

GAME 1026 Video Game Industry

Number of Hours: 42

Schedule: SEP 12 - DEC 12 6pm - 9pm Mondays

Location: HBC, Room 220

Class ID: 79487

Instructors: Bill Louden wlouden@austin.rr.com

The course covers the structure of the industry: its history (literature, media studies and design), the market, game genres, distribution and publishing channels, typical business models, and a competitive landscape of the industry. Topics include: market size and trends, retail and Internet distribution channels, single and multi-player game genres, PC, console, and cell phone platforms, and major industry players. Also included in this course are the history of computers, electronic games and toys, and the construction and critique of a canon of significant and influential games.

Prerequisites: None

Course Objectives

1. Industry history and structure
 - a. Develop a historical perspective of the origin and evolution of computer games from inception to present.
 - b. Identify and define the game industry structure using the Porter five-forces framework that examines current players, suppliers, customers, substitute products, and potential entrants.
 - c. Create a strategy based on the industry structure from both a new entrant and existing player perspective.
2. Marketing and distribution channels
 - a. Identify and define game marketing and distribution issues.
 - b. Gain the ability to do a market analysis, customer identification using traditional and emerging distribution channels.
3. The taxonomy of Games
 - a. Identify and define the classification of games, game genres, platforms, and markets.
4. Business models
 - a. Identify and define budgeting and planning issues as they apply to various business models, including: stand-alone games, the “box” model, the online model, and hybrid models.
5. Industry Roles and Careers
 - a. Identify and define core requirements of a games industry career, including roles in design, development, marketing, management, and support.

Required Materials (Available at the ACC Bookstore):

Introduction to the Game Industry by *Michael Moore*. Prentice Hall ISBN 0-13-168743-3

2005 IGDA Casual Games Whitepaper.

http://www.igda.org/casual/IGDA_CasualGames_Whitepaper_2005.pdf

The student is expected to have MS Office, including Word, Excel, and a PowerPoint reader.

Evaluation

Student must participate in class discussions and projects, and cannot miss more than three class meetings.

Course Outline

9/12	Week 1 Games Overview, A Theory of Fun
9/19	Week 2 The History of Computer Games
9-26	Week 3 Game Platforms, Console, PC, PDA, etc.
10/3	Week 4 Industry Structure & Markets Project Brainstorming
10/10	Week 5 Market Analysis: Understanding the Customer
10/17	Week 6 Competitive Analysis: Understanding the Company Project Milestone 1
10/24	Week 7 Game Analysis, Understanding Game Design
10/31	Week 8 Game Genres, Models, & Types I Project Milestone 2
11/7	Week 9 Game Genres, Models, & Types II
11/14	Week 10 Game Genres, Models, & Types III Project Milestone 3
11/21	Week 11 Business Models, What does it take to be successful?
11/28	Week 12 Ethics, Culture, Responsibilities, and Ratings Project Milestone 4
12/5	Week 13 Industry Roles and Careers
12/12	Week 14 Project Review

Values for the Course Assignments

<i>ASSIGNMENTS</i>	<i>PERCENT</i>
WEEK 2 Why are you here	5
WEEK 3 Favorite Computer Game	10
WEEK 6 Industry Analysis – Milestone 1	15
WEEK 8 Company Analysis – Milestone 2	15
WEEK 10 Game Genre – Milestone 3	15
WEEK 12 Game Analysis – Milestone 4	15
WEEK 14 Final Project	25
TOTAL	100

How points and percentages equate to grades

A	94-100	A = Excellent performance. Work is exemplary and worthy of emulation by others. Student is in full attendance and constructively contributes to the learning environment.
A-	90-93	
B+	87-89	B = Above average performance. All assignments are complete and exhibit a complete understanding and an ability to apply concepts.
B	84-86	
B-	80-83	
C+	77-79	C = Average performance. Accomplishes only the minimum requirements. Oral and written communication is at an acceptable level for a college student.
C	74-76	
C-	70-73	
D+	67-69	D = Demonstrates understanding at the most rudimentary level. Work is minimally passing.
D	64-66	
D-	60-63	
F	< 59	F = Work is not passing, characterized by incompleteness, lateness, unsatisfactory demonstration of understanding and application.

10/17 Week 6 Competitive Analysis: Understanding the Company

Project Milestone 1

Reading:

IGDA	2005 IGDA Casual Games Whitepaper	pp. 31-39.
Mulligan	Chapter 6	pp. 75-94

Assignment: Select a Game Industry Segment. Using the five forces analysis, submit a 1,500- to 1,750-word paper on the structure of that industry. Discuss who are its suppliers, its customers, substitute products, potential new Entrants, and the Industry competitors. Paper is due via email no later than Noon, Monday, 17-Oct.

10/24 Week 7 Game Analysis: Understanding Game Design

Reading:

IGDA	2005 IGDA Casual Games Whitepaper	pp. 40-90.
Mulligan	Chapter 7	pp. 95-124

**10/31 Week 8 Game Genres, Models, & Types I
Project Milestone 2**

Reading:

IGDA	2005 IGDA Casual Games Whitepaper	pp. 40-90.
Mulligan	Chapter 8	pp. 125-154

Assignment: Due Select a company within the industry segment chosen from Milestone 1. Using key areas of the Competitive Strategy Wheel and SWOT analysis, submit a 750- to 1,050-word paper on the company in that industry via email no later than Noon, Monday, 21-Oct.

11/7 Week 9 Game Genres, Models, & Types II

Reading:

Handout	Game Design	
Mulligan	Chapter 9	pp. 155-192
Koster	Chapter 10	pp. 160-171

**11/14 Week 10 Game Genres, Models, & Types III
Project Milestone 3**

Assignment: What is your favorite game genre? Why? Select a Game within your genre. Compare and contrast this games, features, graphics, interface, etc. to another within the same genre. What makes your favorite game more appealing? What

makes it less appealing than others? What would you suggest to make your favorite game better? Why? Submit a 500- to 750- word paper to support your reasoning via email no later than Noon, Monday, 14-Nov.

11/21 Week 11 Business Models, What does it take to be successful?

Reading:
Mulligan Chapter 10-12 pp. 193-214

11/28 Week 12 Ethics, Culture, Responsibilities, and Ratings Project Milestone 4

Reading:
Mulligan Chapter 14 pp. 291-314

Assignment: Game analysis and post-mortem. Select a popular video game and complete a 500-750 word analysis and post-mortem on its design, playability, and impact on the marketplace. Submit via email no later than Noon, Monday, Nov. 28.

12/5 Week 13 Industry Roles and Careers

Reading:
IGDA Handout

12/12 Week 14 Project Review

No Reading.

Assignment: Revise, combine, and complete your sections from Milestones 1 through 4 into your final document project adding a capstone on what you have learned from this process. Submit your final document (2,500 – 3,500 words) via email no later than Noon, Monday, 12-Dec.

. Video Game Development Program Philosophy

The Video Game Development Program has been designed, developed and implemented in partnership with leading video games studio managers and directors in Austin. The video games industry has undergone significant changes in how games are developed. They are rarely developed by few persons working in isolation. Today's games are often developed by teams of 50 to 200 on schedules from 2 to 3 years with budgets of \$10M to \$20M. The large publishers drive the game development funding and schedules. Consequently, it is critical that personnel in the industry communicate and collaborate effectively.

This drove the certificate requirements definition. Students are required to successfully complete courses in four categories:

1. The base industry courses: Video Games Industry, Business of Video Games and Video Games Development.
 - a. Students will understand what drives the industry, why games are developed, what is needed for success and how to get from idea to delivery.
2. The course specialization courses: Video Game Programming, Video Game Art, Video Game Design and Video Game Production.
 - a. Students will understand the requirements, objectives, limitations and goals of the different disciplines in a studio. This is essential for communication and collaboration.
 - b. Students in these core courses will be cross-discipline in order to build an understanding and appreciation of how different discipline teams collaborate and contribute to the final product.
3. The five specialization electives.
 - a. Students will develop skills in the discipline in which the student will seek employment.
4. Non-specialization electives
 - a. These are optional courses that will give you a deeper understanding of what other disciplines do and how they function. They will help you understand how to work with others on the team and to get the ‘big picture.’ These courses do not count towards the Video Game development certificate.
5. Capstone Project
 - a. This multi-person team project will simulate the real video game development environment. Students will develop a concept, turn it into a design, implement the programming and art required and produce it on the committed schedule. Go/no go milestones and final “publisher” acceptance reviews will mimic the industry. The students will have a deliverable for their portfolio that can be used for employment purposes.

Throughout the program each course will focus on knowledge transfer, skill building and teamwork. There will be a heavy emphasis on projects that will broaden and deepen each student’s portfolio development. Portfolios are critical to demonstrating an individual’s capabilities. Some projects will individual, many will be team based. How much a student gets out of each course will largely be determined by how much the students puts into the course. Video game development is highly complex, difficult work. The courses are designed to prepare students for that environment. So, come expecting to work hard.

The program is designed to reinforce key concepts such as teamwork, collaboration, and cooperation across all disciplines in the games development and management process. Many concepts are repeated throughout the program because they are extremely important to successful game development.