA (Mechanics–Dynamics–Aesthetics) analysis
(4) Game design document (GDD)
(5) Game engines (Unity, Unreal, etc.)

7. Implementation Phase

At this stage, students transform their game idea into a playable prototype. The process progresses through cycles of testing, feedback, and iteration. Possible outputs are as follows:

(1) Playable prototype
(2) Level designs
(3) UI / HUD
(4) Gameplay video
(5) GDD (final version)

SECTION FIVE
Presentation and Jury

8. Midterm Grading Criteria (40% of the total grade)

The midterm stage is conducted to assess how well the student has grounded their project idea, how prepared they are for the research and design process, and the adequacy of the project being initiated. The four main criteria listed below are used to measure the adequacy of the project's initial stage.

(1) Clarity in Project Structure and Explanatory Nature of the Proposed Game Project (%40)

The student is expected to clearly present the core idea of their game project in terms of originality, creativity, and innovation. The game concept should be expressed in a clear and understandable manner; the audience should be able to easily grasp the core idea of the game. The presentation

should explain the gameplay structure in a mechanically consistent and understandable way, in terms of the actions the player will perform, the basic rules, and the challenges they will encounter. In addition, a logical relationship should be established between the target audience and the chosen game type, and this choice should be presented along with the reasons for it.

(2) Presentation Quality (30%)

The presentation should be structured to include an introduction, body, and conclusion. It is important that the content progresses in a logical order and provides a coherent narrative. The visual materials used (slides, diagrams, sketches, visual references, etc.) should support the idea of the game and strengthen the presentation. The student's verbal presentation will be evaluated in terms of clarity of expression, tone of voice, speed control, and confidence during the presentation.

(3) Project Distribution and Timeline (20%)

The student is expected to use the time allocated for the presentation effectively and evenly. The presentation must be completed within the given time limits. Time should be distributed evenly between the sections of the presentation; no section should be unnecessarily prolonged or rushed through. Time management is an important criterion for evaluating the clarity and persuasiveness of the presentation.

(4) Consistency in the Q&A session following the presentation (10%)

In the question-and-answer section, the student is expected to provide clear, concise, and consistent answers to the questions posed. The answers given should reflect the student's mastery of the game concept, mechanics, and planned production process. At this stage, it is important for the student to be able to defend not only their idea but also the feasibility and logical integrity of the project for evaluation purposes.

9. Final Jury (60% of the total grade)

The Final Jury evaluates the extent to which the game project developed by the students or student group during the semester has been completed in line with the objectives set at the outset. At this stage, a playable game prototype, materials documenting the design process, and a professional presentation are expected.

(1) Consistency of the Final Game with the Project Objectives Presented (%25)

The extent to which the final version of the submitted project aligns with the problem, objectives, and scope defined during the visa phase is evaluated. Changes made during the game development process are expected to be justified, consistent, and aligned with the design objectives. Students' ability to clearly articulate why the game ended up this way and how the design decisions made guided the project is considered under this criterion.

(2) Creativity in Game Design (25%)

The creativity of the submitted project in terms of game design is evaluated based on the originality of the experience it offers, its problem-solving approach, and its design vision. Creativity is not only considered at the idea level; it is also assessed based on how it is reflected in the game through elements such as gameplay structure, interaction forms, level design, and narrative usage. Whether the game offers the player a meaningful and distinctive experience forms the basis of this criterion.

(3) Game Mechanics and Design Quality (25%)

The creativity of the submitted project in terms of game design is evaluated based on the originality of the experience it offers, its problem-solving approach, and its design vision. Creativity is not only evaluated at the idea level; it is also assessed based on how it is reflected in the game through elements such as game structure, interaction forms, level design, and narrative usage.

(4) Presentation and Communication Skills (25%)

In the final presentation of the submitted project, students are expected to be able to convey the project in a clear, organized, and persuasive manner. The flow of the presentation, time management, use of gameplay videos or live demos, and the effectiveness of visual materials are evaluated in this context. In group projects, it is important that each student clearly states their contribution to the project and their area of responsibility. Answers to jury questions should reflect students' mastery of the subject, their level of understanding of the design process, and their critical thinking skills.

10. Class Attendance Requirement: 70%

SECTION SIX
Ethical Rules

In their final projects, students are required to fully comply with the principles of academic integrity and design ethics. All content used in the project must be original, and the plagiarism rate, including content generated by artificial intelligence, cannot exceed 20%. If the student has used artificial intelligence tools, this use must be clearly and transparently stated in the project, and its rationale and scope must be explained. Under no circumstances can the use of artificial intelligence be intended to copy content or replace original design processes.

All user research conducted during the project process must be carried out in accordance with ethical principles. Informed consent must be obtained from participants, personal information must be kept confidential, and the principle of anonymity must be adhered to. Users' names, faces, or personal information should not be shared without permission; user feedback should be reported as is, without alteration or manipulation. Fabricating data obtained during research, presenting untested processes as if they had been tested, or producing results based on fake participants is considered a serious ethical violation.

All types of visuals, icons, videos, audio, mockups, or similar materials used in the project must comply with copyright laws. Content requiring a license cannot be used without permission. Materials not subject to copyright must be used with proper attribution in accordance with the relevant license type. Students may not include designs, illustrations, or brand elements belonging to others in their project without permission. If the project is based on a real brand, institution, or individual, it must be stated that the work is a concept project for educational purposes, and permission must be obtained from the institution.

If photographs, videos, or audio recordings of real people are to be used in the project, explicit permission must be obtained from the person, and privacy principles must be respected. The content produced cannot contain any discriminatory, exclusionary, hate speech, or language that violates social sensitivities. If digital manipulation, such as mockups or representative images, is used, it must be clearly stated in the report that these do not reflect the actual product.

The student is responsible for documenting all stages of the design process in a transparent, accurate, and ethical manner. In case of violation of ethical principles, the project may be rejected by the jury and the student may fail the course. Therefore, all students are expected to act in accordance with academic integrity and professional ethical standards during the final project process.

The student is responsible for the information contained in the following links:

https://arucad.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/26b.-A-STUDENT-GUIDE-TO-USING-AI-FOR-UNIVERSITY-WORK.pdf

https://arucad.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/26a.-ETHICS-GUIDE-OF-GENERATIVE-ARTIFICIAL-INTELLIGENCE-USE.pdf