Tabletop Games

According to the "Board Games Market - Global Outlook and Forecast 2018-2023" by Arizton, "The global board games market is anticipated to reach values of more than $12 billion by 2023, growing at a CAGR of over 9% during 2017-2023."[1] Compared to the 2.43% growth rate of console games or the 5.92% growth of PC games, analog games are dynamic, even if the total market value is considerably smaller.[2]

In an increasingly digital and dehumanized world, these off-line, in-person games offer a chance for people to connect with one another in real-time, face-to-face, creating lasting memories and stronger bonds. In that spirit, you will go through the process of researching, proposing, designing, and testing a tabletop game. While this should be a fun and interesting opportunity to practice your skills in professional writing and collaboration, I would like you to approach this as seriously as you can.

1. **Team Identity**
   a. Your first project will involve defining yourselves as a team: Name & Logo, a Mission Statement of ethics and goals, an introduction of your team and their roles, and a metric by which you will evaluate each other.
   b. **Due Saturday, February 29th @ 11:59 pm. 630-945 words min.**
2. **Project Proposal**
   a. Your second project will involve researching games design, analyzing market data, play testing rented or purchased products, and/or conducting interviews into order to write a proposal of your product, explanation and justification of its design, and a Budget and Timeline for production. You will submit a draft and revise based on feedback from me.
   b. **Due Saturday, due Friday 3/27 @ 11:59 pm.**
3. **Prototype & Instructions**
   a. Your third project will be a fully functional prototype of your game and instructions for set up and play through. This prototype should be as professional as time and money allows, completed before the Usability Tests in Project 4.
   b. **Due Friday 4/10 @ 11:59 pm**
4. **Usability Report & Presentation**
   a. Your fourth and final project will be a usability test conducted by your group, using your classmates as players. You will synthesize their feedback and your own observations in a final report of changes needed. Additionally, you will present your findings to the class and justify your presentation design in an accompanying **Design Memo (250 words).**
   b. **Due Final Exam**, your grade will be determined by the Report, my evaluation of your Presentation, and the average responses of your peers.

---

[1] Arizton. "Board Games Market - Global Outlook and Forecast 2019-2024" Abstract.
https://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/nwkdpt/12_billion_board?w=12

[2] Best The News. "Compound Annual Growth Rate (Cagr) of Global Video Game Industry Revenue between 2015 and 2020, by Category." *Statista - The Statistics Portal*, Statista, www.statista.com/statistics/307326/growth-of-global-video-game-industry-revenue-platform/, Accessed 15 Jan 2019

<u>Elements of Tabletop Games</u>

Tabletop Games have a wide variety of game types, which is both a boon for and a pressure on invention, but regardless of what your games ends up doing, consider these fundamental elements when researching and designing your game:

1. **Game Board & Pieces** are central here, with some plane in which the game plays out, whether linear or cyclical, open-space or moving along a track, whether cartoonish like *Candyland* or realistic like *Risk*. Also, there should be representations of each player that move around the board, indicated by color or shape, concrete or abstract, as needed by the other elements in the game.

2. **Movement** around the game board needs to be determined in some way, whether through throwing dice (*Monopoly*), drawing cards (*Candyland*), spinning a wheel (*Life)*, or even more complex mechanics, e.g. the success or failure of a previous turn. There might also be various consequences for moving to certain spaces, such as losing a turn or gaining additional movement or resources.

3. **Goals and Win Conditions** need to be clear from the outset. You need to motivate players to move toward explicit goals, with clear consequences for choices made in trying to achieve those goals. Additionally, you need to organize the turns or phases of a game to provide each player an equal opportunity, but not necessarily an equal chance, to succeed or fail. Finally, the win condition, the "goal of goals," also needs to be explicit from the onset, so players know the reasons for making their choices, both narratively in the game and dynamically in playing.

Collaborative Project Skill Sets

Professional writing is generally collaborative, with multiple people working together on a single document toward a single goal. While challenging, the best groups are complementary teams working together, with each member contributing their own special set of skills or addressing their special set of responsibilities.

Use the following descriptions to help focus your reflection, but remember that each is broad, variable, and might have considerable overlap with others, and many people's skill sets disrupt such easy definitions, such as a **Hybrid Designer/Scripter.**

The Manager skill set focuses on teamwork and morale. This might include good **communication and coordination** with both supervisors and teammates, good **time management** to establish and enforce deadlines and meeting times, and effective **interpersonal abilities** to deal with problems and conflicts that arise.

The Designer skill set focuses on the document's appearance. This might include **design application experience** in using multiple media to augment communication, **creative intuition** to develop useful, attractive graphics and effective, elegant formatting, and **attention to detail** in order to prepare documents for review.

The Scripter skill set focuses on the prose and tone of the document. This might include **advanced writing experience**, whether majoring/minoring in it or extensive writing-intensive coursework, a **command of language** to write for precision, concision, and accuracy, and **excellent editorial skills** in order to prepare documents for review.

The Researcher skill set focuses on finding information. This might include **experience with research resources**, like databases, websites, or interviews, **expert information literacy**, analyzing sources for credibility, content, relevance, and bias, and developed practice in **effective and efficient source integration and summary**.

Other Skills Sets might include:
- **The Expert** has **extensive knowledge of subject matter** for the project.
- **The Generalist** skill set ranges across the project **without a specific focus.**

<u>**Collaboration 1: Team Identity**</u>

Due: Saturday 2/29 @ 11:59 pm

Format: Self-Generated Report (Creating template for collaborations)

Requirements: 630-945 Words

For this collaboration, you will define your team's professional brand or *ethos*. This will include who you are as a collective, what ethical and behavior standards you hold yourselves to, and how you will design your future collaborations. As with all Collaborations, you must submit a <u>Collaborative Team Evaluation</u> in which you account for your peers' contributions to the project and process.

<u>**Purposes**</u>
- **Team Name and Logo** that is eye-catching, informative, and performative
  - Presented as a title page, with a list of team members and their roles.
- **Overviews** of each team member (bios) and their roles, skills, and responsibilities.
- A **Mission Statement** about the ethics and the overall professional writing goals of the team.
- **Evaluation Criteria** for your Collaborative Team Evaluations.
  - Keep these goals, ethics, and criteria direct, specific, and unambiguous, because you will be held accountable for them
- **Professional Design**: professional, effective, and engaging
  - The specifications you establish will be the design standards for future Projects.
- **Design Rationale** that illustrates critical thinking in the document design.
  - Included as an Appendix A

Grading

Purposes [25%]:	**Prose** [25%]:	**Tone** [25%]	**Format** [25%]
A—completes all purposes excellently	A—precise, concise, and accurate (PCA), no errors/ambiguities	A—objective and neutral, not casual or defensive	A—follows format completely
B—completes all purposes effectively	B—mostly PCA, one or two errors/ambiguities	B—mostly objective, but with a few breaks	B—mostly follows format, one or two errors
C—completes all purposes adequately	C—somewhat PCA, a few errors/ambiguities	C—adequately objective, but with several breaks	C—adequately follows format, with a few errors
D—attempts to complete purposes	D—attempts PCA, several errors/ambiguities	D—attempts objectivity, but inadequately does so	D—inadequately follows format
F—Incomplete, missing purpose(s)	F—inadequate prose	F—inadequate Tone	F—Does not follow format

Collaboration 2: Project Proposal

Due: Friday, April 3 @ 11:59 pm

Format: Self-Generated Report

Requirements: 1350 words minimum (excluding Front and Back Matter) **20 pages max**

<u>Goal</u>: For this collaboration, you will conduct primary and secondary research on tabletop games, game design, the creative process, marketing, etc. as needed, and using this research, **you will propose your own analog game** for **up to or at least three players**, defining the **specific age range and level of difficulty**. This document requires formal report elements, see below, and augmented by effective use of graphics.

<u>Proposal Elements</u>
<u>Front Matter</u>
- **Title Page** with team name and logo.
- **A Proposal Summary** describing the proposed game and justifying its design (<400 words)
- **A Table of Contents** listing all major sections and a **List of Figures/Illustrations**
    - o Use Word Styles, so you can use the Table of Contents tool

<u>Body Sections</u>
- **Introduction** that outlines the context, scope, and organization of the proposal.
- **Methods** for your research about game elements, design, market, interest, etc.
- **Results** of your research on tabletop games and **Conclusions** about what a new game needs to do/be to be successful.
- **Proposed Project,** in which you explain and justify your game in as much detail as possible, using the research to support your claims about the specific game elements you discovered and how the game you propose fits within the market.
- **Plan of Work** for creating a prototype of your game, specifically outlining:
    - o **Tasks**: what are the specific sub-parts that need to be completed? How/why?
    - o **Personnel**: Who will you need and why? What do they offer that you need?
    - o **Facilities**: What other buildings will you require? What can you do yourself, and what not?
    - o **Equipment**: What tools will be needed? Why those tools? Where will you get them?
- You must use **at least 5 Graphics** to enhance communication and persuasion: e.g. textboxes, diagrams, charts, graphs, illustrations, etc.

<u>Back Matter</u>
- **References** page**,** with a minimum of 10 correctly cited sources.
- **Appendixes** of any interview transcripts, analyses, etc. too bulky for the body of the report.
- **Design Memo** in which you explain and justify the report design (315-500 words)

Collaboration 3: Prototype & Instructions

Due: Saturday, April 25 @ 11:59 pm

For this collaboration, you will create a **fully functional prototype** of your proposed game. Because the rest of the semester is online, **your game elements must be digital, designed to be sent, printed, and played remotely.** Therefore, you are limited to two-dimensions.

Make sure to play through the game, as much as possible, at least 3 times before submission. Since we are not doing usability testing, you need to test it as a team. If you have a printer and willing participants, see how they play the game.

Also, you will need to write **instructions** for your players about how to set up and play through the game (See Markel, Chapter 20). Keep your **audience's needs and knowledge in mind**, make sure **your writing is precise, concise, and accurate**, and use **document design** to create open, airy pages and clearly relate the graphics to the text.

Prototype Elements
- **Themed Aesthetic**: there needs to be some fictional diegetic "narrative" that your players can inhabit as they play the game, e.g. the mystery mansion of *Clue*, the exploration of *Settlers of Catan*, or any other world you can invent. Consider popular tropes and genres: western, space, fantasy, SF, disaster, rom-com, action, drama, horror etc. The narrative can be as simple as running errands or as grand as galactic space battle, it is up to you!

- **Game Board & Pieces:** There should be **representations of each player** that move around the board, indicated by color or shape, concrete or abstract, as needed by the other elements in the game. There also needs to be **some plane in which the game plays out,** whether linear (*Shoots n Ladders*) or cyclical (*Sorry, Monopoly*), open-space or moving along a track, think about differences between a chess board, *Risk*, and *Candyland*. Also,

- **Movement** around the game board needs to be determined in some way, whether through throwing dice (*Monopoly*), drawing cards (*Candyland*), spinning a wheel (*Life*), or even more complex mechanics, e.g. the success or failure of a previous turn. There might also be various consequences for moving to certain spaces, such as losing a turn or gaining additional movement or resources.

- **Goals and Win Conditions:** You need to motivate players to move toward explicit goals, with clear consequences for choices made in trying to achieve those goals. These could be collecting resources, controlling locations, defeating opponents, or whatever works for your game.

  Additionally, you need to organize the turns or phases of a game to provide each player an equal opportunity, but not necessarily an equal chance, to succeed or fail. Finally, the ultimate win condition needs to be explicit from the onset, so players know the reasons for making their choices, both narratively in the game and dynamically in playing.

Instructions Elements

- **Title**: "How to Play" or the Gerund
- **Introduction**
    - Who should carry out this task?
    - Why should your reader carry out this task?
    - What safety measures/concerns are needed?
    - What items will the reader need?
    - How long will the task take?
- Step-by-Step **Instructions** for **both Set Up and Game Play**
    - Number the instructions, Clearly indicate:
        - Steps (actions reader performs)
        - Feedback Statements (response to a step)
    - Present necessary information
    - Use imperative mood, do not omit articles
    - Include graphics (if needed)
- A **Conclusion** that states what they have completed and what they can do next.
- You must use **at least 5 Graphics** to enhance communication and persuasion: e.g. textboxes, diagrams, charts, graphs, illustrations, typographic, or other visual elements

Design Rationale Elements

Finally, you will also submit a **Design Rationale** (like the executive summary, abstract, and rationale you have done before) in which you explain and justify the design process of the game.

- **Overview** of the team, mission statement, and team members.
- **Summary** of the game's "aesthetic" as well as the "mechanics" and rule system: what are players doing? Why? How will they do it? How do your mechanics help your aesthetic?
- **Explanation and Justification** of your game design: why did you do it how you did?: What did you borrow, modify, create? Who do you think would want to play this? Why?
- **Format: Self-Generated Memo, 315 words minimum.**

Grading

Elements [25%]:	Prose [25%]:	Tone [25%]	Format [25%]
A—completes all elements excellently (specific and thorough)	A—precise, concise, and accurate (PCA), no errors/ambiguities	A—objective and neutral, not casual or defensive	A—follows self-generated specifications completely
B—completes all elements effectively	B—mostly PCA, one or two errors/ambiguities	B—mostly objective, but with a few breaks	B—mostly follows format, a one or two errors
C—completes elements adequately	C—somewhat PCA, a few errors/ambiguities	C—adequately objective, but with several breaks	C—adequately follows format, with a few errors
D—attempts to complete elements	D—attempts PCA, several errors/ambiguities	D—attempts objectivity, but inadequately does so	D—inadequately follows format
F—incomplete, missing elements	F—inadequate prose	F—inadequate tone	F—Does not follow format

Collaboration 4: Presentation (Promotional Video)

Due: Wednesday, May 6 @ 11:59 pm

For this collaboration, you will create a promotional video for your game, showing what it is, how to play, and why people might want to play it. **Think of this as a video version of the Sell Sheets we analyzed in class.**

Fortunately, we have access to **VidGrid**, a video recording and editing tool, right on Canvas. See the VidGrid Instructions folder in Files for how to use it. If you wish to use other applications, you're more than welcome. For this assignment, play to your strengths to meet your goals.

Promotional Video Elements
- **Overview** of the team, mission statement, and team members.
- **Summary** of the prototype's elements:
  - Themed Aesthetic
    - What imaginary world are players inhabiting?
  - Game Board & Pieces, Movement
    - What does the game consist of? What happens?
  - Goals & Win Conditions
    - How do you play? How do you Win?
- **Explanation and Justification**
  - What makes this a good game? Why should people play it? What makes it fun?
- **Multimedia**
  - Use a combination of photos, videos, speech, and text to make the best possible case for your game. Video should be **3-5 minutes in length.**
- **315-word min. Design Rationale** that explains and justifies how you produced this video.

Grading

Purposes [30%]:	Performance [25%]	Design [25%]	Time [10%]	Rationale [10%]
A—completes all purposes persuasively (specific and thorough)	A—performance is professional and engaging	A—professional visuals/multimedia	A—within 30 seconds of 3-5 minutes	A—memo excellently explains & justifies design
B—completes all purposes adequately, or most persuasively	B—effectively both professional and engaging	B—effective use of visual/multimedia	B—30 seconds-1 minute over/under	B—memo effectively explains & justifies design
C—completes most purposes adequately, or at least one persuasively	C—adequately professional or/engaging	C—adequate use of visuals/multimedia	C—1-1.5 minutes over/under	C— memo adequately explains & justifies design
D—completes one purpose adequately, missing purposes(s)	D—attempts, professional and/or engaging, too casual or boring.	D—visuals/multimedia hurt communication, persuasion	D—1.5-2 minutes over/under	D—memo attempts to explain & justify design, does not do so.
F—Does not any complete purpose.	F—inadequate presentation	F—does not use visuals/multimedia	F—>2 minutes over/under	F—memo not completed

Collaborative Team Evaluation

Name:

Assignment:

Using the space provided below, evaluate your teammates' contribution to the success of the project using the criteria your team established. Highlight or bold your score. While this is your own opinion and perspective, I will not consider an evaluation without some detailed and specific justification, explanation, or defense **of at least 105 words**, so comment in space provided, increasing each section as necessary.

Teammate Name: _____ 　　　5　　　4　　　3　　　2　　　1

Comments:

Teammate Name: _____ 　　　5　　　4　　　3　　　2　　　1

Comments:

Teammate Name: _____ 　　　5　　　4　　　3　　　2　　　1

Comments:

Individual Reflection

Having evaluated your group members above, provide a report on your own contribution to the group for this specific project. Outline any ideas or materials you provided, any leadership or administrative tasks you completed, or any conflicts that arose and the resolution. Also, make sure to identify what you could and/or might do differently in the future. **210 words min.**

5   4   3   2   1

Comments: