

Business and Management of Games

USC School of Cinema-Television, CTIN 458

Instructor: Robert Nashak

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Units: 2

Course Description:

This course provides students with a deep understanding of the current marketplace for games in preparation for successful careers in the entertainment and/or games industry. We'll cover marketplace dynamics across a wide variety of platforms including console and PC games, social gaming, smart phone and tablet games, MMOs and more. We'll cover a wide range of business, management and legal issues, including an overview of current business models in games and interactive media, methods for pitching and getting products funded, legal issues pertaining to copyright and intellectual property issues, production management techniques, as well as business start-up nuts and bolts for aspiring entrepreneurs.

The course will consist of lecture, discussion and hands-on exercises that will prepare students to generate creative, innovative ideas for today's ever-changing entertainment market, while working with common business tools such as spreadsheets, budgets, schedules and contracts.

You will be required to come up with an original game product or service based on current marketplace trends. By the end of the semester, you will create a world-class funding presentation to pitch your original product or service.

Multiple Guest speakers will illuminate aspects of the industry from a first-hand perspective.

Meeting Information:

Lecture, Participation and Discussion: 3 hours

Evaluation of student performance:

The course will have ongoing in-class assignments, and one final project that will start mid-term and continue to the end of the semester. Students will be graded based on creativity and ability to apply class teachings. Students are also graded for a final presentation of their project at the end of the class.

Graded Assignments:

- 1) Game presentation to class: Each student will present a short powerpoint/keynote presentation to class giving an overview of a game of their choice from any game platform. The presentation will provide an overview of the gameplay and also show what's innovative about the game: e.g. monetization, social features, user-generated content, etc.
- 2) Half-way through the semester, students will submit the first half of their final project presentation. Slides to be submitted: Company Overview, Market Dynamics, Key Competitors, Vision, and a first pass at the Product Overview
- 3) Final Presentation presented in class and submitted for grading on the exam day.

Grade value will be apportioned as follows:

Participation	10
In-class Assignments	10
Mid-Term Project Preso	30
Final Project	40
Final Presentation	10
Total:	100

Course content:

Week 1: Introduction to the Class

Lecture/discussion:

- Syllabus Overview
- Investor Deck Example: Show early investor deck and walk through the timeline toward company acquisition

Week 2: Games Market Overview Part 1

Lecture/discussion:

- Overview of the games market across all key platforms:
 - social, console, pc/mac, mobile/tablet

Week 3: Games Market Overview Part 2

Lecture/discussion:

- Overview of the games market across all key platforms:
 - social, console, pc/mac, mobile/tablet

Week 4: Creative Game Development

- Student Game Demos
- Overview of what makes for great game design and great gamification

Week 5: Sizing the Market

Lecture/discussion:

- Student Game Demos
- Market Opportunity Analysis
- How to size the market opportunity for your product or service

Week 6: History of Video Games

Lecture/discussion:

- Guest Speaker
- Overview of the history of games

Week 7: Connected Television and Market Sizing

Lecture/discussion

- Student Game Demos
- Students present preliminary market sizing assumptions

Week 8: How to Start and Run a Games Business

Lecture/discussion:

- Guest Lecture
- Overview of running games businesses

Week 9: Marketing and Business Plan Essentials

Lecture/discussion:

- Student Game Demos
- Business Plan Essentials
- Sources of Funding
- Development Planning
- Marketing
- Opportunity/Mission/Vision

Week 10: P&Ls, Making your Business Case, Legalities

Lecture/discussion:

- Student Game Demos
- How to Create P&Ls for your business
- Licensing, Contracts, and IP ownership

Week 11: Pitch Preparation

Lecture/discussion:

- Student Game Demos
- Pitch Presentation

Week 12: Pitch Presentations

Present Pitches

- Present project pitches

Week 13: Pitch Presentations

Present Pitches

- Present project pitches

Week 14: Pitch Presentations

Present project pitches

- Present project pitches

Suggested Readings:

The Art of Interactive Design

Chris Crawford

The Playful World: How Technology is Transforming Our Imagination

Mark Pesce

Playing For Profit: How Digital Entertainment Is Making Big Business Out of Child's Play

Alice LaPlante/Rich Seidner

Trigger Happy: Games and the Entertainment Revolution

Steven Poole

Interactive Design for New Media and the Web

Nicholas V. Iuppa

Writing for Interactive Media: The Complete Guide

Jon Samsel/Darryl Wimberley

Digital Storytelling: A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment

Carolyn Handler Miller

Game Architecture and Design: A New Edition

Andrew Rollings

Ultimate Game Design: Building Game Worlds

Tom Meigs

Creation Emotion in Games: The Craft and Art of Emotioneering

David Freeman

Developing Online Games: An Insider's Guide

Jessica Mulligan/Bridgette Patrovsky

Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams on Game Design

Andrew Rollings/Ernest Adams

Masters of Doom: How Two Guys Created An Empire and Transformed Pop Culture

David Kushner

Break Into the Game Industry: How to Get a Job Making Video Games

Ernest Adams

Game Over: Press Start to Continue

David Sheff

The Ultimate History of Video Games: From Pong to Pokemon – The Story Behind the Craze that Touched Our Lives and Changed the World

Steven L. Kent

High Score: The Illustrated History of Electronic Games

Rusel DeMaria/Johnny L. Wilson

Got Game: How a New Generation of Gamers Is Reshaping Business Forever John Beck

The Visual Story: Seeing the Structure in Film, TV, and New Media

Bruce A. Block

Digital Storytelling: A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment

Carolyn Handler Miller

Pause and Effect: The Art of Interactive Narrative

Mark Stephen Meadows

Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals
Katie Salen/Eric Zimmerman
Interactive Television Demystified
Jerry C. Whitaker
Bamboozled at the Revolution: How Big Media Lost Billions in the Battle for the Internet
John Motavalli
The Medium of the Video Game
Mark J.P. Wolf/Ralph H. Baer
The First Quarter: A 25-year History of Video Games
Steven L. Kent
Game Development and Production
Erik Bethke
Game Design Workshop
Tracy Fullerton/Christopher Swain/Steven Hoffman

Missing an Assignment, Incompletes:

The only acceptable excuses for missing an assignment or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform the instructor before the assignment is due and present verifiable evidence in order for a make-up to be scheduled. Students who wish to take incompletes must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor before final grades are due.

Note for 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 us as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Academic Integrity:

The School of Cinema-Television expects the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical performance from USC students. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one instructor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade and be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. If you have any doubts or questions about these policies, consult "SCAMPUS" and/or confer with the instructor.