

CMS.608 Game Design, Fall 2010 | Transcript: Lecture 6

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PROFESSOR: So a lot of folks, for instance, the rise in online poker or something. And they will say that, oh, we don't fall into the tax bracket for gambling because we're a skill based game. But literally [INAUDIBLE] is about competition. In some ways, you can class it as sport. But the reason why I was asking entirely is because the way how Caillois writes it, or at least the way how Roger Caillois has been translated, kind of makes it sound like he's actually drawing hard divisions between all these categories. But really they're all adjectives.

AUDIENCE: What was the original language?

PROFESSOR: French, I believe.

AUDIENCE: I believe that's the original version.

PROFESSOR: Correct me if I'm wrong.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PROFESSOR: If anyone can confirm that, that would be awesome. Write a blog post about it.

AUDIENCE: Jeremy, you're on it.

JEREMY: Yeah, I'll try and confirm that it's actually French. I'll confirm it, and then write an obnoxious post about translation errors.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PROFESSOR: I'm sure it could have been translated in far more interesting language, because it's kind of dull.

JEREMY: [INAUDIBLE] French [INAUDIBLE] if it actually it is French.

PROFESSOR: And then we have more meetings on Caillois on Wednesday. Yay! But it's an important text. But [? Ellings ?] will be, I use the word vertigo a lot, because it sometimes gets sort of substituted. But vertigo, I think people have a very specific understanding of vertigo as getting dizzy because of heights. And obviously not all games are about heights. But people, sure, they use it to describe the sensation of taking a roller coaster, which literally is about heights. But it's also about speed. And you can use the same thing. Have everyone played the game called Descent on the PC back in the day? So imagine a first person shooter. The game is filling up the entire screen. But there is no up. There's no gravity. Whenever you want, you can turn yourself this way. And you just stay that way until you want to turn yourself again.

By the way, the controls work just pretty much the same way as a first person shooter. That was Descent. And the whole pleasure of that game, you'll be doing this all the friggin' time. I'm going down this straight corridor. And I never just go down the straight corridor. I go down the straight corridor, and I turn [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Inception.

[LAUGHTER]

PROFESSOR: Yeah! That sort of thing. If you ever get a chance to play the game Prey, which is probably like five dogs on like a pre owned nowadays. You have that same sort of thing. And Portal has a lot of that kind of loss of control, physical sensation. They're trying to get that. But obviously real physical experiences that are half an inch. They're talking about three legged races or that horrible game where you spin around on a bat with your head.

[LAUGHTER]

PROFESSOR: And [? Ellings ?] can be used to describe any one of those things. I like to use it as describing the sort of fun of the loss of control. But that's not necessarily the case. Just the sheer physicality of the game that's part of the experience in a way that

digital chess doesn't really have any of that. Even real chess [INAUDIBLE].

So actually I'm just going to write out those words for those folks who didn't get a chance to read through that page. So [INAUDIBLE] is kind of like intercompetition skill. I talked about [? Ellings ?] which is kind of jumping down through the last one of these such as am I spelling this right where just kind of physicality just kind of sucks.

[LAUGHTER]

PROFESSOR: Actually Jason, can you turn the light in the room on. Its extremely dark. Loss of control. Other ones were

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Javier, what was that again?

AUDIENCE: Chance.

PROFESSOR: Chance, luck, not skilled. You guys know the phrase [INAUDIBLE]?

AUDIENCE: The die had been cast.

PROFESSOR: Yes. Yes, the die has been cast right before Caesar [INAUDIBLE] and says I now am able to attack someone. I couldn't remember who. But Javier needs dice basically.

PROFESSOR: Actually

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Say what?

AUDIENCE: He matched on the [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Matched?

AUDIENCE: Matched on [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Yeah. Although I've heard two translations of *The Die Has Been Cast* as a phrase actually. Because on one hand, you can think of it as the die has been cast. So we'll see where fortune takes us, and there's nothing we can do wrong.

But I've also heard it described as the die as in the thing that you put molten metal into, as in cast. And so whatever we were making is now set. And they had that same idea, but because we had because one way that you can think of is this is not auto control. And the other way you can think of this is and now this is set in stone. Which are two very different connotations, but both saying we don't really have control of the situation.

AUDIENCE: Yassa means thrown.

PROFESSOR: Thrown away, yeah. Yeah. But the English phrase, [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Are there words in English that [UNINTELLIGIBLE] root to mean random? In French the word for random is aleatoire. Come straight from [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Sure. Yeah.

PROFESSOR: Which is undoubtedly why he chose that word I just checked, he is French.

PROFESSOR: Obviously that's why Caillois used it. But yeah, I can't think of any English words that use that as a root, although there might be some. I know there's a game committee. And I think they actually make strategic games. And there's one more which is

AUDIENCE: Mimicry.

PROFESSOR: Which is kind of odd because that's in English, not in French. Mimicry's mimicry. It's actually in English, so role playing, dress up, let's pretend. Simulations sometimes? You know, it might actually fall into that. So you can imagine in tactical simulation, for instance, being very much about competition and skills. But then if it's a tactical simulation about Russian [UNINTELLIGIBLE], something like that, then [UNINTELLIGIBLE] territory. Do you

It's part of the pleasure of believing that you are something else, as opposed to I'm

just guy playing [INAUDIBLE] as opposed to I am this 17th century scholar [INAUDIBLE]. And making a game about that. So these are the adjectives that he talks about to describe games, but in the bit where we actually ask you to read, it's more about why. These words give you a clue to think about why are people playing games.

These are types of fun, much in a way that gets touched on by the MDA paper that we had you read last week. What are these aesthetics that people are going for? Are they going for the thrill of competition or the thrill of luck? Are they going for physical motion and how that feels, or are they going for the feeling of being someone else? And it's not. Again, these are not mutually exclusive terms. These are things that you could have one game that has all of this.

You could have one game that has two in some strong competition and the rest are all minimized. That's fine. But understanding that this is why people are enjoying the game more, and more importantly this is what people are enjoying playing with each other for. One nice thing about this is that fodder for [UNINTELLIGIBLE] and for mimicry, it's really, really difficult to think about those two in particular without thinking about the players.

Competition sucks if there's no one else you're competing with. Sure playing against computers nowadays, but traditionally we couldn't. At least you were playing against the designer, and especially when it came puzzles. It's really, really annoying to pretend to be somebody else when there's no audience, even if that other person is someone pretending along with you. [INAUDIBLE].

Now, luck you can continue to play a game flipping a coin. But even when it comes to luck, and it comes to experiences of physical motion, these things tend to be measurable [INAUDIBLE]. And that's why these four particular divisions that [INAUDIBLE] picked out are really, really good for [INAUDIBLE] social [INAUDIBLE]. A game where is there a name for this game where you put a bat on the ground and you go around?

AUDIENCE: Bat?

AUDIENCE: Bat irritating.

AUDIENCE: What is he talking about?

AUDIENCE: Wait, wait, and someone gets fixed and then?

PROFESSOR: So there's a type of relay race where you pick up a baseball bat, and you put your head on it. You go around it three times, and then you just run back to your team, carry the bat, and try to hand the bat off to somebody else on your team. Usually ending up hitting someone.

AUDIENCE: I've heard it called Dizzy Bats.

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: Dizzy Bats.

AUDIENCE: Dizzy Bats.

PROFESSOR: Dizzy Bats. Yeah. So that game is a lot more fun when there's somebody else around.

[LAUGHTER]

AUDIENCE: I do that by myself.

AUDIENCE: You start handing it off to yourself.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Bats flying around.

PROFESSOR: And even with games of chance, I mean sure, if you cook the games of chance by itself, but for the most part most of my enjoyment of the game of chance is usually with a group of four people, actually, either playing poker or playing something like mahjong.

So these are all very support [INAUDIBLE]. If you think about when someone's going to come down and sit in front of your game, and what sort of frame of mind they're going to be in to play your game? What sort of frame of mind do you want to put them in in order to enjoy the games? Think about why they might want to hang out with other people. Because [INAUDIBLE].

So if there's this other person they play with, that you may or may not know, but try to think about how you're going to construct enough clues to sort of get them to enjoy it. So the game is about pretending to be someone else. I'm going to make a game where I am playing a negotiator in a hostage situation, for instance. [INAUDIBLE], awesome. I'm going to be the negotiator. You all are going to be the guy taking hostages. And then you want to play that out, and harm them. Friday we had the game Crunch, where people were playing CEOs, I think. I'm hoping [INAUDIBLE] that you will already hate [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: That's awesome.

PROFESSOR: [INAUDIBLE] less corrupt. And you think about how does the game, even from the rules, even from the design of the box, get you into the mood of thinking, OK, whoever I am in real life, I'm going to take on this persona. And I'm going to enjoy taking on this persona for a while.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, but then you're really not [INAUDIBLE] because they have this game's kind of built in where you actually hide cards on yourself.

AUDIENCE: Did you guys catch anyone doing that in the act?

AUDIENCE: I got caught.

AUDIENCE: No, I caught him.

AUDIENCE: I feel like arguing about that's part of the rules. He already got it. He had already hidden them away, and then the cards were sought way afterwards.

PROFESSOR: And even arguing over whether something was illegal or not, even when there's

evidence that it is, no one caught you doing it. It's appropriate for this theme of being a CEO of a failing bank. It's like, well, so we have all of these CDOs. Yeah, we purchased them at some point, but nobody caught us while we were doing it. So now you guys have to help us fix it. That's what the game's about. Was there a game that was particularly competitive that people played on Friday?

AUDIENCE: That game was pretty good.

PROFESSOR: Which one? [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: There was a competitive moment in Saboteur when Alec, revealed himself to be a saboteur and ruined our chance to find the gold.

PROFESSOR: Saboteur is what I would describe as cutthroat. It's a game that's deliberately about winning by other people losing.

AUDIENCE: It made me upset with Alec.

AUDIENCE: It made me cry.

PROFESSOR: And John Nash, actually, [INAUDIBLE]. Oh. Because he did spend some time here at MIT, possibly when visiting, but he designed one game called Hex, which is ostensibly designed based on the washroom tiles of one of the Building 39 or Building 37 bathrooms.

But anyway, that game and another game called Screw Your Buddies are all cutthroat games. The only way to get them to win this game is by screwing over the other person playing. Screw Your Buddies in particular is just like boiled down diplomacy. The only way you're going to win this game is to betray someone else.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

PROFESSOR: Let's see. Games of chance. What was kind of chancy on Friday? And you

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PROFESSOR: Think or go?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: That's 17. [INAUDIBLE] 4:00 AM you've got

AUDIENCE: Every threat was on the board. Two people go in. 17 drops. Oh my God.

PROFESSOR: It's a press your luck game, right? Do you dare? Do you think you can? I enjoy that game a lot. [INAUDIBLE]. I don't think that we had any influence specifically. It's hard to get really physical in card games.

AUDIENCE: Maybe in that that game, Falling. Yeah. That was a pit.

PROFESSOR: Pit actually, you're right, two weeks ago, some of the games that were played were really kind of kinetic. So even with card games, you already have very good examples of that. I want you to keep in mind because today we're actually going to start the process of getting new folks to think about what you're going to do as social assignment and break you up into teams. Before we continue , Jason, do you have anything to raise regarding [INAUDIBLE]? No. Anybody else?

AUDIENCE: I'm still confused about the whole Eskimo part.

AUDIENCE: Agreed.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: Eskimos.

PROFESSOR: Take a look at the French. [INAUDIBLE]

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] and what took universities, some are a good friend of ours did. I mean we might know someone who knows him. I'll find out tonight. [INAUDIBLE] is not that old. So maybe

AUDIENCE: We to just have him come over over, chill at MIT for a little bit. We could talk to him about the Eskimos.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: He is dead, but I might know some people who knew him.

Just be a necromancer, that's OK.

PROFESSOR: All right. So this is what we're going to do. We're basically going to do brainstorming today. The basic idea is that we're going to have a bunch of index cards and one job to make it easier on the job of the secretary is that you'd actually be reading off something written. So especially while other people are throwing out their ideas, and you get something, and that person's still talking. You might as well just write down your idea. So we'll have a whole bunch of cards.

I'd also like you to start off by writing your name right on top. And the reason for this is because I don't think every single person in this room knows each other's names yet. As we do this process, it's more that you remember oh yeah, it's that guy who came up with that idea. Oh, and that person's name is so and so.

AUDIENCE: That's what you want? To have all the ideas from each person on one card, or have one idea per card?

PROFESSOR: All on one.

AUDIENCE: What if the professors took notes and we could just bounce out ideas?

PROFESSOR: Well that's what the tape recorder is for. But the thing about writing your ideas down is that someone can look at the card and say, yeah, that guy. I want to follow up with this guy. Because we're not actually going to form the teams for you by the end of this class. The idea is so that after this brainstorm, you've got a pool of ideas of which you guys can make games. Actually, frankly, we don't care if two teams ended up making pretty much the same game, out of the same concept. Because I know that two different teams of two different sets of people are going end up making different games anyway, even if you start from the same. That's not a requirement. You folks can make you can take any set of ideas from the book today.

Obviously, if you're the one who pitch an idea and somebody else thinks, hey, that was actually pretty cool. Take that opportunity to talk to the person and [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE]. That pretty much is going to happen between classes. So by Wednesday, I want you all to come in. This is basically one of the ideas of the homework, is to tell me which team you're on, who's on your team, and what's the general one line idea that you're working with.

Now, the idea that they're giving us is what you started with. It may not be what you end with. That's fine. I'm very comfortable that ideas change while you guys work. I think that's fine. The teams shouldn't change. So you're working with these three other people, or a team of a four. Then that should be intact for the rest of this for this assignment. OK, so teams of four.

Now, one more clarification about the project. The card game, all the cards need to be identically sized. We do like cards that are going to be legible, but you don't need to spend a whole lot of time making them pretty. I will just appreciate it that by the time you actually hand in your cards, you have them written in ink. Pencil is great when you're prototyping because you can erase [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE]. Ink is great for creating the [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

Your game can be playable by two, three, or four players. It does not need to cater to any grouping other than what you decide. So if you're saying, this is a two player game, we will test it with two people.

If you're saying this is two to four, we'll test it with some number with however many people we manage to rustle up to test.

If you say it could be two or four, but not three, that's fine. You think I kid, but there are some games that work really, really well with even numbers.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PROFESSOR:

Keep it four and under. Or at least make it possible for us to grade it with a maximum of four people. Because if you give us a game that requires five people, we have to find five people and get them together in order to create your

[UNINTELLIGIBLE].

I think there was one more requirement for how long the game could take.

AUDIENCE: I think it's 5 to 10 minutes.

AUDIENCE: It was short.

AUDIENCE: That's really short.

AUDIENCE: That's super short.

AUDIENCE: Falling is really short.

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: Crunch is not.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: So when you're brainstorming for game ideas, how much do we [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE] come to up with in our brainstorm? It's a cool idea. It's an amusing space.

PROFESSOR: I will say that if the character's the thing that's encouraging you to [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE]. I have this cool game that comes to mind. Then that's the thing that you're throwing out.

If instead, I want to make a game about fish. I have no game mechanics in mind, but I think fish are awesome. Then, OK. That's the game you're doing now. Maybe that's the first bad idea [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: If we have like several game ideas, should we take several index cards and write one per?

PROFESSOR: Actually, no I would rather see them all on one if you can fit them. And if you run out of space, flip them over. Again, the idea of the index cards is not just to record the ideas down, because what I am going to do is I'm going to try to type them all out, so that you can [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE]. But also to find you folks again. So I

said, yeah that was that guy who had this idea about fish. Who was that again? So I guess I will leave you.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: Want me to write them down?

PROFESSOR: I think that [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: I mean, you're not a facilitator?

PROFESSOR: Yeah, I'm facilitating.

AUDIENCE: I like clerk better.

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PROFESSOR: But I am actually wonder whether we should define this into two groups.

AUDIENCE: We get to cross pollinate.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PROFESSOR: Let's work as a whole class first. I know there were some folks who actually started off with ideas already on the forum. So why don't those folks throw your ideas first because you already mentioned in the forum.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, I wasn't part of that group in the forum.

AUDIENCE: Well, to start off, Jeremy and I have been sort of discussing the idea, you want to go ahead?

AUDIENCE: Sure.

AUDIENCE: Two ideas, I guess.

AUDIENCE: But yeah, [UNINTELLIGIBLE] titles. So the basic concept of the game in which

players are forced by some game mechanic to refer to each other by name constantly throughout the game, and at a very rapid pace. Their name is generated by the game and accumulate increasingly longer [UNINTELLIGIBLE] this game as they succeed.

So you would start. You would be the lord of something, and then you could accumulate extra title, son of this. Like bringer of flame. And you could just like have all these modifiers and just kind of accumulate and accumulate until your title becomes ridiculous. And then, have people start screwing up as they say your name. And it'd just be hilarious.

PROFESSOR: OK, I'm just going to write down like, memory jogs.

AUDIENCE: So like procedurally generated names, titles.

AUDIENCE: Name game.

AUDIENCE: Name game.

PROFESSOR: Yes.

AUDIENCE: You said you had a second one?

AUDIENCE: Yeah, can I go with the second one?

AUDIENCE: OK, so I had this idea of sort of like a survival horror game, kind of inspired by falling. Like the premise is, you have a group of like player characters that are charging through a building, and you can have like a dealer that is putting down hallways as you're going through. And occasionally threats come up and you have to react really quick and be like, it's a zombie. We have to go upstairs. And thrown down a card to do that. Then you have to keep doing this until you get to the end of it and people can die, and get eaten, and stuff.

AUDIENCE: That's good.

AUDIENCE: I like that a lot.

AUDIENCE: Kind of like cooperative falling off?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: Should we be writing his ideas down?

AUDIENCE: No, I'm writing mine down and then.

AUDIENCE: Cool.

PROFESSOR: Write down your own ideas.

AUDIENCE: So I have an idea. I made this up a year ago when I took Game Design. Or not Game Design, Intro to Video Game Studies. Actually, it's like majority rule. So it's kind of like crunch where you can just hide cars and stuff. But if you get caught, then you get called out. And in order to be penalized for it, you have to be a majority rule has to be by every one playing. And so you can actually bribe people to vote for you. It's more of like a yeah, and then the way you get points is, it depends on how we'd [UNINTELLIGIBLE] it.

PROFESSOR: I'm just going to go around this way.

AUDIENCE: OK. So I have an idea of a card game based on like having success in life. So the beginning of the game, all the players are randomly assigned different goals in order, which are like wealth, and adventure, and love, and things like this. And then all the cards represent different activities that take up a different amount of time.

So you all these activities you can keep in front of you. And then, however much free time you have, you draw that many cards looking for new opportunities. So it's like you take opportunities and leave opportunities and things.

PROFESSOR: I could write out time and opportunities. Let's see. Who's next?

AUDIENCE: I have a very mechanically oriented idea. Essentially I'm stealing and trying to improve the drop mechanic from Magic the Gathering booster draft. For those who don't know, the idea is that you're trying to collect a set. And so let's do it in terms of

regular card games. You're trying to collect a straight flush as long as possible, as high valued as possible. But other people may be trying to collect that same suit. So you want to collect a different suit from other people.

And you do this by looking at the cards in your hand, picking one of them, passing the rest to the person on your right. and then, continuing to do this, and then going back in the other direction with a new hand. And then in the same direction again with a third hand. And the object is collect a big, straight flush. Also, guess what the person to your right was collecting, and guess what the person to your left was collecting. So you're trying to signal the other people what suits are open and collect the suit which is open.

PROFESSOR: Let's see. Who's next.

AUDIENCE: So it's going to be there are different types of cards, like action cards, like pick up cards or lose cards. But then [UNINTELLIGIBLE] Stock pile from your friend's hand to the discard pile. You can play a different card in a different order so the rule always changes. Kind of mess other people up or help yourself out.

PROFESSOR: I will just write that the rules are constantly changing.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, but you get so there's actually an order to it. So you can choose. So if it's going to be your turn and it says pick a free card, you can put down, like from a friend's hand or lose three cards [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. Makes a lot of sense in my mind.

PROFESSOR: So rules changing with cards.

AUDIENCE: So one idea I have is a game about character growth through narrative arc. So the start of the game you're given a character, and the idea is you want to follow a certain narrative arc so that they grow in terms of the hands of the game you're playing. So if you start out with a cocky character, then you may want to actually lose a couple of the hands of the game, such that your character experiences failure and his character growth increases. And so, basically the winner of the game is determined by who manages to get their character to grow the most emotionally.

AUDIENCE: It's very deep.

AUDIENCE: So I had this idea for a poker like game, except it's played with more than one deck, but the normal rules still apply. So if you get dealt five aces, you can't actually play that hand because that would be cheating. So you have an incentive to try and like slip cards into your sleeve, slip back and forth. So you're almost forced to cheat at the game to be able to actually play it.

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE] if you get caught then, just pretty much you have to figure out how to get out.

AUDIENCE: So the idea that I had was kind of like Bananagrams, but with a card game. So you have cards with lines or preset lines or shapes, just something on the card. And you have to try to connect them all in some way on your personal board, so that it forms a closed shape. And once you're done, you have to take another from the pile and try to fix your shape so that it's still closed while trying to beat everyone else.

PROFESSOR: So collecting cards, make shapes.

AUDIENCE: So my idea was just using normal poker cards and doing a trading game. Just like trading four kinds of pattern as four kind of stocks. And you can randomly draw the card to be your own stock. And everyday, you randomly draw a card to determine the day price. And you can trade with bank or other players. I think you can use 8 and 10's as the stocks and the J, Q, and the K as the special cards
[UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

PROFESSOR: OK.

AUDIENCE: So this was another procedurally generated idea. The game generates for you encounters. And it's supposed to be ridiculous and somewhat humorous. You'd have a base card, like a bear. And then there are various modifiers that you would draw to create that encounter. Or it could be like a ninja zombie pair in space

wrapped in bacon. And then those would all give different attributes to that encounter. And then you'd have to find a way to beat it. And your characters might also maybe be procedurally generated in similarly ridiculous ways and you'd have to counter it with basically, I like procedurally generated ideas. Cards games that are never played the same way twice.

PROFESSOR: I need something [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: With laser beams.

AUDIENCE: Of course.

AUDIENCE: Of course you need laser beams.

AUDIENCE: So my idea was a musical RPG in which players' cards and musical notes. And you build chords. For example, to raise your character's strength, you might make an augmented chord, et cetera. And then you can chain chord progression to attack players. Diminished your life.

AUDIENCE: I just dominated your [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: I got obsessed with drafting. I have another drafting game. Uses the same drafting mechanic except that you're drafting tiles. You play the tiles in front of you and they make a machine. Drafting the same color of machine bit or same type of machine bit, and then laying it in consecutive blocks. Multiple [UNINTELLIGIBLE] makes them better, and then your machines like attack other people. Or they can do crazy shit. But the challenge being that you have to drop the piece that fits into your machine.

AUDIENCE: That can do crazy shit.

AUDIENCE: That can do crazy shit. It has to be pronounced like crazy.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: So my idea to have like a monarchy type thing. So it starts out everyone is like heir

to the throne. Everyone wants to become the king, or queen, I guess. And the point is you have to get the king to really like you, or to assassinate him. But if you want to assassinate him, you have to kill off all the other players first. So it's kind of a like a betrayal and deciet game.

PROFESSOR: So a betrayal. OK.

AUDIENCE: Yep. So another game, it's about reducing your opponents mobility by placing cards that represent walls, and placing other cards to rotate various walls. And your opponent is doing the same thing. So you could sort of envision the Tron Light Cycle game without any hint of reflex removed completely.

AUDIENCE: That would be really cool.

AUDIENCE: So it's all just a strategic placement of walls to reduce your opponent's mobility.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, I think you can just make a Tetris box and then every time you select one give to the other player [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

PROFESSOR: So Tetris blocks. Got it. OK?

AUDIENCE: This is kind of like Pokemon, except now you raise zombies or you catch zombies. So you have different types of zombies. Like maybe you take some from Left 4 Dead universe or something, or just Resident Evil or something, and you can do like versus other people or something.

AUDIENCE: I thought of having cards I don't know whether they would be like words or a few words together. But you would go around and each round, the goal would be to build a story. So each person would play a card face down, or something. So it'd be a mechanic like Apples to Apples, except you're progressively building a story and if people like your addition to the story.

PROFESSOR: So Apples to Apples [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Sure. Moving away from drafting. OK, so I have another game idea called, Are you a Cylon? Essentially

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]?

AUDIENCE: Are you a Cylon? Are you a Cylon. And essentially broad brush strokes steals the skill resolution that came from Battlestar Galactica the board game, and then strips it down to secret Cylons sabotaging people. And then people accusing them. And then everybody crying.

AUDIENCE: So I really like Harvest Moon, so I was thinking that maybe there could be Harvest Moon competitive card game. And I guess you have a certain amount of stamina each turn and cards are actions. And whoever has the biggest harvest at the end of the game would win. I don't know how many turns there would be.

PROFESSOR: So stamina in farming.

AUDIENCE: So sort of building on the monarchy of the trail idea, this is a game about the heir to the throne. The king is dying in x turns. You and the other players are going to compete to prove who is the correct heir to the throne. And you can do so through combat directly with other players, assassinations, or political machinations, such as like accusing other players of being base born.

PROFESSOR: Assassinations.

AUDIENCE: Actually, I just have the paper when you throw out your idea, also throw out also mention your name because I'm still learning everyone's name.

AUDIENCE: OK, so I'm Ian. So I had this idea for a game called Admiral Snack Bar. It's a competitive game where each player is building up their own sort of like snack shop, and they make a certain product. And the other players need that product in some way to enhance their own things. But you can see secretly poison parts of your product, so that when they purchase them, they'll like get messed up in some way. So it's sort of like a trade off and you can make alliances and stuff like that.

AUDIENCE: So it's sort of like a trap?

AUDIENCE: It's a trap.

AUDIENCE: There's the tagline right there.

AUDIENCE: It's a snack.

AUDIENCE: So I'm thinking of a game, I guess to have like the total wars mixed with Nazi Germany. So the point of the game is you want to snatch up territories. And you can do this by maybe attacking other players. Well, in particular it's just like cards. And you can do this by attacking other players who may be making alliances, which you can easily betray. Or maybe have like all the cards in a pile and every turn you can take one and try it. And you get points by getting certain combinations of [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. More like Risk right there as well.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: I'm Brian. So I was thinking of like a trick taking game. But the idea is there's four players, and you're trying to get the second most tricks each round. And then there are cards that allow you to swap out other cards at the end of a round and other things that are tricky.

PROFESSOR: So hit the second best trick?

AUDIENCE: Or second most tricks or something like that. But yeah.

AUDIENCE: So I was thinking of sort of a put succinctly Scrabble meets chicken.

PROFESSOR: Hm?

AUDIENCE: What?

AUDIENCE: You have a bunch of people. And they play cards in the middle and you have to make words out. And if you make longer words, you get more points and so forth. So maybe your letter is more rare, it gets more points. But the catch is that if the

word is longer, you can't gain as much point. The point gain is

AUDIENCE: Diminishing.

AUDIENCE: It's diminished more. It's proportional to how long the word is you make.

AUDIENCE: I'm Bato. And I wanted to combine Mario Karts and Chrononauts. So the idea of you're racing through time. Somebody is the main guy that's trying to get to someplace. Everyone else is trying to stop him. And your abilities or weapons only work in certain time periods and stuff like that. And so you have the time travel and the items from Chrononauts and the racing and attacking from Mario Kart.

AUDIENCE: Go, Michelle.

AUDIENCE: My name is Michelle. So I was envisioning something like Ricochet Robots but where the two people basically, the point is that everyone has a set of cards that have pathways or grids or walls that you can bounce off of. And you build a grid with your opponent. And there's one robot piece that you have to try to bounce off the walls to reach some specific goal. You can screw up the other player.

PROFESSOR: Build walls and bounce robots around. Good.

AUDIENCE: I'm Patrick.

PROFESSOR: Go ahead. Oh, Patrick, then Jeremy.

AUDIENCE: So this is a game where the players are owners of businesses. And depending on the nature of the business, they might have mutual dependencies that would be beneficial for people to get more money. But then as the market goes bad, they'll have to play cards to cut off the ties between companies. And so I call it Objectivism, The Game.

AUDIENCE: That was [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: OK. You?

AUDIENCE: So just a slight variation on the procedure [UNINTELLIGIBLE] idea but now I'm

visioning it possibly as a sort of Falling real time type deal. So every turn, you're getting dealt cards. And you have cards that can modify the dealing pattern so they can discard other players' cards or can get them to be skipped, so on and so forth. And you also have cards that can add various modifiers to your beast.

And the goal of the game is that by time the deck has been entirely dealt, you have the most bad ass creature that you've created and that you'd have to figure out and there might be an optimum way to rearrange things, so as you're getting cards, you have to try to figure out how to rearrange them. And at the same time, other players could be discarding stuff. And you have to deal with all these things at the same time. And then at the end of the game, you have to freeze and see who has the best one. And it could be a really quick game and very hilarious.

PROFESSOR: OK, so [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: So kind of like building a creature, plus Uno.

AUDIENCE: OK, this game is Monkey or Shakespeare? So there are several different piles of cards. Each of them has words on them in Shakespearean English. Some of them are going to be played by players. Some of them are going to be like random number generators, essentially.

The players that are playing as covert Shakespeares select cards and then place them face down in a common pool. Then the top cards from all the other decks get placed in the pool. And then everything gets shuffled up. And then each of these different piles is going to be a different color.

And so you will spell out sentences in the color progressively, based on the card draws. And the object of the game for the other players who aren't hidden Shakespeares is to try to work out who's the Shakespeare, who's just trying to spell the prearranged sentence beforehand is, and who are just monkey piles. All right. So it's detect the random number generator.

AUDIENCE: Bato, again. I want to take that tanks versus robot game that we played before on the paper and make it into a card game between players. And the tanks can level

up. And you could change your specific strategy and that kind of stuff.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Would the robots still be deterministic from something?

AUDIENCE: Up in the air.

PROFESSOR: Let's see. Who from this side hasn't gone yet? I don't think you

AUDIENCE: I did. I had my convoluted idea.

AUDIENCE: I think everyone's gone.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: So one mechanic is any game that has a high amount of trading of cards. You can imagine anything from a Go Fish type thing to something more complicated. However, you don't mechanically enforce the traded cards. So there is basically lying in that [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. Also, playing off of the robot tank idea, a game where, basically, your strategy is mitigated by the cards you play, rather than the actual characteristics. So the cards played dictate how another deck or another mechanic is run, rather than you directly interfacing with that.

PROFESSOR: Robots.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE] robots with mechanical modifications. [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: I am Justin. So I just have an idea about your asylum game that seems very interesting. [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE]. Maybe it will help if you can play two characters instead of one. So if you have four people, you have eight characters determined [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE]. So two player asylum. Two characters.

AUDIENCE: Sure. Andrew. So you could have something that's sort of an MIT case. So you're an MIT student. And you're going through pizzas, you're doing energy drinks to help you along through the night, social events. You can hang out at Harvard for a night. [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: That would be a debug.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, exactly. Sorry, you'd force other people to hang out at Harvard for a night.

PROFESSOR: Anything else? [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: Deion. This is MIT or Harvard. So let's say you're in a design class. And you're trying to build a project. So there's some students that are MIT. Most of them are.

But then there's one or two Harvard students. And so everyone's trying to build this project. But the Harvard student is messing it up. Or maybe it could be Harvard, MIT, or Caltech.

So the other student, that's not MIT, is trying to screw up your project. And so by the end of the game, you want to figure out who that person is. Or maybe you take turns making additions to it. Something like that.

AUDIENCE: So this came up only a few seconds ago in my brain. The setting I imagine for this might be something like a dark elf realm underground. And there's various houses or various families of dark elves. And there's one that is not controlled by players. So I guess it's deterministic [UNINTELLIGIBLE] set rules.

And players every turn can place written cards to influence the behavior of this non player entity the next turn. And basically, players are vying for influence over this non player entity, which would then do benevolent or malevolent things towards players. And it might be only semi obvious, depending on how cards are played who exactly took certain actions to get this master house to give favor or remove favor from one player to another. And so it would be a game where you're trying to beat other players. At the same time, you're trying to figure out who's on your side, who's not on your side, and forging alliances and betraying each other.

AUDIENCE: Second one is a guy at a party. He's trying to get the girl at the end of the night.

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Oh, frat boys.

AUDIENCE: Is that a card game?

AUDIENCE: You could screw other people over by going up to them and bringing up embarrassing stories. Or you could be really nice and try to meet the girl's friends. It's all based off an AI kind of [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: And hook up.

AUDIENCE: I'm Ian. You have a game where the objective is all the players are actually trying to build a physical house of cards out of the cards. But each card has an in game mechanical effect as well. And then there's possibly the actual structure determines something as well. You'd have to do it with very thick cards.

AUDIENCE: So

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: Jenga with the cards.

AUDIENCE: Jenga cards.

AUDIENCE: There would be a mechanic actually, my idea was building a house, but not with a house of cards. But that's a better idea. Adding a mechanic who'd be like you can play an action card that's like, a storm destroys the west wall of your opponent's house or something. In your case, [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: Jason. So you're on a student project or corporate project or some team doomed to fail. So your objective is to make you look as good as you can, whether by making the project better, or by making sure other people are responsible for it being worse.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: A terrible microcosm for the first assignment.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: Don't fail too badly.

PROFESSOR: Who is next?

AUDIENCE: Brian.

PROFESSOR: Brian.

AUDIENCE: With all this talk of drafting, I started thinking about auction games. So an auction game where there's some different points. And maybe if you collect certain types of points, it's good.

And then also some of the cards, you can add a few mechanics for yourself. So you can bid for a card that later you can play. And have everyone else bid. And then you have to go bid after them, or something like that. But everyone has the same amount of points at the beginning [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: I'm Jason, by the way. Going back to my guys at a party one, you could work in a mechanic where people could bring in real stories and real traits that they have [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: But you could honestly lie and make it worse for someone else, but then you lose points for lying. [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE] dishonest guy.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: So again, it's like an RPG card game, where you each have your set of things you can do and equipment you have. And then there's an encounter deck. And these keep getting flipped over.

And then people have to react to this. But it's not quite cooperative because at the

end, there's something that only one person can get. So maybe they have to duke it out at the end if there's more than one person left.

PROFESSOR: Sounds like [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Yeah, kind of.

AUDIENCE: So bringing up auction mechanics, there's a bidding mechanic that is interesting from a theoretical standpoint that I never see implemented, where if you have a thing that's being bid for or you have everyone assign something that they get from some pile. And then if someone feels that they are unhappy with what they have, they trade it with someone else's, and either put some amount of money on the other item or some decremental type object on their item. The bidding system comes out of the pirates trying to split up booty and making everyone happy.

PROFESSOR: So bidding by reducing other people's bids is that a good description?

AUDIENCE: It's a bidding system in which everyone has something. And then you trade and add value until everyone feels it's equal.

PROFESSOR: [INAUDIBLE] something. Let's see. Yeah?

AUDIENCE: So my idea was you have two teams, maybe four players. It's like an RPG. And so before you start, you have to draft the equipment and spells you can do. And so then you have team battles against each other. And the way you determine what happens is maybe a War like system, where each one has a deck which is shuffled. Take the top card of the deck. The highest card wins. And so that determines damage and such done.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: I like it. So searching off the RPG idea but adding on a randomly generated fort or castle that one player has to defend and everyone else is trying to attack into. And he has to set up his defenses around. But he's also controlling a character. And so he can move his guy around the board to choose one of the guys to defend against. So essentially an RPG with randomly generated board as well.

PROFESSOR: Defend your castle?

AUDIENCE: Yeah, yeah.

AUDIENCE: Castle defense.

AUDIENCE: I like it.

AUDIENCE: So it's sort of building off of the idea of pirate's booty. I like the idea that you have a bunch of items within the game. The value for them is chosen randomly so that it's unknown what the value of the items are. So you just have the items and various players can make various moves like choose to appraise an item by paying some gold. And the idea is you want to try to get the item that's worth the most amount of money during any round to get the most amount of gold.

PROFESSOR: Get the maximum amount of [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. I'm running out of space, so I better be ending this soon.

AUDIENCE: I'm out.

AUDIENCE: I'm Jason.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: I kind of like the bidding [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. So you build competing factories with different products. So you want to bid on different items, but for some people, it might be necessary to have a certain [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. Things are going to have different values for different people. And you could also get high end stuff or low end stuff. And the randomness is going to come in where if you have low end stuff, a user could hate your product. And then you lose money and stuff like that.

PROFESSOR: Michelle?

AUDIENCE: In a bidding sort of game, you could be bidding for space, let's say, space to use the Hubble Telescope. But before you can do this, you have to pass a couple of hurdles, like taking J lab, or

AUDIENCE: Bidding.

AUDIENCE: Use the Hubble. That's awesome.

AUDIENCE: One of the first hurdles.

PROFESSOR: I wrote it down as bidding [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

AUDIENCE: Tower Defense, the card game. Interpret as you will.

PROFESSOR: Tower defense.

AUDIENCE: That's a lot of math.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: Slight variation Dungeon keeper, the card game. So I'd imagine that there would be several lanes, down which enemies would come. And you would collaborate with other players to create buildings on the other end of those lanes that would then generate either traps along the way or your own units that would knock down the lanes, taking out the enemies.

And every turn, you run the game yourself. So you run your opponent and it automatically advances and sends stuff at you that's drawn from decks. And you have to be able to time stuff right and all that, not to get your core destroyed, basically.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: I'm just thinking of the idea of Tower Defense, the card game. Combine that with Falling, the idea that turns are happening at the same time. So you have one player who's playing the zombies invading. And he's just basically going, one, two, three, four.

That's like a zombie advance, four steps, or something, by placing cards down. And then the other player is trying to place defenses just as fast, but has to discard

cards as well. So it's really a game of how well you are able to handle cards.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: I had another idea in the vein of Falling. But it would be like Russian Roulette. Everyone's trying to have everyone else die and not them. And then you can play excuse cards, be like, oh, I have to go to the bathroom. I'll be right back. Or calling somebody else out and calling them the chicken or something. You play with macho points.

PROFESSOR: I think that's Russian Roulette with excuses.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: So players take turns being a prospective high schooler who wants to go to college. And the other players are, therefore, admissions officers. And as a student, you're trying to get into the college that gives you the most

AUDIENCE: Financial aid?

AUDIENCE: Most swag, anything.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: And as admissions officers, you're trying to give them the least.

PROFESSOR: So admissions [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE].

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: Admissions officer is easy. You're just just like, no, no, no. You got into community college.

AUDIENCE: I've come up with a game mechanic for his idea. So you could have bluffing where you say, oh, I'm going to the bathroom. And then someone else could call you out on it. And you either have the bathroom card and you're actually going to the bathroom or its an excuse. So that's a mechanic [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: That's [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Yeah, the full bladder card.

AUDIENCE: Isn't there a simple mechanic you basically place cards down to try to create a path from some predetermined point to another but in that way, you can block other players by placing cards

PROFESSOR: So create impasse and blocking them.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

AUDIENCE: I think you're done.

AUDIENCE: I think we're done.

PROFESSOR: [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE]. All right.

AUDIENCE: Just use the bottom.

PROFESSOR: I guess I could write down to the bottom, but it would be a pain for folks to look at. So these are just memory jogs of what we've got up here. None of these ideas need to be taken up wholesale for your original idea for the team. [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE] things that folks [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

I would actually like folks to grab one of the thumbtacks over there. Once you've written down your ideas on the card and pinned them up on the wall. They don't have to be closely packed. In fact, spread them out a little bit, so that people can look at them one at a time.

And the rest of the class basically is just time for you guys to talk. You [UNINTELLIGIBLE PHRASE] get to know each other's games better. And start discussing about projects that you're working on.

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