MUAG 4200: Videogames—Behind the Screens

Maymester 2022 3 wk summer 1, 2021
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Pronouns: he / him
Office Location: MU 104
Phone Number: 565 369-7299
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 3 to 4 p.m.
Email: David.Schwarz@unt.edu

Communication Expectations

Please communicate with me via the Canvas email feature; I’ll check email several times each teaching day (and often as well on days during the week when I don’t teach); on the weekends I shall check email Sunday evenings after 6 p.m.

Course Description

In this course we will focus on the game INSIDE; our work will bring together three dimensions of the your daily discussion contributions (graded and shared), in addition to a media-rich paper and a final The three dimensions are: 1) concepts from psychoanalysis, literary theory, and theories of interactivity, 2) making both simple and complex sound objects which you will embed in our Pong game (Javascript) and 3) incorporating your sound object into your version of PONG.

Course Structure

In this course we will

- **PART I**: study readings in critical literature;
  - **first**, we you will read these (provided as pdf files), taking notes on what you understand and writing down questions for the what you don't;
  - **second**, you'll watch my video lecture on that reading, taking notes on what you understand and writing down questions for what you don't;
  - **third**, we'll have a group online class in which you ask questions, and I'll answer them! *This first online zoom session will be from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Central Standard Time US.*
  - Graded discussions are due at 5 p.m. Central Standard Time US Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.
- **PART II**: make sound objects using external sound files in Audacity (studying them in Sonic Visualizer). *This zoom session will take place from 1 to 2 p.m.*
- **PART III**: create your own version of PONG using the Javascript programming language. *This zoom session will be from 3 to 4 p.m.*
• We will cover each of these parts of class. Each week's work will culminate in assignments on critical theory (part I), sound design (part II), and Pong (part III); when these assignments are due we have no zoom sessions.

Course Prerequisites or Other Restrictions

There are no required prerequisites for this course. However, in order to be successful in this course you will need to:

• Devote at least 8 hours of work to the course per class day.
• Use a robust internet connection and computer to communicate with colleagues as well as study and upload assignments.
• Network with your fellow students in the discussion boards.
• Learn audio editing software for the sound design portion of the course.
• Learn enough javascript programming language to adapt our generic “Pong” to your own, customized game.

Course Objectives

By the end of Module 1 you will have:

• written a paper on the psychoanalytic dimension of LIMBO from our readings
• begun to make your soundtrack to PONG using manipulations of sine tones
• worked with Javascript to code the background color, icons, and static elements in your version of PONG

By the end of Module 2 you will have:

• expanded your psychoanalytic study of LIMBO to take into account various elements of semiotics from our readings
• expanded your soundtrack to PONG using manipulations of noises (white, grey, blue, pink, and purple)
• revised your version of PONG to enhance and alter the dynamic elements (gameplay) to reflect your aesthetic

By the end of Module 3 you will have

• expanded your psychoanalytic and semiotic dimension of your paper on LIMBO to account for elements of interactivity, based on our readings
• completed all aspects of the soundtrack for PONG including ambient background sound, sounds that represent alerts, and scores
• completed your version of PONG refining all aspects of gameplay and sound design
Materials
You can take and do well in the course with either a Mac or Pc; however, it would be ideal if you had two computers: one Mac + one Pc.; you will need robust internet connection; download the following (free) software: Sonic Visualizer, Audacity.

Teaching Philosophy
I believe in making this course interesting, relevant, culturally sensitive to equity and diversity, and thorough in terms of teaching you professional level mastery of the techniques of audio design and computational editing of videogames.

It is my responsibility to provide you with clear, concise, and competent materials for each day’s work within each module; these include pdf scores (where appropriate), videos (that are single shots with no internal editing, perfect audio and visual assets, and captioning), audio and video assets of the relevant works, and perfectly clear written assignments that I will return via Canvas graded with comments within one week of submission.

It is your responsibility to do each day’s work thoroughly, to communicate concerns that you have via the Canvas email feature, to participate actively in discussion boards, to submit assignments on time, to consider my written comments on papers, and to respond to them following the return of each written assignment.

Course Technology & Skills
To successfully engage with the materials of this course you will need:

- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- Speakers
- Microphone
- (free) Sonic Visualizer
- (free) Audacity
- (around $10) Limbo from Playdead

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy
You will also need to be familiar and comfortable with:

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using presentation and graphics programs

Technical Assistance

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm)
Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
Phone: 940-565-2324
In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130  
Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:
- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit Canvas Technical Help (https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328)

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using “text-talk” unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

Course Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1 – discussions (4)</strong></td>
<td>3 points each</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 2 – discussions (4)</strong></td>
<td>3 points each</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td><strong>Module 3 – discussions (4)</strong></td>
<td>3 points each</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td><strong>Media-rich paper</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td><strong>Final Pong</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
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<td><strong>Total points</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
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**Grading**

**Discussion Posts:** 3 points each

3 points: you have thoroughly and precisely addressed the discussion question in relationship to the readings
2 points: your engagement with the discussion question and its relation to the reading is adequate and correct but not precise
1 point: your engagement with the discussion question bears little resemblance to the reading which suggests that you have not engaged with the content of the reading
0 points: no discussion posted or response that is cursory or contains major mistakes in terms of the meaning of the reading

**Assignments papers**

A = 40 Full and accurate application of at least one of our readings to a moment of a game documented with fully-functional media (audio clips, video clips, sonograms of sounds, images, spectrograms, etc).

B = 38 Good and appropriate application of at least one of our readings to a moment of a game documented with one or two appropriate media (audio clips, video clips, sonograms of sounds, images, spectrograms, etc).

C = 36 Somewhat superficial application of at least one of our readings to a moment of a game documented with few media (audio clips, video clips, sonograms of sounds, images, spectrograms, etc).

D = 34 Poor application of at least one of our readings to a moment of a game documented with very few media (audio clips, video clips, sonograms of sounds, images, spectrograms, etc).

F = <34 minimal text that does not explore the assignment.

**Assignments: PONG**

A = 24 fully functional PONG that evokes in sound, image, and gameplay a precise affect
B = 22 basically functional PONG with imperfect evocation in sound, image, and gameplay a precise affect

C = 19 PONG functionality limited with vague evocation in sound, image, and gameplay a precise affect

D = 17 PONG functionality seriously flawed with little clear evocation in sound, image, and gameplay a precise affect

F = <17 PONG doesn’t work or nothing handed in

Course Evaluation
Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. **SPOT evaluations will be available to you between November 15, and December 2, 2021.**

Course Policies
Face Coverings
UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

Attendance

I require attendance that begins punctually on the hour; and your video monitors must be on during the entire hour. I will deduct one point from your final grade for each zoom session absence.

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Late Work
**Late Work:** I will not accept late work in this course. All work turned in after the deadline will receive a grade of zero unless the student has a university-excused absence (Links to an external site.) and provides documentation with 48 hours of the missed deadline.
**Turn-around Time:** I will comment on and evaluate your work in the evening of the due date. When this is not possible, I will send an announcement to the class.

**Assignment Policy**

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

**Instructor Responsibilities and Feedback**

**UNT Policies**

**Academic Integrity Policy**

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

**ADA Policy**

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website (https://disability.unt.edu/).

**Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)**

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.
Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student’s records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University’s policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT’s Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students’ access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student’s Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect (https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email
inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

**Survivor Advocacy**

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

**Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses**

**Federal Regulation**

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website (http://www.ecfr.gov/). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

**University of North Texas Compliance**

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he...
should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

**Student Verification**

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See **UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses** (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002).

**Use of Student Work**

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student’s permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student’s written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form

**Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses**

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.

2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.

3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

   Example: This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions. Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

   No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.
Academic Support & Student Services
Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- Student Health and Wellness Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- UNT Care Team (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- Individual Counseling (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- UNT Records
- UNT ID Card
- UNT Email Address
- Legal Name

*UNT euIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don’t assume someone’s name, we should also ask and not assume someone’s pronouns.

You can add your pronouns to your Canvas account so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- What are pronouns and why are they important?
- How do I use pronouns?
- How do I share my pronouns?
- How do I ask for another person’s pronouns?
- How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?

Additional Student Support Services

- Registrar (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
• Financial Aid (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
• Student Legal Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
• Career Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
• Multicultural Center (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
• Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
• Pride Alliance (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
• UNT Food Pantry (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services
• Academic Resource Center (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
• Academic Success Center (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
• UNT Libraries (https://library.unt.edu/)
• Writing Lab (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)