# SUBJECTIVE

## Abstract

- **Name:** SUBJECTIVE
- **Creators:** Pierre Depaz, Winnie Song, Jeremy White, Leandro Ribeiro
- **Semester & Class:** Fall 2013, Game Design I
- **Overview:**
    - **Players:** 6 Players + 1 Game Master (GM)
    - **Playtime:** ~30 minutes

Subjective is a physical turn-based strategy game, mixing Hide and Seek with Tag and Espionage in order to project players of digital turn-based tactical games in the bodies of the units they are used to order around. In the game, two teams of players battle each other to reach their asymmetrical goal over three rounds. Subjective puts the emphasis on spatial awareness, dissimulation, communication and team-coordination, shedding new light on how one apprehends its social and physical surroundings as well as one's ability to communicate.

## Materials

- 7 Smart phones with a text messaging application installed and a separate message thread for each team.
- 6 Dossiers
- 6 Role cards (1 Sniper Guard, 2 Pointman Guards(A/B), 2 Decoys(A/B), 1 Spy) with maps on the back
- 6 Maps

## Rules

### Setup

1. At the beginning of the game, each player draws a role card that will assign their team and role (this is to be kept a secret from your opposing team)
2. Each player is assigned a cellphone corresponding to their team so each team member is on the same message thread on the messaging application
3. Members of the Corporate team have to keep the role they have been given, but the Collection teams can exchange their roles when ON THE SAME SPACE, so that, for example, the spy can give his card to another Decoy who will then become the spy (the spy will become an Decoy). This can only happen during the Collection team's turn
4. The GM disperses the dossiers around the floor as shown as red stars on the map given to the players
5. Collection team starts at the elevator hallway (the one with the glass doors). Each

member of the Corporate team can start on the space a dossier is located. They do NOT need to start all on the same space

6. Once at their starting position, the Game Master gives all the players 3 minutes to decide their strategies and then the game starts (Collection team goes first)

**Turn Order**

1. The Game Master sends a text every 90 seconds saying "Corporates go" or "Collectors go" depending on whose turns it is. When it is his or her team's turn, the player can move the maximum number of spaces allowed by his or her role. Everytime they cross a blue tape line, they have moved one space. Players are allowed to enter into classrooms and other rooms, if access is possible, without spending a movement as long as there is no blue tapes delimitating the separation of spaces
2. Once the Game Master ends the turn, the players' whose turn just ended have to stay in the space they're in (they are allowed to move around the same space during the opponent's turn, but CANNOT leave it)
3. If an asset is taken, the Spy must report on his team's message thread by sending a text saying: "Asset taken". The Game Master then relays the information to the opposing team, by saying "Asset Taken".
4. If a player is eliminated, the person eliminated must report it on his team's message thread by sending a text saying "I'm out". At which point the Game Master will relay the information to the opposing team by saying "*Name of the person* is out.*"*

## Gameplay

**Objective:**
1. Collection team wins by recovering 3 out of 6 dossiers and bringing them back the their starting position
2. Corporate team wins by eliminating the spy (attack mechanic explained below)

**Classes:**
1. **Collection team:**
    a. **SPY:** High Movement (4 spaces), No Attack, **Only player** that can pick up dossiers
    b. **DECOY:** High Movement (4 spaces), No Attack
2. **Corporate team:**
    a. **POINTMAN GUARD:** Regular Movement (3 spaces), Can eliminate people in the same space
    b. **SNIPER GUARD:** Low Movement (2 spaces), Can eliminate people up to one space away if line of sight is established

**Movement:**
1. When it is his or her team's turn, the player can move the maximum number of spaces

allowed by his or her role. Everytime they cross a blue tape line, they have moved one space. Players may peer over lines to view another space BUT the player must remain in the space where the turn ended.

2. At any time, whether during the player's turn or not, the player may hide in adjoining classrooms, closets or any room that has not been delimited by blue tape without costing the player a movement.

**Eliminating a player:**

1. During their turn, members of the Corporate team have the possibility to eliminate a member of the Collection team by calling him or her out (e.g. "*Hey, you ! You're eliminated!*"). They can only eliminate a member of the opposite team if they are within their range of action (same space or one space away). If the space is shared by more than one member of the Collection team, The corporate team member may only eliminate one on his/her turn.
2. If a Corporate team member tries to eliminate an Decoy instead of the Spy, then that Corporate member is removed from the game and the Decoy keeps playing. If the guards call out the spy, they win the game.
3. Eliminated players CANNOT communicate with their team (in any way). They have to stay at the Game Master's location

# Thoughts on Design

The original idea for this game was to transpose the experience of a tactical turn-based digital game into a physical game where each player would embody the equivalent of the fighting units in those games and experience first-hand the importance of positioning, spatial awareness, line of sight and communication.

The first concern for that project was to, above everything else, keep the rules and interactions between players clear and simple. Unlike a board game where all elements of the game play are in sight, a physical game with players interacting in pairs or alone demands simplicity as to not have to refer to a complete ruleset while playing the game. Also, complicated or obscure rules would have broken the immersion of the game, which we found as being an important point, ever since our very first playtests.

Our very first iteration of the game was about moving a set number of steps per turn and killing the other players by touching them on your turn. The "combat" mechanic wasn't very fun and engaging, so we created another version in which each team hides a set number of symbols around the floor (on the whiteboards) and players have to sneak around, find them and take a picture of it. The combat mechanic was kept the same as before but the hope was that sneaking around would become more important than directly engaging into combat. This,

however, led to a game that wasn't very fun especially because players just walked aimlessly around hoping to coincidently find a symbol lying around.

Our objective then became finding a combat system that would be both clear, simple, and engaging for both players, and a way to codify movement around the playspace. After multiple iterations, we didn't find a satisfying system for combat so we settled on a simple "touch and you're out" system, which allowed us to focus more on movement, hiding and sneaking. The movement went from being a fixed number of steps to moving through a fixed number of pre-delimited spaces. This allowed for players to hide in any space they were in without having to count the exact number of steps needed to reach it. It also balanced the fact that some players would have bigger steps than others.

After we settled on a combat and moving system, we felt the game was still lacking a climax. Therefore, we iterated on different levels in order to find a goal which would bring both climax and closure to the game. A simple deathmatch wasn't working and didn't feel fulfilling to the playtesters. A territorial component felt interesting, but didn't incentivize player-to-player interactions, as it was mainly walking around a space while ignoring the other team. We tried to develop different ways of playing the game so that player movement on the same team would be meaningful rather than just similar for everyone. We then started to implement different roles, with abilities centered around movement and attack.

The most important feedback we had from our playtesters was the fact that having both teams with the same object led to uninteresting optimal strategies such as playing fully on defensive. This led to a slow and dull game where both team just camped in an attempt to ambush. This led us to create asymmetrical objectives to potentially solve camping problems. Now, one team would have to pursue a territorial objective, forcing them to move around the playspace, whereas the other team would need to locate and confront a particular role in the opposite team. This final approach allowed us to link two aspects of the game we felt were lacking by themselves and let us give depth and tension to the game.