STATS 98/198

Magic the Gathering Decal – Spring 2018

1 unit, Wednesday 6-8pm, 340 Evans

Course Instructors:
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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, 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 block (Ixalan) keeping track of match statistics every week. Students will be given 6 booster packs in Week 2. The Mid-Semester Tournament will be an in-class sealed tournament where students will crack open 6 more booster packs and construct a second deck with these 6 booster packs to use for the tournament. The End-of-Term Tournament will be an in-class draft. Don't worry if you do not know what a draft is, you'll learn what it is in the class! 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.

Grades:

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

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. Each student will be allowed two unexcused absences for the semester for any reason; they do not have to tell the instructor. However, after two absences, any absence after that results in requiring to submit a make-up assignment. Remember, a student needs to complete all weekly assignments and any make-up assignments to pass the class.

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

Course Schedule

1/24 - 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 Ixalan card gallery. Answer the posted questions on rules of the game.

1/31 - 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

2/7 - Week 3: Deck Design 2
Continuing from last week with more advanced discussion. Strategy, Synergies, Different Ways of Winning, Sideboards.
Assignment: Match Analysis

2/14 - Week 4: Card Evaluation / Templating
Learning how to evaluate power level, and recognizing templating issues.
Assignment: BREAD Analysis
2/21 - Week 5: Mulligans and Sideboarding
Discussion on when to mulligan and what cards to sideboard in/out.
Assignment: Mull or Keep Scenarios and Sideboarding Scenarios.

2/28 - Week 6: Mid-Semester Tournament
In class sealed tournament part 1.
Assignment: Midterm Deck Building Reflection

3/7 - Week 7: Mid-Semester Tournament II
In class sealed tournament part 2.

3/14 - Week 8: Sequencing / When to Cast Spells
Transition into more advanced topics, including the idea of sequencing, and decisions on when to cast spells.
Assignment: Match Reflection

3/21 - Week 9: Other Ways To Play / Online Tools
Introducing constructed, eternal, and casual formats as well as online websites pertinent to MTG for learning more.
Assignment: Deck Tech

3/28 - Week 10: Spring Break
No class!
Assignment: No assignment

4/4 - Week 11: What’s The Play? / Rules Puzzles
A set of rules puzzles and play decisions.
Assignment: What’s The Play Worksheet
4/11 - Week 12: Competitive Magic
More advanced strategies and topics at the competitive level of the game.
Assignment: Semester Reflection

4/18 - Week 13: Draft
Introducing the draft format.
Assignment: First Picks

4/25 - 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 Magic: the Gathering
  https://magic.wizards.com/en/gameplay/how-to-play

- Introduction to Ixalan

- Ixalan 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

- A Beginner’s Guide To Drafting