



CTIN 482 - Mobile Social Games

Units: 2

Spring 2021 – Tuesday 2-5:20 PM

Location: Zoom room on Blackboard

Instructor: Cynthia Woll:

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Info: cwoll@usc.edu

SA: Christy Ye

Office Hours: TBD

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Course Description

Working in a professional studio-like atmosphere, students will learn the fundamentals of Game Design and Product Management for social mobile games. As designers, students will form teams to develop concepts, wireframes and prototypes for original games, to be presented and discussed in class. Students learn how to perform market analysis, create and present game pitches, and build a design document. The course culminates with a multiple, portfolio-quality clickable prototypes and professional quality supporting documentation.

Students will also learn the basics of Product Management: Analytics, Data-Driven Design and Live Ops. As Product Managers, students will work with teams from CSCI 526. The Product managers will be responsible for evaluating the design from the prototypes, working with the teams to develop data points, and giving written critiques to the teams based on data collected. Teams from both courses will be evaluated in part on how effectively they work with data-driven design principles.

Learning Objectives

Students learn fundamentals of Game Design and Product Management for social mobile games. Students work in teams to prepare market research, game design documents, analytics, polished pitches, and prototypes. Students will also learn how to work on a team with defined roles to collaborate on a project. This semester, special emphasis will be given on how to work with and manage remote teams.

Course Notes

This course will assign a letter grade.

Students will submit work via Google Drive, Blackboard, and by showing builds to instructors and peers in class.

Students will have access to an educational version of Sensor Tower. Students will work with other development and production tools, as discussed in class. We will also use a Discord server for class socializing and co-working.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Handouts, templates, games, and sample documents will be supplied by the instructors when assigned.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Students will create both interactive experiences and documentation. The interactive experiences will be either simple prototypes of core game mechanics or a more polished vertical slice. Assignments will be graded on effort, collaboration, execution as compared to goal, and overall quality.

Documentation may consist of: pitch presentations, design documents, technical specifications, playtesting logs, design journals, and other forms of documentation as assigned. The length of the final documentation should be 6-10 pages. Students will learn professional documentation and presentation techniques. Assignments will be graded on effort, collaboration, execution, and, where applicable, iterative improvement.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade	Due
Weekly deliverables	50	Ongoing
Midterm prototype deliverables	10	Week 6
Analytics Paper	10	Week 12
Final prototype deliverables	20	Week 15
Participation	10	Ongoing
TOTAL	100	

Assignment Submission Policy

Written assignments and prototypes are due at the beginning of class of the assigned week.

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 instructor **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 instructor 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 instructor. The following guidelines are from the Interactive Media & Games 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 verification according to University policy.
- Family or personal emergency with verification according to University policy.

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

Diversity

In making games and interactive media in a professional and ethical way, it is important that you consider diversity. When looking at your projects, you should consider who is depicted and how this work will impact others. What kinds of individuals and communities are represented in your work? What point of view does your work express? This class may assist you in learning how to make work that includes diverse viewpoints, and may discuss racial, religious, gender and sexual orientation issues in the context of games and interactive media.

Creating an Inclusive 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 you will be expected to offer content warnings when appropriate, use students' stated 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 something problematic, 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 welcome to speak with the instructor or the advisor for the division.

Title IX Policy

Harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, and stalking are not tolerated by the university. All faculty and most staff are considered Responsible Employees by the university and must forward all information they receive about these types of situations to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for assisting students with supportive accommodations, including academic accommodations, as well as investigating these incidents if the reporting student wants an investigation. The Title IX office is also responsible for coordinating supportive measures for transgender and nonbinary students such as faculty notifications, and more. If you need supportive accommodations you may contact the Title IX Coordinator directly (titleix@usc.edu or 213-821-8298) without sharing any personal information with me. If you would like to speak with a confidential counselor, Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) provides 24/7 confidential support for students (213-740-9355 (WELL); press 0 after hours).

Additional Policies

This course emphasizes teamwork, and one of the desired learning outcomes is for students to develop communication and leadership skills. Students are expected to treat each other with respect, listen to each other, and work together towards a shared, collaborative, healthy work culture. Any student found to be disruptive or engaging in behavior that doesn't meet the standards of respectful teamwork may be asked to leave by the instructor.

If you experience any problems with a fellow student regarding their work, please bring up your concerns with any of the instructors.

	Class Topics/Lectures	Assignments	Due Date
Week 1 Jan 19	<p>Introduction to the course and course goals.</p> <p>Introduction to social mobile games. Introduction to Product Management</p> <p>In class: Genres/Game Mechanics</p> <p>In-class assignment: Assign genre buddy. Pair up and play games in the genre. (6 genres)</p> <p>Create one genre slide for discussion in class</p>	With genre buddy, create 2-4 slides for a new game concept that mashes up 2 different genres	Week 2, Jan 26
Week 2 Jan 26	<p>Lecture: Core Loop Lecture: Intro to Analytics</p> <p>Review genre slides ideas</p> <p>In-class assignment: genre teams form core loops for their ideas</p> <p>In-class discussion: core loops</p>	<p>Form teams of 2-4 people.</p> <p>Using existing or new genre mash-up ideas, form core loops for an original game</p>	Week 3, Feb. 2
Week 3 Feb 2	<p>Review core loops</p> <p>Lecture: Reward Systems</p> <p>In-class exercise: based on core loops due today, revise with reward system integrated.</p> <p>Discuss wireframing tools Assign Adobe XD</p>	<p>Review Adobe XP tutorials</p> <p>Develop first pass of wireframes for the idea presented in class</p>	Week 4, Feb. 9
Week 4 Feb 9	<p>Lecture: More Analytics</p> <p>Review first pass of wireframes</p> <p>In-class exercise: List of what you think you should track.</p> <p>Lecture/Discussion: What is a GDD?</p>	<p>Continue wireframes</p> <p>First draft of GDD including section on Analytics</p>	Week 5, Feb. 16

<p>Week 5 Feb 16</p>	<p>Lecture/Discussion: Hypothesis-driven Testing</p> <p>Lecture: Consumer Insights, Deconstructs, User Empathy.</p> <p>Lecture: Live Ops</p> <p>In-class review of GDDs</p>	<p>Complete GDD</p> <p>Complete Wireframes</p>	<p>Week 6, Midterm</p> <p>Feb 23</p>
<p>Week 6 Feb 23</p>	<p>Midterm: Present wireframes in video format to the class</p> <p>Field trip #1: First look at Open GL prototypes from CSCI 526</p>	<p>Reading TBD</p> <p>Case Study: Pick 2 titles that are top grossing (top 30) and 2 in the same genre that are grossing at 400 or below, using Sensor Tower as a guide</p> <p>Write 500 word paper with your hypotheses about why you think the successful titles are so</p>	<p>Week 7, March 2</p>
<p>Week 7 Mar 2</p>	<p>Form new teams, new games, 2 new genres mashed up</p> <p>New tech if desired</p> <p>Discuss tracking analytics and how to do it: high tech, low tech</p> <p>Field trip #2: Discuss and finalize with CSCI teams 10 things to track</p>	<p>New teams</p> <p>Core loop for new game with rewards shown</p> <p>Be available for brief questions from CSCI teams re: 10 things to track</p>	<p>Week 8, March 9</p>
<p>Week 8 Mar 9</p>	<p>Lecture: Live Ops</p> <p>Lecture: Data dashboards</p> <p>In-class review: new core loops</p> <p>Discussion: Team roles and dynamics</p> <p>Discussion: Case studies from week 6</p>	<p>Begin new wireframes</p> <p>Begin new GDDs, with live ops section with holiday event</p>	<p>Week 9, March 16</p>
<p>Week 9 Mar 16</p>	<p>Field trip #3: Visit CSCI teams to review their data dashboards.</p>	<p>Continue new wireframes</p> <p>Continue GDD,</p>	

	<p>Give CSCI team feedback on dashboard layout, readability, etc.</p> <p>In-class: review and discuss holiday events</p>		
<p>Week 10 Mar 23 Wellness Day – no Class</p>	No class	No class	No class
<p>Week 11 Mar 30</p>	<p>Review wireframes</p> <p>Field trip #4: Review data from CSCI teams. Discuss with teams how design may be impacted by the data your review</p>	<p>Written analytics assessment of changes that could/should be made to CSCI prototypes. Include data from dashboard. This paper is to be delivered to CSCI teams</p>	Week 12, April 6
<p>Week 12 Apr 6</p>	<p>Review wireframes, GDDs</p> <p>Discussion: Team dynamics</p> <p>Discussion: pitch decks</p>	<p>Continue wireframes and GDD</p> <p>Begin pitch deck of game</p>	Week 13, April 13
<p>Week 13 Apr 13</p>	<p>Field trip #5 (final time) Meet with teams who have received your feedback and made changes to the game. Discuss changes and possible future changes with the team</p> <p>Discussion: summary of interaction with CSCI teams – what went well, what went poorly</p>	<p>Continue wireframes and GDDs</p>	Week 14, April 20
<p>Week 14 Apr 20</p>	Semester review	<p>Prepare videos of final wireframes</p> <p>Prepare brief pitch deck of final project</p>	Week 15: Final project due, April 27
<p>Week 15 Apr 27</p>	Final wireframe presentations		

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office* <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://ali.usc.edu>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://dsp.usc.edu> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Disruptive Student 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.

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.