

Matthew Wu

Active Fun in *Goblin Goons*: Activity Theory in Game Design

This senior thesis project aims to see how the social-science structures of activity theory, as defined by N.H. Hashim and M.L. Jones, and Raph Koster's theory of fun can be applied to video game design and development. During background research, I first researched the fields of system thinking and activity theory. These are all fields of social-science, aimed at understanding systems and how humans interact with them. In addition, I also researched how a game is defined and how it can be made fun using Koster's theories.

The purpose of my own project is to try and apply said theoretical frameworks to a project using computer science. My project, *Goblin Goons*, is a virtual side-scrolling platformer inspired by my own favorite games. The game started as a combination of mechanics inspired by games like *Hollow Knight*, *Nine Sols*, and *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice*. The first initial stage of the project involved using the game engine Godot to program and implement all the base mechanics. During this process, I used my prior experience in the field of computer science, the frameworks of activity theory, Koster's theory of fun, and multiple rounds of playtesting to craft a guided, enjoyable experience.