

Course Title		
MLI26C738	Global Game Industry	6 cr
Learning Outcomes and Content		
<p>Since the beginning of the 21st century, the game industry has grown rapidly, surpassing the film and music industries in global revenue. Located at the intersection of technological innovation and artistic creativity, the game industry is constantly renewing itself and pushing forward existing business models. With the proliferation of Internet and digital distribution, the game industry is truly global, innovative and digital, providing a rich context for revisiting international business studies. This course will address various issues that are central to managing successfully a gaming firm, such as: business model and business development strategy; fundamentals of monetization and analytics of games, user acquisition approaches and marketing; localization and global expansion as well as ethical game design.</p> <p><b>Learning outcomes</b> for this course, upon successful completion, include the ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) gain an up-to-date overview of the dynamics and trends of the game industry, its historical origins and future directions,</li> <li>2) understand managerial practices in game companies and analyze specific matters associated with global games distribution,</li> <li>3) evaluate game company internationalization strategies through platforms,</li> <li>4) analyze game design and customer service from an ethical point of view, and design alternative, improved solutions based on this, and</li> <li>5) experiment, through prototyping, with how gameful elements can be integrated across different organizational functions and industries.</li> </ol>		

Instructor Name and Profile
<p>Miikka J. Lehtonen, D.Sc.(Econ.), B.Soc.Sc. Assistant Professor (Strategic Design Management), Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation, Dubai, UAE</p> <p>Miikka is a multidisciplinary academic with research and teaching focus on engineering, design, and business. He believes in learning-by-doing which gets reflected in his teaching methods. Miikka teaches cases where students have to design, reimagine and execute new business concepts. He believes that concepts like Design Thinking are best learned through action.</p> <p>Previously Miikka has worked on projects and teaching assignments in Finland and Japan. He also has experience teaching in Denmark, the United States, Russia, India, and China. His main job focuses on research and teaching, but he also delivers design-driven consulting solutions to clients in various industries.</p> <p>His current research interests and teaching methods focus on visual methodologies, management and creativity in game companies, design practices in MNCs, and PechaKucha. Miikka is also one of the co-founders of the Nordic Rebels movement that received the Danish Design Award in 2019 under the category “Better Learning”.</p> <p>His references include: ANA, Kao Group, Slush (Tokyo and Helsinki), Rovio, Consulate</p>

General of Finland in New York, KONE, and National Museum of Finland.

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### Email Address

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### Office Hours

To be discussed and confirmed during the first session of the course, but you can always reach me via WhatsApp on +971585650297

### Required Readings

Readings below also listed in the course schedule in connection to the corresponding session. Brief explanations in brackets after each reading to describe why I have included them in the course.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-06-21/how-nintendo-s-switch-helped-the-japanese-gaming-giant-win-again> (Each course needs to have at least one non-academic text, right?)

Broekhuizen et al. (2013) New horizons or a strategic mirage? Artist-led-distribution versus alliance strategy in the video game industry. *Research Policy*, 42 (4). (A bit hardcore / heavy, but super insightful in terms of the strategic dimension of running a game development company)

Bulut, E. (2015) Playboring in the Tester Pit: The Convergence of Precarity and the Degradation of Fun in Video Game Testing. *Television & New Media*, 16 (3), 240-258. (Somewhat critical / provocative, and as such essential reading to understand that game development isn't always about rainbows and unicorns)

Heimo et al. (2016) Virtual to Virtuous Money: A Virtue Ethics Perspective on Video Game Business Logic. *Journal of Business Ethics*, doi [10.1007/s10551-016-3408-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3408-z) (Same as above, in order to improve the status quo, we need to understand the underpinning dynamics better)

Kerr, A. (2017) *Global Games* (selected chapters only, but in general Kerr's books are amazing if you want to know more about the industry)

Lehtonen, M. J., Ainamo, A. & Harviainen, J. T. (2019) The four faces of creative industries: visualising the game industry ecosystem in Helsinki and Tokyo. *Industry and Innovation*, [doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2019.1676704](https://doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2019.1676704) (There aren't that many studies looking at the Helsinki ecosystem, and in this paper we contrast Helsinki with Tokyo)

Lehtonen, M. J. & Harviainen, T. (2016) Mobile Games and Player Communities: Designing for and with Clans. *Design Management Review*, 27(3), pp. 20-26. (A quick and dirty paper illustrating how game companies engage their players in developing the game further)

Lehtonen, M. J., Santos, F. P. & Mihailova, I. (2015) *Angry Birds: 'Lead your feathery team*

*into battle now': Rovio's internationalization to Japan.* The Case Centre. (Our first case study, a nice “retro” story on Rovio’s rise and fall in Japan)

Santos, F. P., Mihailova, I. & Lehtonen, M. J. (*Forthcoming*) Leading the growth of a game development studio: Scaling up Frogmind through the creative power of small and independent teams. To be submitted to The Case Centre. (We almost forgot about this case! Will be published later on, so you’ll be the first ones to dig deeper into what made Frogmind a global success)

Tschang, F. T. (2007) Balancing the tensions between rationalization and creativity in the video games industry. *Organization Science*, 18 (6), 989-1005. (Ted’s paper is brilliant! Have been extensively discussing with him the intricacies of the video game industry, and in many ways this paper lays the foundations to what we’ll be covering during this course)

Whitson, J. R. (2018) What Can We Learn From Studio Studies Ethnographies? A “Messy” Account of Game Development Materiality, Learning, and Expertise. *Games and Culture*, [doi.org/10.1177/1555412018783320](https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412018783320) (An essential piece to familiarize yourself better with game development processes)

Zackariasson & Wilson (2013) The New Business Logics of Video Games: Triple Evolutionary Processes in Perspective. *Competition Forum*, 11 (1). (Peter and Timothy have been writing extensively about the game industry dynamics, and while this one is already seven years old, it still holds true to a large extent!)

**Course Schedule – NB! All times listed in GMT+3 (Finland time zone)**

**NB2! Not all sessions are synchronous (want to avoid Zoom overkill), some will be fully asynchronous and others partially synchronous. Regardless of the nature of the session, they will always take place between 4:00-7:00pm.**

<p>Session 1, 12 October, 4:00pm – 7:00pm – Introduction to the course, team formation and team assignment presentation</p>	
<p>Session 2, 13 October, 4:00pm – 5:30pm – Finnish game industry: past, present, future – watch <b>The Name of the Game</b></p>	<p>Read: Lehtonen, M. J., Ainamo, A. &amp; Harviainen, J. T. (2019) The four faces of creative industries: visualising the game industry ecosystem in Helsinki and Tokyo. <i>Industry and Innovation</i>, <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2019.1676704">doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2019.1676704</a></p>
<p>Session 3, 14 October, 4:00pm – 5:30pm – Ideation: how game development companies are creating game ideas – <b>team exercise at your own pace</b></p>	<p>Read: Tschang, F. T. (2007) Balancing the tensions between rationalization and creativity in the video games industry. <i>Organization Science</i>, 18 (6), 989-1005.</p>

<p>Session 4, 15 October – Game development processes – team exercise and watch Branching Paths</p>	<p>Read: Whitson, J. R. (2018) What Can We Learn From Studio Studies Ethnographies? A “Messy” Account of Game Development Materiality, Learning, and Expertise. <i>Games and Culture</i>, doi.org/10.1177/1555412018783320</p> <p>AND Section 3.2 from Kerr, A. (2017) <i>Global Games</i></p>
<p>Session 5, 16 October, 4:00pm – 5:30pm – Reflection session and team presentations – team exercise</p>	<p>Note 1: team presentation to be uploaded to MyCourses by 11:59pm 15 October</p> <p>Note 2: individual learning diary (part 1/3) to be uploaded to MyCourses by 11:59pm 16 October</p>
<p>Session 6, 19 October, 4:00pm – 5:30pm – Business models and monetization design – team exercise</p>	<p>Read: Zackariasson &amp; Wilson (2013) The New Business Logics of Video Games: Triple Evolutionary Processes in Perspective. <i>Competition Forum</i>, 11 (1).</p> <p>AND Section 2.3 from Kerr, A. (2017) <i>Global Games</i></p>
<p>Session 7, 20 October – User testing and quality assurance – asynchronous at your own pace and team exercise</p>	<p>Read: Bulut, E. (2015) Playboring in the Tester Pit: The Convergence of Precarity and the Degradation of Fun in Video Game Testing. <i>Television &amp; New Media</i>, 16 (3), 240-258.</p>
<p>Session 8, 21 October, 4:00pm – 7:00pm – Consumers as players, ethics of video games, and playing games (for pedagogical purposes)</p>	<p>Read: Heimo et al. (2016) Virtual to Virtuous Money: A Virtue Ethics Perspective on Video Game Business Logic. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>, doi 10.1007/s10551-016-3408-z</p> <p>AND Section 4.5 from Kerr, A. (2017) <i>Global Games</i></p>
<p>Session 9, 22 October, 4:00pm – 5:30pm – Branding, marketing, community management (Guest speaker, Johnathyn Owens, streamer) – team exercise</p>	<p>Read: Lehtonen, M. J. &amp; Harviainen, T. (2016) Mobile Games and Player Communities: Designing for and with Clans. <i>Design Management Review</i>, 27 (3), 20-26.</p> <p>AND Section 4.3 from Kerr, A. (2017) <i>Global Games</i></p>
<p>Session 10, 23 October, 4:00pm – 5:30pm – Reflection session and team presentations – team exercise</p>	<p>Note 1: team presentation to be uploaded to MyCourses by 11:59pm 22 October</p> <p>Note 2: individual learning diary (part 2/3) to be uploaded to MyCourses by 11:59pm 23 October</p>
<p>Session 11, 26 October – Strategic dimension: Frogmind case study – team exercise at your own pace</p>	<p>Read: Broekhuizen et al. (2013) New horizons or a strategic mirage? Artist-led-distribution versus alliance strategy in the video game industry. <i>Research Policy</i>, 42 (4).</p> <p>AND Santos, F. P., Mihailova, I. &amp; Lehtonen, M. J. (Forthcoming) Leading the growth of a game development studio: Scaling up Frogmind through the creative power of small and independent teams.</p>

Session 12, 27 October – Internationalizing game companies: Rovio case study – team exercise at your own pace and IGDA Demo Day 6:00-7:00pm	Familiarize yourself with the case study prior to the session: Lehtonen, M. J., Santos, F. P. & Mihailova, I. 2015. <i>Angry Birds: ‘Lead your feathery team into battle now’: Rovio’s internationalization to Japan</i> . The Case Centre.  AND Section 6.4 from Kerr, A. (2017) <i>Global Games</i>
Session 13, 28 October, 4:00pm – 5:30pm – Global game industry and its future (Guest speaker, TBC) – team exercise	Read: <a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-06-21/how-nintendo-s-switch-helped-the-japanese-gaming-giant-win-again">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-06-21/how-nintendo-s-switch-helped-the-japanese-gaming-giant-win-again</a>
Session 14, 29 October, 4:00pm – 6:00pm – Reflection session and final team presentations	Note 1: final presentation and report to be uploaded to MyCourses by 11:59pm 28 October  Note 2: individual learning diary (part 3/3) to be uploaded to MyCourses by 11:59pm 29 October
Session 15, 30 October – Final exam, deadline for submitting your essay 6:00pm Finland time, exam questions will be posted on the course space on Moodle 9:00am Finland time	Essay-based exam (no learning by heart, but applying what you have learned during the course), more information will be shared during the course

Grading	
Course Requirements and Values	Weighting (%) or maximum points
Active class participation	Max. 10 points
Individual learning diary	Max. 30 points
Team assignment (70%) and final presentation (30%)	Max. 30 points
Final exam	Max. 30 points
	Total 100
Conversion scale	Final grade (official scale)
90 - 100	5
80 - 89	4
70 - 79	3
60 - 69	2
50 - 59	1
0 - 49	0

ECTS GUIDELINES
This course is a 6 ECTS unit course, following the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) guidelines of Aalto University School of Business. The number of hours the average student is expected to work in the course is 160 (including in-class and out-of-class work).
<b>ECTS Student Workload</b>

	Number of Hours
<b>Faculty-led engagement</b> (May include synchronous sessions and asynchronous interaction, e.g. viewing recorded lectures, distance teamwork and other peer interaction such as threaded discussions.):	<b>45</b>
<b>Self-study hours</b> (May include acquisition of content and assignment completion.):	<b>115</b>
Work with course materials, e.g. required reading	20
Exam preparation	15
Individual research & writing	30
Team projects (meetings, research, preparation, etc.)	50
Other	N/A
<b>Total of all student workload hours</b>	<b>160</b>

### Academic Policy Statements

#### TEXTBOOK POLICY

All required textbooks and other course materials are the responsibility of the student. It is the expectation of faculty that all students will have access to the textbooks and other reading material. If a student is not able to purchase his/her own copy of the textbook or other required reading materials, it is nonetheless the student's responsibility to find a way to complete the reading for the course.

#### COURSE PARTICIPATION

A hallmark of the Mikkeli program is student engagement in the classroom, which for this course is an online learning space. Students are expected to participate actively in the course and follow lectures and other presentations, whether synchronous ("live") or asynchronous (recorded). Assignment deadlines will be enforced as for regular courses. As always, faculty will evaluate your achievement of the learning outcomes of the course through assessment methods approved by the program director. A passive approach to the course will negatively affect your grade. In practical terms, this means that the instructor for the course will take attendance in the synchronous sessions. **Any student who is absent for 25% or more of the synchronous sessions may be dropped from the course.** The decision to drop a student from a course will be made by the instructor, who will inform Mari Syväoja, Manager of Academic Operations: [mari.syvaoja@aalto.fi](mailto:mari.syvaoja@aalto.fi).

## CODES OF CONDUCT

Academic excellence and high achievement levels are only possible in an environment where the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity are maintained. Students are expected to abide by the Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity, other relevant codes and regulations, as well as the canons of ethical conduct within the disciplines of business and management education.

In addition, the BScBA Program has strict exam regulations in force which must be followed in all test-taking situations.

2020 - 2021