

GAME DESIGN COURSE

(Syllabus of Sheli Petersen,* Associate Professor of Art)

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Summary: Students will design and create simple 2-D animated games, with a focus on educational games. They'll work with game theory and design and explore concepts in interactive design. Students will also design a proposal for a more complex platform game.

Required resources: Digital Tutors "Flash ActionScripting™" CD. The CD offers technical support for students as they expand their knowledge of Flash and action script.

In class: Petersen brings games into class for students to play and critique. She says that playing board games allows students to see how game theory works. "Students need to understand the purpose or ultimate goal of the game and how players achieve that," Petersen says. "They're dealing with sophisticated problem-solving." Students have already taken a 2-D animation class that introduced them to Adobe™ Flash software; now they'll use Flash to create games and learn action script, the code that makes games run.

In Game Design, students learn more about the potential for interactivity. "They'll really sharpen their technical skills—what they're learning translates well to job skills," says Petersen. In addition to creating several simple games, students will develop proposals for more complex platform games. Proposals will include backstory, background art, a main character, and simple character animation. Petersen cites *Braid*, a platform puzzle game for the Xbox™ 360, as an example of the type of game students could propose. "It's been critically lauded because the artwork is spectacular and for the way the music enhances the idea of interacting in this world," she says. Petersen points out that game design also offers an opportunity to explore narrative from a different perspective than traditional illustration. ■

* **SHELI PETERSEN**'s art career began at three with crayon drawings of the solar system. In high school, she earned money doing portraits of various friends and celebrities. After receiving a Bachelor's of Fine Art from Southwest Missouri State University (Springfield, MO, 1990), she worked as a graphic designer and illustrator for Kansas City's art and entertainment magazine, *Pitch*. For two years, she managed all the art direction for Smith Advertising (Kansas City, MO). She earned her Master's in Fine Art in Illustration from Savannah College of Art and Design (Savannah, GA, 1996). In graduate school, she concentrated on children's book illustration. Her thesis project, *Magali—An Aztec Legend about Good Fortune*, is published by Laredo Publishing (Beverly Hills, CA). Her other published work includes *Itza—The Boy Who Rode a Jaguar*, written by Leonard Bernard, *Voladores* written by Patricia Petersen, and *Gigi and the Birthday Ring*, written by Giselle Fernandez. Sheli is an Associate Professor of Art at Rivier College (Nashua, NH). She is the recipient of the Children's Choices Award, the Society of Children's Books Writers and Illustrators Most Professional Portfolio Presentation Award, and the Savannah College of Art and Design International Art Award.

****JENNIFER LISKOW** is Rivier's Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications and teaches in the College's Professional Communications program. Jennifer earned her bachelor's in English and communications from Notre Dame College in Manchester, N.H. in 1996. In 2002, she completed her master's in writing and literature at Rivier. She began writing in junior high school; since then, she has had poems, short stories, features and essays published. She serves on the Board of Directors for NH Roller Derby, the state's first competitive flat-track roller derby league.