



Designing & Producing Video Games

ITP 391 (4 Units)

Objective

Designing & Producing Video Games is a course in which a faculty member who is also a video game industry professional guides, instructs, and supervises the students through writing a game design document and learns about the project production process.

On completing the course the student will be able to:

- Write a game design according to accepted industry standards.
- Join a game development project in a junior design or assistant producing role.
- Obtain a job in the game industry with less difficulty than untrained applicants
- Utilize communication, presentation and writing skills to pitch a game concept

Concepts

The course consists of a semester-long project to design an original video game, side by side with in-depth instruction on the job of the video game producer. Students are walked through an imaginary video game project from concept through pre-production to production to release.

Prerequisite

Written and verbal communication skills, an understanding of Word, Excel, email, and Internet use, as well as a passion for working in games.

Units 4

Lecture The instructor will lecture the class on producing methodologies and on game design philosophies, with extensive use of Powerpoint slides and whiteboard notes.

Guest speakers from the game industry as they can be found and persuaded to appear.

Faculty Supervision Students are supervised in the course by a faculty member who is an experienced game industry professional. Faculty member will work with students to:

1. Clarify and understand the principles of game design documentation;
2. Develop individualized documents for student designs;
3. Recommend web sites, texts, readings and other resources as appropriate to the problem/work under study;
4. Maintain regular contact with the student during the practicum;
5. Evaluate the student's final deliverable and determine grade for the course.

Textbooks

INTRODUCTION TO GAME DEVELOPMENT

edited by Steve Rabin

[Charles River Media](#); ISBN: 1-58450-377-7

Additional readings may be assigned by faculty to keep students updated on current events in the industry.

Grading

Criteria	% of Grade	Frequency	Deliverables
Weekly writing assignments	40%	Weekly (every other class)	Portions of final project, delivered piecemeal. Every other assignment is a "revision" of the previous assignment.
Midterm	25%	Once during semester	Written exam
Final exam or project	25%	Once during semester	Presentation of final project and written exam
Attendance	10%	Twice weekly	Show up in class or give advance notice
Total	100%		

The final exam may be a mock job interview and/or pitch session, possibly involving one or more non-faculty industry professionals (using the student's completed project as a portfolio or pitch), and is valued at 25% of the total grade.

Projects: It is the student's responsibility to turn in projects on or before deadlines as set by the instructor.

Policies

Late Projects: Rules for late project submission will be established by the instructor.

Academic Integrity

- The use of unauthorized material, communication with fellow students during an examination, attempting to benefit from the work of another student, and similar behavior that defeats the intent of an examination or other class work is unacceptable to the University. It is often difficult to distinguish between a culpable act and inadvertent behavior resulting from the nervous tension accompanying examinations. When the instructor determines a violation has occurred, appropriate action, as determined by the instructor,

will be taken.

- Working together is encouraged, but the projects must be your own effort. "Duplicate" projects or plagiarized projects will all receive zero points and possible referral to the Office for Student Conduct.
- All students should read, understand and abide by the University Student Conduct Code
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/governance/gov03.html>

Students with Disabilities

- Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Course Outline:

Class	Design Track	Production Track
1	Class intro	Class intro
2	Write concept para	Boss gives you project
3	See movie	Bare bones of concept
4	Write 2-pager	Greenlight execs
5	Revise 2-pager	Developer wishlist
6	Main game screen	Contact developers
7	Revise main game screen	Choose developer
8	Story Elements	Contracts & milestones
9	Revise story elements	Payments
10	Control Inputs	GDD, TDD, planning
11	Revise control inputs	Budgets, schedules
12	Walkthrough	Budgets, schedules
13	Revise walkthrough	Graphics approvals
14	Shell, menus	First playable
15	Midterm (date TBD)	
16	Revise shell, menus	Communicating upwards
17	First Cut Scene	Audio
18	Revise first cut scene	Alpha greenlight
19	Guest speaker - TBD	
20	Guest speaker - TBD	
21	Guest speaker - TBD	
22	Guest speaker - TBD	
23	Sound, music, voice	Change requests
24	Revise audio	Internal vs. external - travel
25	Cooperative project	Internal - Agile vs. Waterfall
26	Outline - final deadline / revs	Red flag spotting
	Thanksgiving	
27	Revise outline - resumes	Marketing
28	Concatenated doc w sec #s	Beta greenlight, QA
29	Full paper print-out	BOM, release
	Final Exam	

Technology Resources:

Students will be able to use ITP computers and software to implement their projects.