

USC School of Cinematic Arts

CTIN 409 Special Topics: Producing Interactive Projects

Units: 2.0 Fall 2025, Tuesdays 6:00 pm – 7:50 pm

Location: SCA 206

Instructor: David White

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Office Hours: by appt.

IT Help: creativetech@cinema.usc.edu

Learning Objectives This course is an in-depth exploration of the development and production concepts woven into CTIN 484 Intermediate Game Development and CTIN 489 Intermediate Game Design Workshop.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

- Familiarity with Google Suite, especially docs and sheets. Knowledge of Excel is a bonus.

Final Project

- For this class, you **must** have a project that you are working on outside of class. For example, AGP students can use the projects they are currently working on in AGP. If you do not have a project, please see me ASAP to discuss.

Recommended Readings and Supplementary Materials

Recommended Supplemental Reading:

- Agile Game Development - Build Play, Repeat 2nd Edition by Clinton Keith
- Scrum and Xp from the Trenches 2nd Edition by Henrik Kniberg

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Plan a Party:

- Create a detailed party plan.
- Include budget, resources, and schedule.

Game Schedule:

- Develop a preliminary production outline based on an assigned test case.
- Include estimated hours, specific tasks, and milestones.

Game Breakdown and Budget:

- Create a preliminary team structure and budget based on an assigned test case.
- Plan for a fixed budget.
- Include team responsibilities, dependencies, salaries, time estimates, and overhead costs.

Final Project:

- Convert an assigned Design Document into a full production plan.
- Include team breakdown, schedule, budget, and milestones.

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.

Syllabus Outline

	Topics/Daily	In Class Exercise / Assignment	Deliverable
Week 1 8/26/25	Class Overview What is a Producer?	Assignment: Plan a Party Due Week 2 (9/02/25)	
Week 2 9/02/25	Schedule - Key Elements	Exercise: Schedule Breakdown	Party Plan
Week 3 9/9/25	Platform Scope	Assignment: Game Schedule Due Week 5 (9/23/25)	
Week 4 9/16/25	Discipline Dependencies	In-Class Exercise: Agile Workshop	
Week 5 9/23/25	Scheduling Review Methodologies Agile / Waterfall / Hybrid	In-Class Exercise: Workshop	Game Schedule
Week 6 9/30/25	Breaking down a Design Doc	Assignment: Game Breakdown & Schedule Due Week 8 (10/14/25)	
Week 7 10/7/25	Budgeting, Staffing Overhead	In-Class Exercise: Workshop	
Week 8 10/14/25	Morale, Team Dynamics Working with Leads Team Leadership	In-Class Exercise: Workshop	Game Breakdown and Schedule
Week 9 10/21/25	Staffing Budget Review <i>Industry Guest*</i>	In-Class Exercise: Workshop	
Week 10 10/28/25	Invention vs. Reinvention Scalability and Repurposing <i>Industry Guest*</i>	In-Class Exercise: Workshop	
Week 11 11/4/25	Managing Expectations: Clients/Team	In-Class Exercise: Workshop	
Week 11/11/24	NO CLASS	NO CLASS	
Week 12 11/18/25	Handling Crunch Dealing with Triage Saying No	Final Project Production Plan In-Class Exercise: Schedule Change and Scope Reduction Due Week 15 (12/09/25)	
Week 13 11/25/25	<i>Industry Guest*</i>	In-Class Exercise: Workshop	
Week 14 12/02/25	<i>Industry Guest*</i>	In-Class Exercise: Q&A - AMA	
Week 15 TBD	<i>Final</i>		Final Project Production Plan

***Industry Guest Dates and schedules subject to change**

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Final Due Dates	% of Grade
Party Plan	9/02/25	10%
Game Schedule	9/23/25	10%
Game Breakdown and Budget	10/14/25	15%
Final Project (Production Plan)	12/12/25	25%
In Class Exercises/Participation/Attendance		40%

Assignment Submission Policy Assignments should be submitted electronically by the due dates outlined at the beginning of class, subject to change based on overall class progress, via Google Drive.

During class time, ALL STUDENTS should have access to past assignments electronically on either hard drives or their laptops.

On some occasions, with advance notice, the instructor will ask students to print their assignments and bring copies to class for discussion/markup. Practice Assignments are not a part of the Grading Breakdown.

Missing an Assignment Deadline, Incompletes: The only acceptable reasons 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 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. Incompletes are only available after the Week 12 withdrawal deadline.

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

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 professionally and ethically, 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 commit to fostering 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.

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. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.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

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 Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

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

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of 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.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.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.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

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

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, 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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail diversity@cinema.usc.edu. You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

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.

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PLEASE NOTE:

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