THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Computing Science Department

COMP 1810: Assignment 1 (5%)
Game Mechanics Analysis
(Individual Assignment)

Due: **February 2ⁿᵈ, 8:00 pm [Zero mark for late submission, upload to BLearn].**

What to hand in: Your written analysis in pdf format via BlackBoard Learn. This assignment should be roughly one page (~400 words) but maybe longer if you add screenshots to augment your description, provided they directly contribute to the discussion and not used as fillers.

Overview: Just as filmmakers learn to watch film differently – seeing the structure of shots – and writers learn to read differently, game designers learn to *play* differently, seeing the structure of the games they play. For this assignment, you will write a brief analysis of the mechanics of one game. Just learning to see and analyze game mechanics is important. However, many times, the unique qualities of a game are only apparent when contrasted with other similar games, or with earlier or later games in the same series. In assignment 2, you will compare and contrast at least three games to better understand their game design.

For this assignment, choose a game, then identify and describe at least three mechanics of the game. Argue for at least one of them as a "core mechanic" of the game. For extra credit, argue for dynamics that arise from one or more of the mechanics you identified.

For example, if you were writing about chess (which you can't, because it is done here) you could identify "defined, differentiated, and turn-based piece movement," "capture by ending your turn on a space occupied by an enemy piece," "checkmate," and "castling" as mechanics. You could argue that the first two are core mechanics and that they result in a dynamic of "projecting force across the board" (because enemies avoid any space to which the other could potentially move a piece).

When doing this assignment, a good idea would be choose a game that interests you for your multi-game analysis essay and spend some time the first week of class playing it attentively, making notes you can use for your full paper in addition to this assignment. Another good idea is to choose a game for this assignment that uses mechanics related to the game you hope to build for your class game project. Deeply analyzing a game with related mechanics will be very helpful when designing and iterating your own game.

Inspirational Resources:

http://gamestudies.org/0802/articles/sicart
http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/39414829.pdf

General Guidelines for COMP 1810 Assignments

Correct spelling and grammar are expected. Assignments not written at a university level of expression will be returned without grade. Assignments must be typed using Tahoma as the font face with a 10-point font size. Assignments are submitted in pdf format via Blackboard Learn through the Assignment tab.

Assignments must be original, and in your own words. You must properly cite quotations including those from web sites. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated, the student or student(s) involved will each receive a mark of zero mark and the plagiarism incident reported to TRU Academic Integrity Committee for further actions. Details are provided in the course outline.