

# Sarah Blick - Final Report for “Three-Dimensional Medieval Architecture and Its Discontents”

## The project

After many years of work and beta testing, the Cathedral Game was ready to be used in a class. This semester, in ARHS 234 Romanesque & Gothic Art, students used the game to design and create their own cathedral. After dealing with some programming bugs, it went quite well. Students responded to it with enthusiasm. Anthony Masinton and I have also learned what we want to add to the next version of the game in order to deepen the learning experience. Using the game provided the impetus, the students wrote the story that the building they designed tells using the methodology of buildings' archaeology and demonstrating it in three dimensions.

## Preparing Students for Gameplay

- Anthony Masinton explained the mechanics of the game and created a manual and a video tutorial which were both accessible via Moodle. Every bug that came up, he fixed and helped students individually through any technical problems they had.
- Manual for The Cathedral Game  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/sotlnilvdz9wxkf/TheMasonsLoft2\\_Beta\\_Manual.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/sotlnilvdz9wxkf/TheMasonsLoft2_Beta_Manual.pdf?dl=0)
- Video Tutorial for The Cathedral Game <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8dT80yi320>

## Preparing the Students for Storytelling

- Anthony gave a lecture on Buildings Archaeology and how it applied to the buildings we were studying in class, that is, how one can tell a building's history by certain physical elements. The understanding that buildings we studied have had a very long life and show the changing needs of a community became the basis for the students' stories.
- In my regular lectures I taught students to detect changing styles and construction techniques associated with medieval architecture.

## The Assignments

- We devised a two-part assignment to help develop students' familiarity with the Cathedral Game program, and more importantly, principles of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. As you can see from the PDF, there was a good deal of thought between the first and second renditions of the church each student designed. Along with class discussion going over each design and examining the concept spatially and the reasons for design choices, stories of the life of a building emerged. Their final projects show, for

the most part, a real connection between the stories developed and a historically based design.

- To give their work structure, I suggested some premises to work from, including where their church was located, what kind of church it was, and what kind of instigating factor was making the design change inevitable. They responded by truly creative "historical" accounts of the process.

## Assessment

We asked for student evaluations of the program and the assignment and they found it intriguing and they enjoyed it despite some of the technical problems initially. A by-product of the students using the game is a real comfort with discussing and understanding architectural space. It has become almost second nature for many of the students. Assessing the outcome in terms of their grades, it is evident that it had a real positive impact.

## The Future

Anthony and I will continue to refine the game and add other architectural features and storytelling aspects that add challenges for players/students to overcome. I plan on using this in future classes because it helped students learn the stories of history and how they can be read in architecture, now centuries old.