STATS 98/198

Magic the Gathering Decal – Fall 2017

1 unit, Tuesday 6-8pm, 340 Evans Hall

Course Instructors:
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Hank Ibser

The #1 Game In The Multiverse

Course Description:
We will explore the fantastic world of Magic: the Gathering by delving into its gameplay, lore, strategy, and many other factors that all shape the game’s complexity and awesomeness. Students will have the opportunity to design their own decks, participate in tournaments, listen to guest speakers, and learn how to evaluate and advance their play decisions using probability. By the end of this course, students should become more confident Magic players and gain both a deeper knowledge and greater appreciation for the game that will last a lifetime!
Whether you know nothing about the game or have been playing since Alpha, this course welcomes **both new and experienced players alike.**

**Course Structure:**

This is a 1 unit course that meets weekly for 2 hours, where the first hour is dedicated to lecture and the remaining hour is reserved for free play. The first half of the course (pre-mid-semester tournament) will introduce the basics of Magic, and the second half (post-mid-semester tournament) will touch on more advanced topics of the game.

We will be doing a sealed league throughout the semester using the most current blocks (Amonkhet and Ixalan) keeping track of match statistics every week. Students will be given 6 booster packs in Week 2, and will have the option of adding one pack per week until the end of the term. The Mid-Semester Tournament will be an in-class sealed tournament, and the End-of-Term Tournament will be an in-class draft tournament. These tournaments are meant to be fun, friendly, and low-stake measures to test the student’s knowledge, so don't be intimidated! This also means by the end of the course, students will own, have made, and leave with three completed limited decks.

We will be choosing to focus gameplay primarily within the limited formats for two reasons. 1. To keep the card pool accessible and to ensure all students are on even footing. 2. Other formats would most likely require proxying, and playing with real Magic cards feels infinitely better than playing with proxies.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. We want to give you guys the best experience with Magic, but that also means you have to come to class. Exceptions will be made for exams and any other special cases by contacting either instructor with advanced notice.

**Grades:**

The course will be on a Pass/Not-Pass scale. Students must complete all assignments to receive a 'Pass'.

**Prerequisites:**

Magic is fun but it does cost money! There will be a total fee of $50 to purchase the booster packs we will be using for our Sealed League, Mid-Semester Tournament, and End-of-Term Tournament. Alternatively, students may bring in their own packs.
(if the packs are from the correct set) instead of purchasing from us. And of course, all cards purchased are yours to keep, trade, alter, or whatever it is you do with your Magic cards forever.

Sealed League: A course fee of $20 to receive 6 booster packs.
Mid-Semester Tournament: A course fee $20 to receive 6 booster packs.
End-of-Term Tournament: A course fee of $10 to receive 3 booster packs.

**Course Schedule**

**8/29 - Week 1: Learning How To Play Magic In 1 Hour**
Course overview. A brief introduction to the history of Magic and how to play the game. We will go over the color pie, how to read a card, turn structure, card zones, and basic rules.
**Assignment:** Review the Amonkhet card gallery and take the color quiz. Then post a short writeup of your results.

**9/5 - Week 2: Deck Design 1**
Colors, Mana Curve, Archetypes. Students will construct their sealed league decks in the latter half of class.
**Assignment:** Deck Building Reflection

**9/12 - Week 3: Deck Design 2**
Continuing from last week with more advanced discussion. Strategy, Synergies, Different Ways of Winning, Sideboards.
**Assignment:** Match Analysis

**9/19 - Week 4: Art & Lore**
Delving into the art and lore of Magic.
**Assignment:** Art & Lore Writeup
9/26 - Week 5: Card Evaluation / Templating
Learning how to evaluate power level, and recognizing templating issues.
Assignment: Card Creation

10/3 - Week 6: Mid-Semester Tournament
In class sealed tournament part 1.

10/10 - Week 7: Mid-Semester Tournament II
In class sealed tournament part 2.

10/17 - Week 8: Draft
Introducing the draft format.
Assignment: Draft Video Writeup

10/24 - Week 9: Other Ways To Play
Introducing constructed, eternal, and casual formats.
Assignment: Deck Tech

10/31 - Week 10: Guest Lecturer
In class guest lecturer!
Assignment: TBD

11/7 - Week 11: What’s The Play? / Rules Puzzles
A set of rules puzzles and play decisions.
Assignment: What’s The Play Worksheet

11/14 - Week 12: Competitive Magic
More advanced strategies and topics at the competitive level of the game.
Assignment: Semester Reflection
11/21 - Week 13: Thanksgiving Break
No class. Thanksgiving Break!
**Assignment:** Prepare for the Final

11/28 - Week 14: End-of-Term Tournament
In class booster draft and final goodbyes!
Course Readings

The following will be a selected list of articles and resources we will touch on during the course in no particular order:

- Introduction to Amonkhet

- The Story of Amonkhet

- Amonkhet Mechanics

- The Colors of Magic
  http://mtg.wikia.com/wiki/Color

- How To Build A Deck
  http://magic.wizards.com/en/gameplay/how-to-build-a-deck

- Introduction to Sealed

- Drafting Amonkhet

- A Beginner’s Guide To Drafting