

CTIN541: Design for Interactive Media (Fall 2017)

USC School of Cinematic Arts, CTIN 541

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Course Description:

This course introduces students to core skills in interactive design, including conceptualizing interactive systems, prototyping, playtesting, and managing an iterative design process to meet specific and meaningful experience goals for users.

The course approaches interactivity as a participatory art form, with the designer's goal to provide a specific and meaningful experience for the users and to respond quickly and creatively to feedback during the design process. During the course of the semester, the exercises and assignments primarily focus on developing low- and non-technical prototypes of interactive concepts, experimenting with games, improvisational theater, fine arts, toys, interactive narrative, and real and virtual play spaces.

A central purpose of this course is to give students the opportunity to explore various types of design strategies, to discover their own strengths and interests, and to provide them with a wide repertoire of techniques upon which to draw in the future. In addition, the course will introduce students to the "playcentric" design methodology practiced in the Interactive Media division, encouraging them to develop a focus on the central user experience that anchors their design process.

This is a studio class and a large part of the class content will focus on in-class discussion, critique and problem solving for individual projects. As such, it is imperative that students treat the development of their design projects professionally and bring requested milestones to class on time, ready to present. Students will be expected to participate actively in all discussions and critique sessions, giving and receiving feedback of the highest quality.

Throughout this class, students are encouraged to take risks and to look beyond prior art, in-class examples and common wisdom to explore new and different design ideas. In many cases, students will be assigned to work in partnerships or teams and the quality of students' participation within these groups is of great importance – perhaps as important as the final project. Interactive media in all forms is a collaborative discipline and learning to communicate, share workload, learn from and help others excel is a core value in this field.

Note regarding the Diversity & Inclusion Labs: Throughout the course of the semester, there will be five weeks during which there will be a Friday lab organized by the Council for Diversity and Inclusion. These labs will be from 2:00 PM to 3:50 PM on Fridays. These labs are a required part of the course; failure to attend the Diversity & Inclusion labs will negatively affect your grade. On Fridays when there is a Diversity & Inclusion lab, class will not meet at the regularly scheduled time. These dates are noted in the schedule below.

Meeting Information:

Room: SCI L114

Day and Time: Monday 10:00 AM to 12:50 PM

Fridays 12:00 PM to 1:50 PM

Fridays 2:00 PM to 3:50 PM (Diversity & Inclusion Labs)

Units: 2

Prerequisites: Open to IMGD M.F.A. and iMAP Ph.D. students (as well as other interested and qualified students, by interview with the instructor).

Evaluation and Grading:

Class Participation	10%
Simple System Analysis	5%
Board Game Analysis	5%
Up the River Variant	10%
Rules Rewrite	10%
Procedural Rhetoric	10%
Procedural Rhetoric Postmortem	10%
Videogame Demake	5%
Recombinant Narrative Paper Prototype	15%
Recombinant Narrative Digital Game	15%
Skill Sharing Presentation	5%
TOTAL	100%

Assignments & Texts:Written Assignments

- Simple System Analysis 1-2 pgs, due wk. 3
- Board Game System analysis 3-5 pgs, due wk. 4
- Rules Rewrite 8-16 pgs, due wk. 6
- Procedural Rhetoric Postmortem 3-5 pgs, due wk. 9

Prototype Projects

- Up the River Variant, due wk. 5
- Procedural Rhetoric Prototype, due wk. 8

- Videogame Demake, due wk. 10
- Recombinant Narrative Prototype, due wk. 12
- Recombinant Narrative Digital Game, due wk. 14

Collaboration Assignment

- Skill Sharing Presentation, due wk. 13

Course Texts

- Game Design Workshop 3rd Edition: A Playcentric Approach to Creating Innovative Games by Tracy Fullerton

The required texts are available in the USC bookstore or online at Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. Additional readings will be available as handouts in class or as digital files on the course website.

Course Website

<http://www.undefinedbehavior.com/ctin/541>

Course content (summarized by class meeting)

Wk	Monday	Friday
1	21 August Lecture: Introduction Lecture: Experience Design Reading: GDW Ch. 1 HW: Skill Sharing (due wk. 13)	25 August Diversity & Inclusion Lab 2:00 - 3:50 PM, SCA 108 NO CLASS
2	28 August Lecture: Game Elements Lecture: Systems Reading: GDW Ch. 2 HW: Simple Systems Analysis (due wk. 3)	1 September Lecture: Prototyping Lecture: Ideation
3	4 September Labor Day NO CLASS	8 September DUE: Simple Systems Analysis Lecture: Agency & Affordances Lab: Board Game Analysis Reading: GDW Ch. 3-4 HW: Board Game Analysis (due wk. 4)
4	11 September DUE: Board Game Analysis Lecture: Up the River Lecture: Playtesting Reading: GDW Ch. 5 HW: Up the River Variant (due wk. 5)	15 September Lab: Up the River Variant

5	<p>18 September</p> <p>DUE: Up the River Variant</p> <p>Class Playtest: Up the River Variant Lecture: Rules</p> <p>Reading: GDW Ch. 6 HW: Rules Rewrite (due wk. 6)</p>	<p>22 September</p> <p>Diversity & Inclusion Lab 2:00 - 3:50 PM, SCA 108 NO CLASS</p>
6	<p>25 September</p> <p>DUE: Rules Rewrite</p> <p>Lecture: Public Play Lecture: Procedural Rhetoric</p> <p>Reading: GDW Ch. 7 HW: Procedural Rhetoric (due wk. 8)</p>	<p>29 September</p> <p>Lab: Procedural Rhetoric</p>
7	<p>2 October</p> <p>Class Playtest: Procedural Rhetoric Lecture: Iteration</p> <p>Reading: GDW Ch. 8</p>	<p>6 October</p> <p>Lab: Procedural Rhetoric</p>
8	<p>9 October</p> <p>DUE: Procedural Rhetoric</p> <p>Public Playtest: Procedural Rhetoric Lecture: Postmortem</p> <p>Reading: GDW Ch. 9 HW: Postmortem (due wk. 9)</p>	<p>13 October</p> <p>Lecture: Production Lecture: Pitching</p>

9	<p>16 October</p> <p>DUE: Postmortem</p> <p>Lecture: Expressive Media Lab: Videogame Demake</p> <p>Reading: GDW Ch. 10 HW: Videogame Demake (due wk. 10)</p>	<p>20 October</p> <p>Diversity & Inclusion Lab 2:00 - 3:50 PM, SCA 108 NO CLASS</p>
10	<p>23 October</p> <p>DUE: Videogame Demake</p> <p>Lecture: History of Games Lecture: Narrative Play</p> <p>Reading: GDW Ch. 11 HW: Recombinant Prototype (due wk. 11)</p>	<p>27 October</p> <p>Lab: Recombinant Prototype</p>
11	<p>30 October</p> <p>Class Playtest: Recombinant Prototype Lecture: From Paper to Digital</p>	<p>3 November</p> <p>Lab: Recombinant Prototype</p>
12	<p>6 November</p> <p>Class Playtest: Recombinant Prototype Lecture: Experimental Games</p> <p>HW: Recombinant Digital Game (due wk. 13)</p>	<p>10 November</p> <p>Lab: Recombinant Digital Game</p>
13	<p>13 November</p> <p>DUE: Skill Sharing Presentations</p> <p>Lecture: Working as a Designer Skill Sharing Presentations</p>	<p>17 November</p> <p>Diversity & Inclusion Lab 2:00 - 3:50 PM, SCA 108 NO CLASS</p>

14	20 November DUE: Recombinant Digital Game Lecture: Formal Playtesting Lecture: Reflection HW: Playtesting Script (due wk. 15)	24 November Thanksgiving NO CLASS
15	27 November DUE: Playtesting Script Formal Playtest: Recombinant Digital Game HW: Postmortem Documentation	1 December Diversity & Inclusion Lab 2:00 - 3:50 PM, SCA 108 NO CLASS
	11 December, 8:00-10:00 AM FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD	

Missing an Assignment Deadline, Incompletes:

The only acceptable excuses for missing an assignment deadline or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform the instructors before the assignment due date and present verifiable evidence in order for a deadline extension to be granted. Students who wish to take incompletes must also present documentation of the problem to the instructors or student assistant before final grades are due.

For assignments turned in after the assignment deadline without prior permission from the instructor, a penalty will be imposed equal to 10% of the total available points for the assignment, for each day or part of a day that the assignment is late, up to a maximum of seven days.

Attendance Policy:

Punctual attendance at all classes is mandatory. Students arriving more than five minutes late to three classes, more than ten minutes late to a single class, or leaving early, will be marked as having an unexcused absence from class, unless prior permission has been obtained from the instructors. The following guidelines are from the Interactive Media Division handbook regarding absences and grading and apply to all students.

Guidelines for absences affecting grading

- Two unexcused absences: lowers grade one full grade point (for example, from A to B)
- Three unexcused absences: lowers grade two full grade points
- Four or more unexcused absences: request to withdraw from course (instructor's discretion)

Excused absences are:

- Illness (with a doctor's verification)
- Family or personal emergency (with verification)

Social media, including text messaging and internet messaging, are excluded from class unless explicitly permitted by the instructors. A 0.5% grade reduction will result from each occurrence of a student being found using them.

Disruptive Behavior:

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

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 Cinematic Arts 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.

A Safe Space:

In this class, we make a commitment to foster a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. This means that we will use preferred pronouns and respect self-identifications. While debate and discussion are welcome, please remain aware of the implications of your words and the images that you include in your work. If the instructor or another student points out that something you have said or shared with the group might be offensive, avoid being defensive; this is a valuable opportunity for us to grow and learn together. If you have a concern about any aspect of the class, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor. If you feel uncomfortable speaking with the instructor, you are also welcome to speak with either the undergraduate or graduate advisor for the division, who can discuss the issue with you directly or point you toward other on- and off-campus resources for addressing your concern.

Fair Use:

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. The Interactive Media & Games Division of USC's School of the Cinematic Arts seeks to apply a reasonable working definition of fair use that will enable students and instructors to develop multimedia projects without seeking authorization for non-commercial, educational uses. In keeping with section 107 of the Copyright Act we recognize four factors that should be considered when determining whether a use is

fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.

Syllabus Updates:

This syllabus is liable to change up to the beginning of class and possibly over the semester. Please check the posted syllabus regularly, and note all changes that are shared by the instructor in class.

**PLEASE NOTE:
FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY
INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**