

Design Lab 5: Game Media

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PUDT 3101 - A

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Instructor Info

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<http://www.playfulsystems.com/teaching/2006/gamemedia>

Course Description

Junior year offers three different Design Lab sections for Students to choose an area of focus most beneficial to their development and support of their projects. The underlying thread the Design Lab is the continued focus of programming languages. Design Lab 5: Game Media examines digital game use and the different kinds of media used in their creation. This class will offer students the opportunity to examine games as media, unified spaces for interaction, narrative, and social networks. It will analyze different types of digital games and the technology used to create them. Students will focus on object-oriented programming to develop game concepts. The studio encourages the use of quick prototyping and testing for ideas and analysis, as students obtain a basic knowledge of the aesthetics, systems, terminology and narratives, used in interactive and multimedia experiences.

2 CR.

Open to: Majors Only

Overview

With revenues exceeding \$9 billion dollars in 2004, the rapid growth of the game industry signals seismic shifts in the importance of games within the definitions of media and technology. Digital games use many different kinds of media in the creation of experiences, from animation and character design, to lighting, visual effects, sound, interaction design, and storytelling.

The goal of DesignLab 5: Game Media is to reinforce for the students concepts of programming that may be applied to creative interaction. This class is to be thought of as a support for Core 5 Studio Hybrid. Programming is taught as a tool for realizing work within the domain of multimedia. In the 3-hour required class students engage in projects that build and refine a toolset for programming and interactivity. Students explore a diverse approach to programming practices and processes with regard to games. Using the last semester as a point of departure students explore more complex usage of programming languages as a way to realize art and design concepts. For example:

- The focus of DesignLab 5: Game Media to increase and understanding and ease with programming and programming languages.

- DesignLab 5 emphasizes practical hands-on projects.
- Assignments in the DesignLab 5 include both individual projects and collaborations.
- The DesignLab 5: Game Media is directly linked to the broader DT curriculum of 3rd year, and is a direct support for Core Studio 5: Hybrid.
- This Design Lab course offers students the opportunity to examine games as media, unified spaces for interaction, narrative and social networks.
- The course will examine the history of game design and analyze different types of digital games, including first-person shooters, MMPORPGs, puzzle games, real-time strategy games and more.
- The studio encourages the use of quick prototyping and testing for ideas and analysis, as students obtain a basic knowledge of the aesthetics, systems, terminology and narratives used to develop games.

The Fine Print

Design Lab 5: Game Media meets for one two-hour and forty minute session per week, and at least 6 hours of work per week is expected from each student. As per University policy, 3 absences grounds for failure. Two absences will result in an automatic academic warning. Lateness or early departure from class may also translate into one full absence. In addition, all assignments and homework must be handed / posted to their website before class on the day its due. Any assignments completed after this will lose a letter grade per day its late.

Studio Objectives

1. To build a common vocabulary for talking about and critically evaluating games.
2. For students to learn the fundamentals of game design.
3. For students to learn how to create games in Flash.
2. To apply advanced levels of programming to interactivity and game design.
3. To build and develop complexity into dynamic design.
4. To emphasize process and methods.
5. To explore forms of advanced programming.
6. To reinforce rigorous conceptual development.
7. To explore advanced concepts of interactions and their experience as installation, performance, object, online activity/web environment, game.
8. To establish your own voice as a creative author of works.

Criteria for evaluation

Students in the course will receive feedback on the following areas:

1. **Communication:** How well is the student able to express their ideas, both verbally and in written form?
2. **Critical Thinking:** To what degree has the student demonstrated and developed critical thinking skills over the course of the semester? Is critical thinking evident in the visual work, in critiques and presentations, and in written assignments?
3. **Design Process:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the student's design process? Is the student able to evaluate the work at different points in the process and

to identify areas in their work for future development?

5. Integration of Technology and Programming Concepts: Is the student making good choices about the form and type of technology they are using to express their design concepts? Is the student using programming concepts discussed in class appropriately in their labs and assignments? Is the student able to integrate technology into the conceptualization of their projects?

4. Contextualization and Connection: To what degree has the student been able to connect the themes and core concepts of the course to concepts introduced in other classes? Has the student been able to connect their work and ideas to historical and contemporary precedents, and to situate their work within the larger discourse surrounding ideas of “interface?”

Evaluation and Grading

- A Work of exceptional quality.
- A- Work of high quality.
- B+ Work of high quality, higher than average abilities.
- B Very good work that satisfies goals of course.
- B- Good work.
- C+ Average work, understanding of course material.
- C Adequate work; passable
- C- Passing work but below good academic standing.
- D Below average work; does not fully understand the assignments.
- F Failure, no credit

Course Components

Students work will consist of the following:

1. Labs

Labs will be conducted in class after lectures, so students have the opportunity to apply the programming techniques and concepts learned in class. To complete labs, students are encouraged to work together.

2. Assignments

For the first half of the semester, students will have to complete a number of assignments that will use students' programming and/or game design skills. Most of these assignments will be exercises in rapid prototyping, and will incorporate the use of programming concepts learned in class. Often, these assignments will be creative extensions of labs given in class. Assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise stated.

3. Midterm

As a midterm, students will take a game concept explored in a previous assignment and continue building on it to create a fully functional game. This will be an individual project.

4. Final

For the final, students will work in small groups of 2 or 3 to produce a complete game.

Roles and work should be divided evenly. A formal presentation of the game, including a discussion of the design process and self critique will be a significant component of your grade.

5. Website

All students must document their work on their website. Each project should have a description and sample screenshots/images, writing. This also includes your contribution to the class del.icio.us site.

Your grade will be composed as follows: 10% Attendance and Participation, 30% Labs and Assignments, 20% Midterm, 30% Final, 10% Website .

Readings and Resources

Readings and additional resources will be provided as needed.

Materials and Supplies

Access to Parsons 'A' server. A website / blog to post answers to assignments.

University Policies

Failing Grades

Failing grades are given for required work that is not submitted, for incomplete final projects or for examinations that are not taken (without prior notification and approval). Final semester grades are determined by averaging grades received throughout the semester. Make-up work or completion of missed examinations may be permitted only with the approval of the instructor and the major department Chair.

Incompletes

A grade of I (Incomplete), signifying a temporary deferment of a regular grade, may be assigned when coursework has been delayed at the end of the semester for unavoidable and legitimate reasons. Incomplete grades are given only with the written approval of the instructor and the major department Chair. **The Request for an Incomplete Grade form must be filled out by the student and instructor prior to the end of the semester.**

For graduate students, the deadline for completion of an incomplete is one year. A grade of I will automatically convert to a permanent unofficial withdrawal (WF) after a period of four weeks.

Faculty may not post an Incomplete ("I") in ALVIN unless they have first completed the incomplete approval process. Please contact your department for complete instructions and approval forms for awarding an incomplete. Students who have not been attending your class should have already been reported to your department.

Changes of Grade

Errors on final grades may be revised by the instructor with the approval of the major department Chair up to one semester following completion of the course. After that semester has elapsed, all grades become a permanent part of the academic record and no changes will

be allowed unless authorized by a Dean. Faculty can not submit a change of grade through ALVIN.

Grade Appeals

Students may petition for an academic grade review by following the procedure outlined below within sixty days after the grade was issued. Before deciding to appeal for a grade change, the student should request a verbal explanation of the basis of the grade from the instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the explanation, the student may appeal the grade as follows:

- The student submits a letter outlining any questions and/or objections directly to the faculty member, with a copy to the department Chair or Director. If the faculty member is also the Chair or Director, the copy will be sent to the Senior Associate Dean.
- The instructor submits a written response to the student's letter within one month of receipt, with a copy to the department Chair, or the Senior Associate Dean if the faculty member is also the Chair or Director.

If the student is still unsatisfied after the faculty member's written response, the department Chair will review both letters, clarify any outstanding questions or issues and make a determination about the grade. Some cases may also be reviewed and evaluated by the Senior Associate Dean, whose decision will be final. The review will test the fairness and effectiveness of the grading procedure used. Actual coursework will not, under normal circumstances, be reevaluated by the Senior Associate Dean.

Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy

The purpose of the Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy is to protect the rights of authors, artists and fellow members of the academic community as well as to support the education of the individual student, who derives no educational benefit from cheating. Studio faculty are expected to educate students about the legal and ethical restrictions placed upon creative work and about the consequences of dishonesty in the professional world. Faculty assigning papers are expected to educate students about the appropriate incorporation of quoted material and other thinkers' ideas. Most important, students are expected to keep themselves informed on these matters, to seek clarification from instructors regarding academic honesty and its relationship to specific assignments, and to conduct themselves accordingly. All incoming students are required to sign an Academic Integrity Statement declaring that they understand and agree to comply with this policy.

Students who cheat in any way primarily cheat themselves; but they also compromise the academic climate for all members of the Parsons community. Dishonest students, whether directly or indirectly involved in an act of cheating, will be held accountable for violations of the

Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy. "Academic dishonesty" is defined as:

- cheating on examinations, either by copying another student's work or by utilizing unauthorized materials.
- any act of plagiarism, that is, the fraudulent presentation of the written, oral or visual work of others as original.
- theft of another student's work.
- purchase of another student's work.

- submitting the same work for more than one course.
- destruction or defacement of the work of others.
- aiding or abetting any act of dishonesty.
- any attempt to gain academic advantage by presenting misleading information, making deceptive statements or falsifying documents.

Guidelines for Studio Assignments

Work from other visual sources may be imitated or incorporated into studio work if the fact of imitation or incorporation and the identity of the original source are properly acknowledged. There must be no intent to deceive; the work must make clear that it emulates or comments on the source as a source. Referencing a style or concept in otherwise original work does not constitute plagiarism. The originality of studio work that presents itself as “in the manner of” or as playing with “variations on” a particular source should be evaluated by the individual faculty member in the context of a critique.

Incorporating ready-made materials into studio work as in a collage, synthesized photograph or paste-up is not plagiarism in the educational context. In the commercial world, however, such appropriation is prohibited by copyright laws and may result in legal consequences.

Guidelines for Written Assignments

Direct quotations and references to the statements and ideas of others in written work do not constitute plagiarism if the fact of quotation or reference and the identity of the original source are properly acknowledged.

Written work from other sources may be directly quoted so long as (1) the source is identified before the quotation or in a subsequent citation, footnote or endnote and (2) the fact that the passage is directly quoted is indicated by quotation marks, if a phrase or sentence, or by indentation, if more than one sentence.

Any student who paraphrases the statements of another or brings in ideas or information from a published source must attribute the paraphrased content, ideas or information to the original source, either by using an introductory phrase like “Mr. Smith argues that” or “According to The New York Times” or by identifying the origin in a citation, footnote or endnote. A bibliography listing the sources used in any written assignment should be appended.

Students should ask faculty members for detailed instructions or recommended reference materials on proper formats for quotations, citations, footnotes, endnotes and bibliographies.

Procedures and Penalties

Any violation of the Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy is a matter for disciplinary action. When a faculty member suspects that cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member should first inform the student privately that he or she suspects a violation of the Policy. The instructor should explain the alleged violation clearly, concisely and specifically and should advise the student to review the Policy in the Student Handbook. The instructor should schedule a second meeting with the student to discuss the accusation fully following the student’s review of the Policy. Whenever possible, this full discussion should take place within 72 hours of the initial meeting. If a violation comes to the instructor’s attention during finals or a school break, the discussion should take place as soon as possible, but no later than a month after the incident or before the start of a new semester. Each party may elect, but is not required, to have an impartial advisor present at the meeting. The instructor should select the Chair or Associate Chair of the department that offers the course. The student should select an Advisor from the Office of Advising or from his or her

major department.

The role of the department Chair or Associate Chair is to help facilitate discussion between the student and the instructor by calling all parties to the meeting, providing a private meeting space and allowing the different points of view to be expressed. The role of the Advisor is to help the student to understand the Policy and the alleged violation.

During the discussion, the student should be prepared to present the work in question, along with any supporting drafts, sketches, digital files or other documentation. The instructor may ask the student to reconstruct the process involved in creating the work.

After the discussion, the faculty member, in consultation with the department Chair or Associate Chair, will consider the facts and determine whether the charge is valid and, if so, will recommend what penalty ought to be imposed. The penalty for academic dishonesty should take into account the severity of the violation. The department Chair will refer in writing all violations to the Director of Advising for disciplinary consideration. The Director of Advising will convene a committee to determine the appropriate penalty for the course and the appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include Disciplinary Warning, Probation or, in severe cases, even for a first offense, Expulsion from the program. A record of disciplinary action may impact future educational and employment opportunities.

In cases where the student confesses to the violation, the procedures and penalties for academic dishonesty may be altered at the discretion of the department Chair or Associate, and the Director of Advising.

In cases where the work in question is submitted at the end of the semester and/or the faculty member is unavailable, the department Chair or Associate will discuss the incident with the student.

Appeals

A student found guilty of academic dishonesty may appeal the Committee's decision to the Senior Associate Dean, whose decision will be final. The appeal review will test the fairness and effectiveness of the procedure used to determine the facts. If disciplinary action was taken, the student has the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the New School University Code of Conduct appeal procedures.