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PROFESSOR: OK, thanks for showing up on time. I really appreciate it. It's kind of weird at this. And I never see this front row completely empty, but this will be [INAUDIBLE]. Thank you. That really makes me feel better.

So, today's structure of class is going to be very similar to what we did last time, which was we're going to talk a little bit about a reading, play a bunch of games. [INAUDIBLE] the reading [INAUDIBLE] end of class probably with more time for you to work through your prototype.

Just as a reminder, Rick and I are here to do any play testing that you might want. And we'll give you feedback. Along with the feedback, we also put all the grades up. Thanks to Rick for getting them all down for assignment two.

And all the-- if you look at the comments that we've sent, there are two sections. One is a section that is just about your individual write-up which only you see. And then there is a chunk that is the comments will be geared to every single one of the team members, which was basically based on your product itself.

Do take those in mind. Do keep in mind because there's a lot of stuff there that-- a lot of feedback that we're giving you in the hopes that you will be able to put that feedback to good use for assignment three. And Did you have a general comment?

RICK: Yeah, in particular, rules, rules, rules. Proofread your rules. Test your rules.

The presentation and expression of your rules is just as important, if not more important, than the design of your game. That's why we have you play games you haven't played before and read the rules you haven't seen before to see how bad the professionals get it done.

Try to be better than that. The main things we're looking for-- coherence, clarity, organization, figures, and illustrations. So, for assignment three, please try to put in illustrated-- at least, bare minimum, illustrate what it looks like when your game is set up.

Illustrate what it looks like when a major state change happens in the game. Give us a basic section that just says here's kind of goal, how you play the game. Here's how you actually play the game.

Here's some examples for how various things within the game happen. There is general guidelines on the [INAUDIBLE] materials [INAUDIBLE] readings we've given you. Really pay attention to that for assignment three. Basically, in each assignment we get a little bit more tougher when we're grading the rules section.

PROFESSOR: Because you've have two rounds of feedback already on rules. And hopefully, the third time around, you know what-- you get into the idea of what we're looking for. Also, use illustrations in your rules to get your point across. You know, that's something that we typically find under-used where you spend a lot of words trying to explain some things which [INAUDIBLE] is far easier to understand where [INAUDIBLE] a simple, [? minor ?] drawing. Even just like a cell phone camera, like a sketch, would probably have been more informative than paragraphs and paragraphs.

RICK: Actually, I have a [INAUDIBLE] working for me on a board game. And she did something amazing what I've actually never thought about doing for rules. She made it basically in PowerPoint.

It's really, really long, a lot of pages. So I'm really not sure how well it's going to work that way when we're going to be testing with it. But it's very illustrative and very diagrammy-- lots of big words, very little written out. Very little written out, like , long paragraphs of language. I'm going to get the latest version of that and share it with the class so you can kind of see what that looks like, if that's useful for your game or not.

PROFESSOR: I personally have had a lot of luck with Google Docs built-in drawing tools. So you, for the word processing doc, just bring up the drawing [? in it. ?] And just, like, drawing things like cards that overlap each other with text in them-- like, Google Docs has all the tools you need for that. Drawing arrows that arc in curves with one arrowhead and two arrowheads and everything that you need there is already [INAUDIBLE].

So if you don't have a drawing program, that's a lot built into Microsoft Word and in Google Docs that you can take advantage of. They don't have to look great, but they could often get across the point a lot easier than text. So, do try to use those.

STUDENT: The next playtest is March 7. Is that right?

PROFESSOR: I believe that's right. I don't--

STUDENT: May 7. [INAUDIBLE]

PROFESSOR: May.

STUDENT: [INAUDIBLE]

RICK: So, I highly, highly recommend bringing a draft of your rules in and having that as part of the playtest. You'll get feedback from [? Phil and myself. ?] You'll also get feedback from our guest lecturers.

PROFESSOR: Every time somebody asks you for rule verification in class or when you're playtesting with your dorm mate or whatever, that's a good opportunity for you to think of how you could reword your rules or reformat your rules. That is clearly a situation where this could be a question that's going to come up again when we play the game. Or it could be a situation like they just didn't understand the rules as written right now. So you've got to rephrase it somehow. Use the bullet points, examples, and make sure they're visually distinct when someone is [INAUDIBLE].

RICK: Game designer I follow on Twitter is a very, very well spoken [INAUDIBLE] just posted. There's a difference between a broken rule and a broken rules presentation. The problem could be in either [INAUDIBLE] both those places. Without testing, you're just not going to find it.

PROFESSOR: If the only way that people are playing your game is that you are explaining it to them, then you're not getting the feedback that you need on your rules. So, make sure that for assignment three, your rules have been tested too. The rulesheet has been tested as well as [INAUDIBLE].

Also, one tip for people who are doing personal write ups-- people are getting better at sort of identifying things that went well, things that didn't go so well in the project. And that's good, in general if you did a decent write up, you probably got a extra half grade on top of your grade. So if you got like a B minus-- if you got a B plus, your write up alone could push you to an A minus, for instance.

But what some people don't [? necessarily ?] do is just say next time, I'm going to do this, or next time, I'm going to be sure not to do this. Just like, little simple little things like, what are you going to take all of this for future projects? So right now, [? we are seeing ?] a good analysis of your previous project, but usually write ups will also [INAUDIBLE] what the take-away is.

This is what I've wanted to make sure I'm going to try to do. Or maybe you're not sure. But this is something that you're going to try to do. The next time you make a game, this is what we're going to try and do. That can help a lot.

RICK: First time is free. If it's the last game you'll ever make, then what are you going to [INAUDIBLE] for a project? What are you going to do on another team project, another design project? Think about the future.

PROFESSOR: It doesn't have to be a design thing. It can be, maybe next time, if I work on a team on a creative project, I am going to make sure that I communicate with them this way or make sure that you understand blah. Just something like that will be-- some sort of lesson that you're taking out from the previous assignment [INAUDIBLE]. Any questions about the assignment, assignment two? Grades? By the way, did you get an email from something from [? Stella ?] that tells you grades have been posted?

STUDENT: No.

RICK: Because I think with other classes, [? they post ?] a more grades like p-sets and other stuff. So it would be kind of annoying. Like, four classes posting a p-set every week, or once a week.

PROFESSOR: That makes sense. OK, well, OK, then. It's a good thing that we haven't [INAUDIBLE]. Today's reading is mostly about [INAUDIBLE]. It's actually a bit of a post-mortem.

It's written in the sort of same style as the flavor text of [INAUDIBLE]. And I thought it might help to actually open up the box, give you an idea of what it looks inside.

It might [INAUDIBLE] write up for-- actually, [INAUDIBLE]

RICK: I've seen this. I've watched people play this. This is the latest edition. You might have seen the [INAUDIBLE] edition.

PROFESSOR: And [INAUDIBLE] before that. [INAUDIBLE] bigger than [INAUDIBLE].

RICK: There's the special power that [INAUDIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Ah. [INAUDIBLE] So you get a bunch of planets, different colors, and I believe the colors correspond to different players. [INAUDIBLE]

Got your tokens, some of which are used, some of which are not used depending on the assortment of character that you've got in your game. [INAUDIBLE] particular [INAUDIBLE]. Or you may not use that either. This is the counter. You can see you can put [INAUDIBLE] a race. [INAUDIBLE]

STUDENT: [INAUDIBLE]

PROFESSOR: Yeah, so you can track them. And [INAUDIBLE] how each player keeps track of [INAUDIBLE]. So, here's the yellow player. Here's the green player.

And say both of them are at three. So [INAUDIBLE] that. [INAUDIBLE] not able to [INAUDIBLE] but it's just a way to keep track of [INAUDIBLE] for any one [INAUDIBLE]. And a whole tight pile of cards of two different sizes. It's a really bad [INAUDIBLE] Some of these cards, I'm not entirely sure what they do.

But the cards that I do know what they do are the cards [INAUDIBLE], [? Oh my god, ?] [? it's a mess. ?] [INAUDIBLE] separate [INAUDIBLE] cards. [INAUDIBLE] cards which have these numbers. And what are you basically doing is you're using these cards [INAUDIBLE] identify who is going to initiate [INAUDIBLE].

Here we go. Yeah, so you add-- so these numbers, depending on how many cards that are played, basically give your ships some sort of attack powers. But then you also have individual ships that [INAUDIBLE] move on to attack [INAUDIBLE] attacking a red planet.

And what I'll do is I'll point this arrow toward the red planet. Anybody defending the red planet puts chips on the red planet. Anybody who's attacking it puts it on this [INAUDIBLE] very nice point [INAUDIBLE] are attacking.

That whole game basically largely comes down to you trying to encourage other people to contribute either to your defense [? or the ?] attack. Please give me some chips. Please give [INAUDIBLE] and [INAUDIBLE] negotiate [INAUDIBLE] mutual benefit [INAUDIBLE].

But this is the really interesting part of the game, which is when you start a game, you get one of these cards. And this tells you what race you are. And each race basically has a power that lets them break the rules somewhere in the rules.

Only you have this ability to break this power. So for instance, this is the [? hate ?] race. And they have the power of rage. So at the start of a turn, you use this power to force every player to either discard a card [? on the ?] ship [INAUDIBLE] discard [INAUDIBLE].

Everybody else must then discard at the same time. So if I put [? down a ?] [? card, ?] [INAUDIBLE] an attack card, everybody has to discard an attack card.

All these [INAUDIBLE] ships [INAUDIBLE] they make people angry with this power. The filch is where you steal cards from other people, the power to hack. You can compensation from other players, basically.

And so you've got this kind of like weird almost like CCG, Collectible Card Game, kind of a [INAUDIBLE] where depending on what you start with [? is one way to ?] determine the shape of the rest of the game board. And every time you play the game, you can have a different set of cards because each player gets a different card between-- it's very, very likely that you have to play two games with even the same [? set of basis ?] at the table. [INAUDIBLE]

And the whole idea of the games we picked out today is that all of them are kind of like a sort of an interesting case of what it means to have changing rules in games. Risk Legacy-- how many of you played this particular? OK, how long have you had a game going [INAUDIBLE] how many rounds?

STUDENT: I played with people in my home. I played in like three games and I think we played a total of 12 or so-- 12 games.

PROFESSOR: Every time you play this game, the game changes.

STUDENT: [INAUDIBLE]

PROFESSOR: What?

STUDENT: I've heard of this.

PROFESSOR: Yeah, [INAUDIBLE] changes made [INAUDIBLE]. When you first buy the game, four packets, four envelopes are actually [INAUDIBLE] the past [? year, ?] You can see we played this a bit [INAUDIBLE]. And that gives you new cards, stickers that you can stick on the old cards.

You can see this card had a whole bunch of stickers added onto it that basically introduce new rules into games. You can change the map. And usually, this comes down to the people who won, the people who lost get certain abilities to make changes [INAUDIBLE] areas [INAUDIBLE] these [INAUDIBLE]. Certain cities have been established. So for instance, this is the kingdom of [INAUDIBLE]. This is the kingdom of [INAUDIBLE].

STUDENT: That's mine, by the way.

PROFESSOR: That yours?

STUDENT: Yeah.

PROFESSOR: OK.

STUDENT: That's mine.

PROFESSOR: [INAUDIBLE] cover here. [INAUDIBLE] Here [INAUDIBLE].

STUDENT: Yeah.

PROFESSOR: [INAUDIBLE] in Japan. So this was interesting because one way to think about it is it's not the [INAUDIBLE] played the game of Risk?

RICK: Yeah, it starts off like Risk but closer to like Risk 20-something or other.

PROFESSOR: Yeah.

RICK: One of the later editions of risk where there's like turn order cards and some other-- it does resources differently than classic Risk did. But basically, it is Risk.

PROFESSOR: Yes, and you have stickers that you can attach on the [INAUDIBLE]. And so basically, every time you play this game, you're playing a different game [INAUDIBLE].

RICK: The great thing is, in this one, there's a story that goes along. As you do things, the story changes. So you're in this post-apocalyptic hellscape. With these factions that are fighting each other.

And then all of a sudden, when a certain condition is reached, one of those classes opens up and new elements to the story are discussed. And then a new race-- a new faction comes up or a new race comes up. So, spoilers-- there is aliens right there from alien island.

PROFESSOR: [INAUDIBLE]

RICK: [INAUDIBLE] becomes the alien collaborators. And that faction from now on is considered the collaborator. It gets special powers because of the aliens but they don't get-- I think they get special powers and I think they get a special something that goes against them.

PROFESSOR: This game is actually probably not best played cold. But so what I will suggest is that folks take a look at this box. Because just trying to internalize all of the changes that have happened to this game since [INAUDIBLE] probably [INAUDIBLE].

But it's very, very [? unique way to ?] take a look and see what changes have been made. One way that a designer is going to [INAUDIBLE]. A lot of the rules that you get, a lot of changes you can make later in the game are actually tools for you to fix [? the events. ?]

So there are really, really powerful changes that you can make in the rules. But the whole idea is that after you played something like 15 rounds or 10 rounds of the game, you kind of know where the game is going, where the board is [INAUDIBLE] or maybe [INAUDIBLE] how [INAUDIBLE]. And the players now have the tools to officially fix those imbalances to play.

So in a way, it's [INAUDIBLE] game design process. And [INAUDIBLE] you have [INAUDIBLE] is kind of like a deck building game only your dice and [INAUDIBLE] part of [INAUDIBLE]. And I don't have a whole lot of information about this game.

STUDENT: Plays like Dominion.

PROFESSOR: Yes.

STUDENT: [INAUDIBLE] the cards are out. [? We ?] build your deck just like it's Dominion. And when you do attacks and certain things, you have cards that represent a thing that you can use and then dice that are reflecting the [INAUDIBLE] card.

PROFESSOR: So, like a lot of other deck building games, you know, [INAUDIBLE] conquer. Often, when you're actually going into a game, [? what you're seeing ?] is not quite what [INAUDIBLE] before in previous games. So every time, you're trying to, like, figure out what is [INAUDIBLE] momentum. What is the strategy for this particular round that I'm playing?

[INAUDIBLE] just happens to be an interesting twist on that [INAUDIBLE] cards. And Settlers of Catan, it seems like an odd thing to bring up. But back when it first came out, it was kind of neat that it was one of the games that definitely popularized the whole idea that every time you played this game, you had [INAUDIBLE] because you have the hexes that are arranged [? by the water ?] and systems to be able to make a random map, [? into a ?] table no matter how it's arranged. And you're playing a different scenario in the game.

So we also had the Seafarers expansion. That's kind of like the traditional way that publishers [INAUDIBLE], right? They give you all the parts and maybe a new set of rules to be able to add to an existing set of pieces on the board.

What happens is that the map is a lot larger, as you can see, because you have additional cards. Actually, I don't know anything [INAUDIBLE]. But [INAUDIBLE] larger. Users [INAUDIBLE] then the old ones. Gives you a few new pieces, new rules, and you're playing [INAUDIBLE].

So this one might also be-- and I [? wouldn't ?] suggest just playing a straight out game of Settlers of Catan because I know a lot of you already have. But in case you need it, [INAUDIBLE] especially if you haven't played the Seafarers expansion [INAUDIBLE] look through how they present the rules so that knowing how to play this game, how do they introduce new sets of rules to change the way [INAUDIBLE] played.

RICK: Big difference for that one with islands, rather than having rows of settlements, you have shipping lanes that you build that connect ports.

PROFESSOR: Yep, and I believe you don't know what's on the island before you get there.

RICK: Yep.

PROFESSOR: So you don't actually know [INAUDIBLE] island at the beginning of the game. From the reading that-- anything strike anyone from the reading? Just wondering if--

STUDENT: It said that I guess the unbalance of the game was the actual point.

PROFESSOR: Yeah.

STUDENT: And that they were going for the feel of that if you find that something is not fair, that you have your own unfair power to sort of counter that unfairness.

PROFESSOR: Right, everyone has a win cheat basically, but it's officially mandated by the game and the different ways you [INAUDIBLE]

STUDENT: It's kind of similar to Diplomacy, which is inherently unbalanced. Like, [INAUDIBLE] played several games of Diplomacy, [INAUDIBLE] like some of the-- I don't remember which countries, but some of them are, like, in much stronger positions and two of them together can take out the entire board if people let them. And so in general, more advanced and experienced players will not let that happen or will all gang up and crush the first one or something like that, which kind of makes an interesting meta game.

PROFESSOR: So you can spot the patterns. But then you also have a lot of tools to try to push back against that once you know that the game [INAUDIBLE].

STUDENT: I consider Cosmic Encounter to be sort of like the version of Munchkin in that they're both sort of stop the leader games where it's literally everyone-- it's very easy for almost everyone to get [INAUDIBLE] to victory and it's all about, like, how you [INAUDIBLE] people are [INAUDIBLE] everyone's trying to [? stop her. ?] And when [INAUDIBLE] people run out of stuff to stop the winner.

PROFESSOR: Yep, every game comes to an end. I remember games of Cosmic Encounter dragging on for a really long amount of time, but I'm not entirely sure that's the case of this particular edition of the game.

STUDENT: The idea of finding balance for [INAUDIBLE] where sort of the motto is if it's broken, break it until it's fixed.

PROFESSOR: I haven't heard that one.

STUDENT: [INAUDIBLE] basically, they took *Super Smash Bros Brawl* and just way overpowered a bunch of different people's moves so that you can do ridiculous things the entire time. It actually ended up working pretty well [INAUDIBLE].

PROFESSOR: OK, yeah. *League of Legends*, the ultra-rapid fire is kind of that too. But I think that's-- one of the things that I remember from the readings was if you have a game where it's fun to lose, you've got something really, really good there. They were a lot more flippant about some of the other ways that you can tell you have a good game.

Like, you lose the game when you have a divorce because your spouse wanted the game. But I'm not sure how that metric is useful. But some other metrics that tell whether your game is-- you've got something really interesting as a game is that one is the game system is actually continually surprising the people who actually designed the game.

Then just every once in a while, you just see something you've never seen before and you're the ones who made it. You know you've got a really interesting system there. And if people have stories to tell about their game after they're done, I think Munchkin has that.

Cosmic Encounter definitely has that. They do try to give you the tone through the writing. Both games, Munchkin and Cosmic Encounter, these are very [INAUDIBLE] games where that's a lot of verbal humor in the text.

But I feel in the dynamic of Cosmic Encounter, much like [INAUDIBLE] earlier, that's also [? create an origin ?] story. I was like, this person betrayed that person.

I guess Diplomacy does that too. But you don't want to tell stories about Diplomacy because there's so many bad things associated with that whereas what happens in Cosmic Encounter is kind of hilarious usually. So--

STUDENT: [INAUDIBLE]

PROFESSOR: Yeah, and Munchkin does that too. So you can tell stories about that and say, oh, I remember the time when, you know, I was this close to winning and then all of you [? stopped me. ?] And then I get this power and then I managed to pull myself out. And then this person just came from nowhere and won the whole game.

STUDENT: I used to be competitive about Munchkin and I played like two or three games. And I was like, this game's a joke. Like--

PROFESSOR: It's one long running joke, yeah.

STUDENT: So there's a role or a class, something like [? the Beef, ?] where you can roll a die-- actually, even better is the one where you just take people's shit all day. Like, I had a friend who like literally, every time, he was just like rolled-- like, keep going downhill until he was level one and just keep taking people's shit and it's just like, OK, man. You clearly don't want to win. All you're doing is trolling me right now.

PROFESSOR: Right, right. It's supposed to be a situation of what a role playing group actually does when they're getting together, not how a role playing game actually works. OK, so I think [INAUDIBLE] with playing these games now, I'm going to guess about an hour.

Again, I would not suggest this with Risk Legacy for playing, but you are definitely welcome to take a look at it. The rest of the games, go right ahead. And probably, [INAUDIBLE] hopefully, the [INAUDIBLE] at least one hour, possibly 1 and 1/2 hours for you to work in your teams for the second half of class. Cool? Yeah.

STUDENT: Are we [INAUDIBLE] then?

PROFESSOR: Yes, [INAUDIBLE] on Monday. Sorry, did I say Wednesday?

STUDENT: I don't remember.

PROFESSOR: OK, all right. Yeah, Monday-- Monday is the day where we go outside and get ready to play Joust, which means wear comfortable shoes and--

STUDENT: It's [INAUDIBLE].

PROFESSOR: And hopefully it'll get warmer. [INAUDIBLE] because outdoors is usually too noisy [INAUDIBLE]. All right, so [INAUDIBLE]