

GAME 2058 Capstone – Video Games

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description: This is the final course in the ACC Video Game Development Certificate Program. Students will be assigned to a 4-person team to develop a video game, mod or reel that will serve to demonstrate their capabilities. Each team will have a representative from each of the disciplines – Programming, Art, Design and Production. The class will run the length of the semester. Each team will have an industry mentor. The team will define the project, design the game, schedule to work required, test and deliver the game on the committed schedule. There will be periodic milestone reviews with industry professionals. These milestone meetings will serve as go/no-go checkpoints for the teams project. The output of the project will be the property of the students. There will be no classroom meetings, only one-on-one with mentor and project evaluators. This project will run the length of the semester.

Prerequisites: Completion of all other requirements for an ACC Video Game Development Certificate in one of the four specialization disciplines.

Objectives: Every student will be able to:

- Work effectively as a member of a multi-discipline team
- Create video games concepts
- Develop a project plan to deliver concept
- Create a design suitable for team members' deliverables
- Perform required programming, art, design and production work products
- Communicate effectively within the team
- Prepare review documents and presentations to mentor and industry professionals review team
- Meet committed schedules and deliverables
- Demonstrate leadership in a variety of team roles
- Be a professional video game developer

Rationale: Development of specific work products for students' portfolios is critical to obtaining positions in industry. The best way to demonstrate the capabilities for this demanding industry is to create a portfolio that potential employers can view. This approach seems to be successful and has been approved by many video games companies as well as members of the Advisory Committee of the ACC Video Game Development.

Course length: 48 hours

Required Material: None

Type of Course: Long Course

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Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on their competency in demonstrating a variety of skills acquired in previous Video Game Development Program classes. In order to grant CEU credit for a course the students must be able to create a complete video game of their choice under the supervision of a faculty member as a mentor. The video game, mod or reel has to be approved by an existing Video Game Development Certificate Program Capstone Evaluation Committee [the project mentor and the industry professional review team]. The coordinator will validate each student's achievement of the course objectives by signing and awarding individual a certificate of completion of ACC Video Game Development Program.

Grading Policies

College work must exhibit higher order thinking skills including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Mere knowledge about a situation or demonstration of comprehension of the material is not sufficient to prepare you for employment consideration. As a Video Game Development student, you must consistently apply higher order thinking in order demonstrate mastery of the material covered in this course. Grades are given for results not for effort. Read the definitions for each grade noted below, as this is really how grades are determined.

Grading is based on an absolute scale - you are not competing with anyone else, but you will be challenging yourself. There are no distributions of grades; hence, all of you can earn an A in this course. Note: Students earn grades, faculty members do not give them. Your final grade will be based on both individual and learning team performance.

Your final grade will be based on the points that you earn during the course. You may receive "fractions" of points on some assignments. When calculating your final grade, I will use the standard rounding convention – meaning that scores with a fraction of $\frac{1}{2}$ or greater will be rounded up, those with a score of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ will be rounded

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How points and percentages equate to grades

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

The breakdown for the four areas of the student's final grade is as follows:

Attendance and Participation	20%
Team Reviews	30%
Individual Reviews	30%
Project Deliverable	20%

Total:	100%

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.

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- 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.