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| ­­ | Video Game Production  ITP 280 (4 Units)  SYLLABUS v2.0 Spring 2017  (still subject to revision) |
| **Objective** | The purpose of this course is to gain a hands-on understanding developing video games. Students will be introduced to various facets of video game production: design, art, programming, and management.  The course will include various hardware and software tools that aid in the video game production process. |
| Concepts | The video game production process incorporates various methodologies for programming, designing, and managing games. Students will be introduced to a variety of software tools that involve creating and designing 2D and/or 3D-Worlds, level design, character and background modeling, textures, and animation. Programming concepts in this course will address the role of AI, game logic, network and multiplayer concerns, graphic effects, sound effects, and scripting languages when creating video games. Students will learn the project lifecycle of video game development including concept development, project proposal, functional specs, gameplay design, prototyping, production and testing.  This is a project-based course. Students will be responsible for participating in class game jams and the final project will be a working game / prototype. The tools and concepts needed to complete the projects will be addressed during lectures and detailed during labs. |
| **Instructor** | Tom Sloper  Email: [sloper@usc.edu](file:///C:\Users\Sloper\Documents\2017-1%20230+393+101\sloper@usc.edu)  Office hours: see <http://itp.usc.edu/faculty-staff/Tom-Sloper/> |
| **Assistants**    **Prerequisite** | Teaching assistant: Kelly Chang (see Blackboard/Contacts)  Lab assistant: Anthony Hernandez (ditto)  No formal pre-requisite. Computer literacy or ITP 101 recommended. |
| **Lecture** | Wednesdays 6:00 PM to 8:50 PM  Sign up for one of the labs but attend any lab as needed |
| **Reading** | * ITP 280 Course Reader / Blackboard Readings * Other lecture notes to be distributed by Instructor |
| **Grading** | The following point structure will be used in determining the grade for the course. Final grade will be based upon the total points received.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Lab Assignments - 25%   * Lab 1 – Gamemaker *(100)* * Lab 2 – Game Design Treatment *(80)* * Lab 3 – GamePlay Enhancement *(120)* | 300 | | Midterm - 20% | 100 | | In-class Presentation - 15% | 100 | | Participation - 10% | 30 | | Final Project/Game Docs – 25% | 100 | | **TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS** | **630** | |

***Grading scale:***

*A 93-100*

*A- 90-92*

*B+ 87-89*

*B 83-86*

*B- 80-82*

*C+ 77-79*

*C 73-76*

*C- 70-72*

*D+ 67-69*

*D 65-66*

*F 0-64*

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| **Lab Assignments**: Lab assignments will be posted on Blackboard and will contain instructions on due dates, requirements, etc. Your scheduled lab time is when lab assignments should be worked on/completed. Students can also do their lab assignments from home or an alternative facility. |
| **Midterm Examination**: The midterm examination will be an in-class exam consisting of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Students are only required to bring a pen or pencil to class. |
| **In-Class Presentations**: Students will be required to make a presentation one time, on a particular genre or title. Sign up at <https://docs.google.com/a/usc.edu/spreadsheets/d/16vtHzwHOPwN9_ZPkw_>  [bf5pkbyvjMaMVS4KctWaAt\_4Q/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/a/usc.edu/spreadsheets/d/16vtHzwHOPwN9_ZPkw_) (copy link and paste in browser, or ctrl-click link in Word)  **Final Project**: At the end of the semester, there will a final project. The final project will be a semester-long project including a written high-concept pitch, design documents, and a playable demo of a game. Students will be given direction throughout the semester preparing for the final project. |
| **Policies** | *Make-up policy for exams*: To make up for a missed exam, the student must provide a satisfactory reason (as determined by the instructor and university policy) along with proper documentation. Make-up exams are only allowed under extraordinary circumstances.  *Projects*: It is the student’s responsibility to turn in projects on or before deadlines as set by the instructor.  *Late Projects*: There will be a 10% reduction of the project’s grade for each day it is late.  Before logging off a computer, students must ensure that they have emailed or saved projects created during the class or lab session. Any work saved to the computer will be erased after restarting the computer. ITP is not responsible for any work lost.  ITP offers Open Lab use for all students enrolled in ITP classes. These open labs are held beginning the second week of classes through the last week of classes. Please contact your instructor for specific times and days for the current semester.   * You are required to attend Lab attend each week (except Week 1). * Laptops are permitted in lecture for note taking purposes. Using your laptop to play games, Facebook, etc. is not allowed. |
| **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 professor determines that a violation has occurred, appropriate action, as determined by the instructor, will be taken.  Although working together is encouraged, all work claimed as yours must in fact be your own effort. Students who plagiarize the work of other students will receive zero points and possibly be referred to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS).  All students should read, understand, and abide by the University Student Conduct Code listed in SCampus, and available at:  <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/nonacademicreview.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 (or to your TA) 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. |

Video Game Production

ITP 280 (4 Units)

Lecture subjects are legacy placeholders from past semesters - Exact details of each lecture subject to change based on events, guest speaker schedules, technical difficulties, etc.

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| Week 1 01/11/17 | **Lecture:**  Introduction and Course Overview   * Syllabus * <http://blackboard.usc.edu> * Instructor/Lab Assistant Backgrounds * Presentations signup * GroupMe signup * Guest Speakers   **Lab:** No Labs this week  **Reading:** Course Reader Week 1 (Blackboard/Readings) |
| Week 2 01/18/17 | **Lecture:**  History of Video Games   * Historical Timeline * Pong, Atari – ET, Nintendo, Sega, Sony, Microsoft * Milestone games and cycles in the industry   Game genres, game platforms, and development considerations.   * Action, RPG, RTS, FPS, MMO, MOBA, etc. * Xbox 360/720, PS3/PS4, WiiU, PC, Mobile   The Development Team   Roles & Responsibilities   Emerging positions   Communication  **Lab 1:** GameMaker (Recreating the Classics)  **Reading:** Course Reader: Chapter 10 Specific Genres 175-194; Historical Elements 4-35 |
| **Week 3**  01/25/17 | **Lecture:**  The Game Production Process   AGILE Methodologies   AGILE/SCRUM for Game Development   Software and documents used to manage the production   * Games as a Service (Live Team Support)   **CLASS EXERCISE: SCRUM**  **Lab 1:** GameMaker Recreating the Classics - continued  **Reading:** Course Reader Chapter 5 What is a Game Made Of 39-63; Production & Management 352-369 |
| **Week 4**  02/08/17 | **Lecture:**  Game Design Overview   * What is fun?   **CLASS EXERCISE: Game Design / Sissy Fight**   * Understanding Your Audience * Game Design Principles   + Objectives vs. Goals   + Choices and Outcome   + Interface Design/HUDs   + Progression   + Balancing/Tuning (worksheet examples)   + Polish * Game Design documents   **Guest Lecturer: TBD**  **Lab:** Lab Assignment #1  **Reading:** Course Reader Chapter 1 The Crisis Facing Game Development 3 – 32; Part II Scrum and Agile Planning Chapter 3 35-40; Understanding the Product Owner 1 - 15 |
| **Week 5**  02/15/17 | **Lecture:**  Overview of Assignment #2 / Group Assignments  Level Design – Game Design Tools and Demonstrations (iPad demo)  Game Design Considerations   * Next Gen Consoles (PS3/PS4, Xbox 360/720, WiiU) * Handhelds (PSVita, 3DS) * iOS / Android * PC / Downloadable Platforms   Working with 1st Party Publishers   * Development Environments * Microsoft – Xbox * Sony – Playstation * Nintendo - Wii   **Lab:** Lab Assignment #1 Due Fri ????? (midnight);  **Reading:** Course Reader Chapter One In the Beginning, There is the Designer 1 – 7; Chapter 4 The Game Consists of Elements 39 – 46; Chapter 7 The Game Improves Through Iteration 75-95 |
| **Week 6**  02/22/17 | **Lecture:**  Mobile Games  Lecture on giving Effective Presentations  Lab 1 Demonstrations  Mobile Game Production   * History of Mobile Gaming * Feature Phones vs. Smart Phones * Languages: Java, Obj-C, HTML5 * iPhone/Android Development * Development considerations   + Touch, LBS, Accelerometers   + Asynchronous   ***In Class Assignment – Game Jam: Game Design***  **Reading:** Course Reader Chapter 14 The Design Document 394-412; Chapter 1 A Revolutionary Game Platform 1 – 19 (toward back of Course Reader)  **Lab:** Assignment 2 |
| **Week 7**  03/01/17 | **Lecture:**  Freemium Game Model  Balancing for Monetization  Consumables vs. Decorative items  Overview of Riot Games  The Producer Role at Riot  How to get content in League of Legends  Concept Art Phase  Creating 3D Models  Texturing Models  Incorporating Animation into Splash Screens  How to make money with Free Games  Freemium Online Games & MMOs   Game Mechanics   * Business model * Game styles: DOTA, MOBA   **Reading:** Course Reader Chapter 3 The Look and Feel of Your Interface 27-41; Chapter 14 Designing the HUD 145-154; Chapter 9 Polishing 159-161 (instructor to hand out additional content)  **Lab:** Assignment 2 due ??? |
| **Week 8**  03/02/16 | **Lecture:**  Digital Marketing  If you build it, will they come?  User Acquisition Strategies   * Organic vs. Paid traffic * Best practices for creating viral apps * How to acquire traffic to your game/app * Understanding KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)   Lab 2 Presentations  Legal Aspects of Gaming   * Value of IP * Contracts, NDA’s, Developer Agreements * Infringement, Trademarks, Patents, Copyright   Midterm Review  **Lab:** Assignment #3 – GamePlay Enhancement  **Reading:** Course Reader Mobile Gaming 2012 Casual Games Sector Report; Freemium Gaming Metrics 2012; Chapter 5. A Primer on Intellectual Property 1-51 |
| **Week 9**  03/08/17  03/16/16 | **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**  **Lab:** Assignment #3  **NO CLASS DURING SPRING BREAK** |
| **Week 10**  03/22/17 | **Lecture:**  Working in 3D Environments  Midterm Results  Final Project Overview  Final Project Sample presentations  Unity 3D   Introduction to Unity   * Understanding the development environment * Sample Projects * Basic Physics of Unity * Introduction to Scripting   **Lab:** Assignment #3  **Reading:** Course Reader Week 10 |
| **Week 11**  03/29/17 | **Lecture:**  Working in 3D Environments  Lab 3 Presentations  Level Design   * Laying out levels in 3D * Balance and Progression in 3D * Importing 3D Assets * Protoyping * Iteration techniques   **Lab:** Assignment #3 due ???  **Reading:** Course Reader Week 11 |
| **Week 12**  04/05/17 | **Lecture:**  Online MMO Games  **BLIZZARD Game Jam**  Overview of MMO Games   * Game Design for MMO * Approaches to Game Design * Good Game Design   MMO Game Design Principles   * Prototyping and Iteration * Level Design * Game Balancing   **Lab:** Work on Final Project  **Reading:** Course Reader Week 12 |
| **Week 13**  04/12/17 | **Lecture:**  How to build your own game studio  Setting up a game company   * Legal Items * Selecting a Corporate Entity * Business Plan / Executive Summary * Budgeting & Business Models * Company Culture * Seeking out Investors * Valuation of a Business * Running Operations of a Startup   Game Audio   * Where to find great sound bytes for your game * Integration techniques * Custom Sounds * Establishing a pipeline   **Lab:** Final Project  **Reading:** Course Reader Week 13 |
| **Week 14**  04/19/17 | **Lecture:** Physics and AI  Game Physics   Academic research   * Use of physics in games * Exemplary uses of physics   Game AI – Artificial Intelligence   Academic research   * Use of AI in games * Exemplary uses of game AI   ***In Class Assignment – Game Jam: Physics***  **Lab:**  Final project  **Reading:** Week 14 Reader |
| **Week 15**  04/26/17 | **Lecture:**  Final Pitch Presentations to class  **Final Project Document Due**  **(Functional Spec, Game Design Doc, High Concept Pitch)**   Final project strategy preparation   The future of games   closing words  **Lab:**  Final project  **Reading:** No reading. |

**FINAL PROJECT DEMONSTRATION IS DURING FINAL EXAM PERIOD:**

**Wednesday, May 3 7-9 p.m. in usual classroom**