



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Subject:	GPM
Course Number:	140
Descriptive Title:	Introduction to Game Narrative
Division:	Library and Learning Resources
Department:	Games and Playable Media
Course Disciplines:	Games and Playable Media
Catalog Description:	This course encompasses the theory and practice of narrative, story, and dialogue with a focus on creating video game narratives as related to overall game design principles. This course covers how video games use narrative to communicate with the player and how game narratives interact with game rules and technologies. The course introduces the process of creating a narrative, integrating the narrative with the game design, using environmental storytelling, designing and using game dialogues, and creating game characters through narrative.
Prerequisite:	GPM 100
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	GPM 110
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade and Pass/No Pass
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	Fall 2026
Transfer UC:	Yes
Effective Date:	pending Fall 2026
General Education ECC:	
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	
Term:	
Other:	
IGETC:	
Term:	

Other:	
CalGETC:	
Term:	
Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to: 1. analyze narrative structure and progression in video games 2. create and evaluate a video game narrative outline document 3. design and write player character and non-player character dialogue that integrates with the overall game narrative.
Course Objectives:	1. Analyze a game's narrative design as it relates to player goals and decisions. 2. Critically evaluate game structure, genre, and mechanics as they relate to overall game narrative. 4. Create a game character narrative and evaluate the narrative presentation relative to game mechanics. 5. Create a game world narrative and integrate the narrative presentation with existing game level designs. 6. Write game narration and/or character dialogue that functions as a feedback mechanism and engages players emotionally. 7. Create and diagram player narrative choices as they relate to game mechanics and level design.
Major Topics:	I. Basics A. Form-led design B. Story in other media and story in games C. Story structure D. Context within development cycle E. Roles within narrative design II. Storytelling in games A. Interactive fiction B. Narrative design C. Writing D. Player agency E. Affordances F. Story components G. Voice H. Progression A. Emotion through mechanics J. Worldbuilding III. Formats of writing A. Dialogue B. Barks C. Environmental storytelling

	D. Descriptions E. Lore F. Tutorials, hints, & lists G. Menu & User Interface (UI) IV. Interactive fiction and dialogue mechanics A. Prototyping B. Branching narrative C. Choosing an engine D. Playtesting E. Critical response theory V. Tools and Techniques A. Spreadsheets as design tool B. Characterization C. Design documentation VI. Narrative game pitch A. Concept pitch B. One page outline C. Design deck VII. Narrative analysis A. Case studies B. Story deconstruction
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
A.1. Primary Methods of Evaluation (Part 1 - CCN courses only):	
Primary Method of Evaluation:	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	For this major project you will be writing a narrative document that describes a game world and you will create the supporting game elements that explain the game world documents. In order to best support portfolio development you are encouraged to make use of an existing primary game design document (GDD) from another project you have worked on or are working as the basis for your game narrative document. If you do not have a GDD for a current or prior project that you want to work on, I will provide you with a GDD to use as reference for your work.
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	As homework for this week you will analyze an existing video game that you are already familiar with and create a narrative document that outlines the game narrative and maps the narrative progression and structure. At this stage you should choose a game that has recognizable story elements. I will check with you on the game you are planning to use before the end of class today to ensure it's a good fit for the material we've covered in class up to this point. Your work should include both an outline of the game progression and a three to five paragraph analysis of the game structure. Depending on the game you choose, I may ask you to limit the scope to a specific point in the game to keep this assignment manageable.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	For this assignment you will receive a description of a game, the general game narrative, a player character (PC) and several non-player character (NPC) archetypes, and a key moment in linear game progression. Based on the moment in game play, you will write a scene for the PC and one or more NPC's that will help advance the game narrative, and

	provide the player with a clear motivation and direction as they move into the next level of the game.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Journal kept throughout course, Written Homework
If Other:	
Instructional Methods:	Group Activities, Lecture, Guest Speakers
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Journal (done on a continuing basis throughout the semester), Problem solving activity, Required reading, Skill practice, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Case, Julia Alicia, et al. Story Mode: The Creative Writer's Guide to Narrative Video Game, 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. Nicklin, Hannah. Writing for Games: Theory and Practice. CRC Press, 2022.
Alternative Texts:	Egri, Lajos. The Art of Dramatic Writing: Its Basis in the Creative Interpretation of Human Motives. Simon & Schuster New York. Touchstone Revised Edition 2004. (Industry Standard)
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite	Prerequisite
Category	sequential
Requisite course:	GPM 100
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	Understand video games as designed multimedia experiences GPM 100 - Describe analog and digital games in terms of rules, verbs, and mechanics. GPM 100 - Evaluate games and other playable media in terms of their affordances and constraints as playful and gameful designed experiences. GPM 100 - Explain game development processes including different stages of design and development and the conditions that attend video game production in different settings.
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). if applicable	
Requisite course:	GPM 110
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	Basic familiarity with the game development process GPM 110 - Design game prototypes using industry practices and language. GPM 110 - Create basic documentation for creating and communicating the design of games in order to pitch and develop them.

Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s), if applicable	
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Arnold Martin
Date:	03/17/2025
Original Board Approval Date:	06/26/2025
Effective Term:	FA 2026