



# Elements of Strategic Skill

CSC430/HCI530

# Strategy: decisions



# Types of decisions

- Obvious (Go left and die, go right and win. Which way?)
  - Remove it / automate it; put time pressure on it
- Meaningless (But thou must see the king!)
  - Remove it
- Blind (roulette, initial RPG character build)
  - Give the player (incomplete) information
- Tradeoff
  - Now we are talking. *Balance.*
- Dilemma: tradeoff where all choices are harmful
  - Prisoner's dilemma
- Risk/reward tradeoff
  - Good! Again, *balance.*

# Frequency or anticipation of decisions: good



- Keep them busy with possibilities
- Constant series of *positive* choices
- If infrequent, make the player anticipate them (FPS elevator)

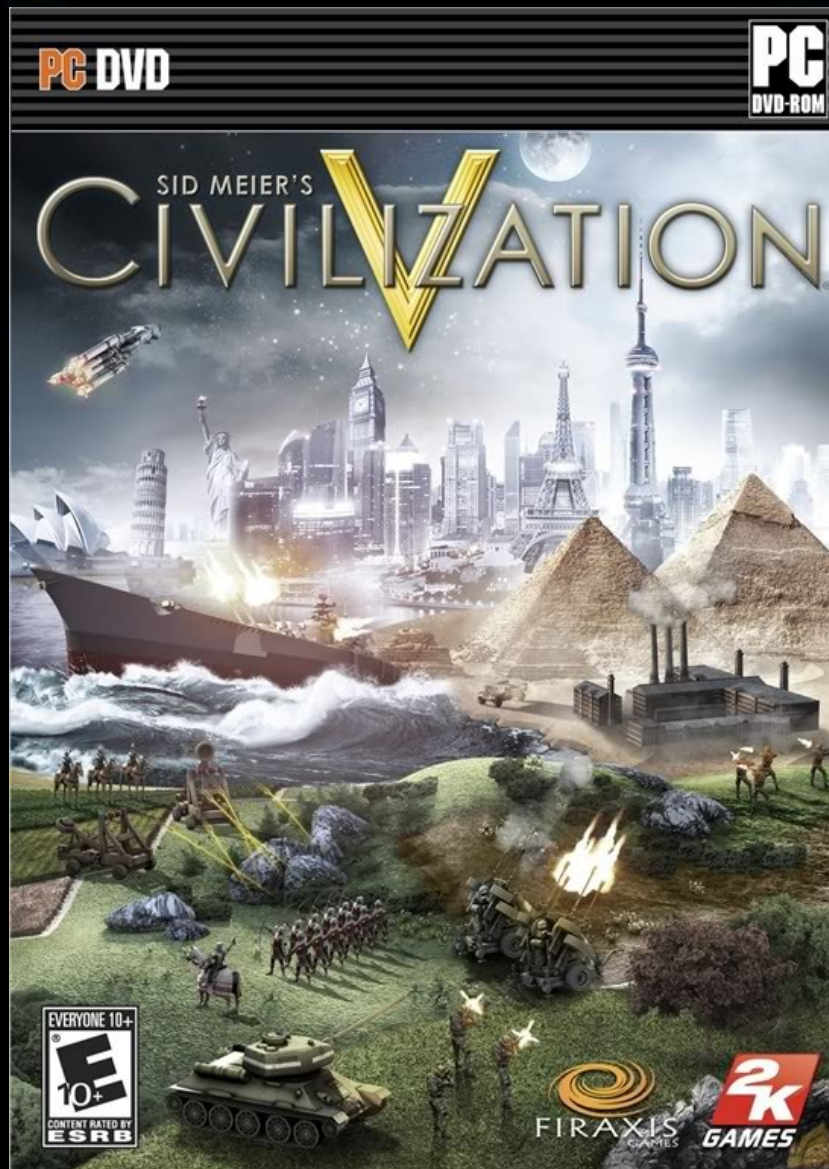
# Frequency or anticipation of decisions: bad

Име

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Вход

- Начало
- Удължени
- Правилна
- Закони се
- Колта
- Помощ
- Форум



# Completely skill-based games

- Usually, strategy games have at least some element of chance (or perceived chance, as in fog of war)
- Games without chance can be completely solved (which makes them non-games)
- Most purely skill-based games are action games (get the right answer *quickly*)

# Mechanics of skill: tradeoff mechanics

- Auctions: bid a resource to earn an item
- Purchases (resource substitution): what to purchase
- Limited-use special abilities: break a game rule
- Dynamic limited-use special abilities: only used under certain conditions
- Explicit choices (increase strength or agility by a point)
- Limited actions: multiple avatars
- Trading and negotiation

# Strategic evaluation: assess your success (as a designer)

- Watch *other* people play your game
- Interview them
- Questions to ask:
  - Do you care when others take their turn?
  - Do you make long-term plans?
  - Do you use multiple strategies in multiple game instances?





# Challenge: Thunderstorm

1. One player is chosen to begin. Play then proceeds clockwise. On the first turn, the player rolls 6d6.
  2. If a player rolls any 1s, those dice are set aside and the remaining ones are passed on.
  3. If a player rolls *only* 1s, all six dice are passed on.
  4. If a player rolls *no* 1s, he is penalized. A sixth penalty eliminates the respective player.
  5. Go to 2.
- Goal of the game: be the last remaining player.

# Challenge 1 continued

- Create a variant of *Thunderstorm* that adds at least some strategic skill.
- Deliverables: written rules of the new game; analysis of whether / why your game is better
- Brainstorm and playtest. Consider adding different elements of skill/choice. How about an auction? An ability to bet on the outcome? A dynamic such ability (e.g., only when a 4 is rolled by the previous player)? Etc.

# Assignment 1 : Eurogame

- Look up what an eurogame is.
- Design one with a playtime of at most 15 minutes.
- Choose a decision (short game = few mechanics, so find a core one to support your selected decision)
- What happens when players make this decision several times in a series?
- Fill in the remaining details: setup, progression of play, victory/end conditions
- Playtest and iterate. The game plays very quickly, so do at least 20 playtests. (You can increase the size of the game as you go along, but start simple, with a core decision).
- Create deliverable (complete set of written rules; if feasible, also a prototype with all game bits included)