



USC School of  
Cinematic Arts

**CTIN 594b Master Thesis II**

**Units: 2**

**Spring 2022 - Thursdays - 10:00 AM - 1:50 PM PT**

**January 13, 2022 - April 28, 2022**

**May 2022 Thesis Show**

**Location: SCI 306**

Prerequisites: CTIN-542, 548, 594a

**Instructors:**

**Martzi Campos**

mccampos@usc.edu

Cell: 650-452-3848

Office Hours: By appointment

**Laird Malamed (remote instructor)**

lairdo@cinema.usc.edu

Cell: 310-903-0886

Virtual Office Hours:

Generally Monday 3 - 4 pm PDT; Friday 3 - 4 pm PDT by appointment

**Class Student Assistant:**

**Lizby Dingus**

[dingus@usc.edu](mailto:dingus@usc.edu)

*IT Help: USC Cinema Creative Computing*

*Contact Info: [creativetech@cinema.usc.edu](mailto:creativetech@cinema.usc.edu)*

*Access to campus requires numerous prerequisites and is subject to changes at any time based on USC and Los Angeles city/county regulations. Everyone's patiences and flexibility is appreciated.*

**Course Description**

CTIN-594b Masters Thesis is the continuation of the studio class designed to provide the framework, guidance and feedback to assist in the development and production of the MFA thesis final project, begun in 542/548. During this 6th semester of the MFA, students will complete their playable interactive work, submit their written thesis and present their work to their peers and professors in the Interactive Media & Games Division.

Successful completion of the thesis require:

1. Final thesis playable build
2. Approved final paper, submitted on time and revised as directed by the Graduate School.  
**Submission deadline is March 18, 2022 12:00 PM PDT**
3. Presentation of findings of the thesis to the faculty and students of CTIN
4. Publicly display your interactive work at the May 2021 Thesis Show
5. Approval of all work by the creative thesis committee
6. Optional: Participate in the USC Games Expo (submission and approval by the Expo required)

Your creative thesis committee, particularly your chair, will communicate to the 594b faculty their approval of the required materials. Students are expected to regularly meet with all members of their committee. Please inform the instructors of any issues.

The class is almost entirely driven by student work sharing and ample feedback from each other. Attendance is required (unless agreed upon in advance due to urgent requirements). Openness and sharing are key drivers.

The Graduate School of USC oversees the technical submission, review and acceptance of the Thesis Paper. As such, the Graduate School has very specific and rigid deadlines, guidelines and procedures. The MFA Student is advised to review the Graduate School website, frequently check their profile and raise issues early. Missing deadlines from the Graduate School is likely to shift the graduate date from May 2022 to August 2022 or later.

**The Profile Check Date is 12 pm PDT March 11, 2022**  
**The Paper Submission is due 12 pm PDT March 18, 2022**

The instructors and IMGD staff cannot lobby for exceptions on behalf of the MFA students.

### Learning Objectives

1. Demonstration of the Student of the ability to manage, complete and demonstrate their thesis work in various formats. The class will provide feedback and guidance to help each student achieve this, and guest speakers will help frame the finalization of the product.
2. Prepare for the Thesis Show and the public demonstration of the student work
3. Learn about the future including job searches, start ups and working in the industry

### Schedule

**Class attendance is mandatory.**

This is the draft week by week plan, so changes might occur depending on the ability to bring in speakers.

01/13/22 Week 01: Welcome back / The thesis paper / Check ins & Updates  
01/20/22 Week 02: Guest Lecture: Marientina Gotsis - writing your thesis paper / Critiques  
01/27/22 Week 03: Critiques

02/03/22 Week 04: Gordon Bellamy - career talk / Critiques / **Thesis Outlines Due**  
02/10/22 Week 05: Round Robin I  
02/17/22 Week 06: Thesis Show Prep / Critiques  
02/24/22 Week 07: Class Poster / Critiques / **Thesis Paper Rough Drafts Due**

03/03/22 Week 08: Paper workshop sessions / Critiques /  
03/10/22 Week 09: Round Robin II / **CONFIRM GRADUATE SCHOOL PROFILE**

SPRING RECESS 03/14-18: No class

**03/18/22 12 PM PDT: Thesis Paper due to Graduate School for May Graduation**

03/24/22 Week 10: Presentation Outline Sharing / Critiques  
03/31/22 Week 11: Thesis Show Prep 1 / Presentation Workshop / Critiques

04/07/22 Week 12: Thesis Show Prep 2 / **Presentation materials & builds uploaded**  
04/14-15/22 Week 13: Thesis Show Prep 3 / Round Robin III  
04/21-22/22 Week 14: **Thesis Presentations**

04/26-28/22 Week 15: Attend 2nd Year Pitches in 542/548 / Final Wrap Up

May 2022 TBD:  
Thesis Show  
USC Games Expo  
Thesis Appreciation Event with family & friends

05/13/22: USC Commencement Ceremonies

### **Formal Check-ins**

In addition - At least once in the semester, each student should schedule a formal check in with Laird and Martzi (separately) to discuss your projects. Anytime between weeks 5 and 9 makes the most sense. You do not need to limit to 1 meeting.

You should be meeting with all of your thesis advisors on a regular basis, including your external advisors.

### **Grading**

CTIN-594b is a complete/incomplete credit course. You will be given credit for the class (as well as the corresponding 594a from Fall 21) upon the approval of your masters thesis. You will of course receive feedback on your deliverables, project critiques and your ability to give feedback.

(Note that graduate students must maintain a B average (3.0 GPA) as per USC Graduate School requirements which is based on your other coursework. Please see Sam if you are concerned about this requirement.)

## **Assignment Submission Policy**

Generally, written assignments will be submitted via the shared Google Docs Drive. Please be aware that the entire class can view these files, so please do not share materials in this location you wish to keep private.

Oral assignments (project updates, defense presentations, etc) will be presented in class.

## **Attendance Policy**

Punctual attendance at all classes is mandatory. Students arriving (or logging in for Zoom classes) 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.

Excused absences include:

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

We all understand emergencies arise, and breaks will be provided during class to handle the usual deluge of electronic messages. Please inform an instructor or SA of urgent situations.

Given the online nature of the class, we recognize the strain of multiple hours per day with VC. As such, if you need a break, please let your instructors know and take it. We will have break time as part of our classes.

We also realize that since we have devices all around us, the distraction is real. We recommend trying to close down all forms of other comms during class, and silencing alerts from social media, email etc.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

In making games and interactive media in a professional and ethical way, it is important that you consider diversity and inclusion. 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.

## **Safer Spaces**

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 issue content warnings as appropriate, 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.

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).

## **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” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### **Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710*

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](https://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776*

[osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](https://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*

[ombuds.usc.edu](https://ombuds.usc.edu)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE  
IN THE SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**