Game Studio – LMC 4710

Syllabus

Course Number: LMC 4710
Location: Skiles 357
Times: Monday & Wednesday – 4:30p-5:45p

Instructor: Dr. Anne Sullivan
Instructor Email: unicorn@gatech.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment (Set time TBD)
Office Location: TSRB 317C

Course Website:
http://canvas.gatech.edu

Course Description:
This course provides students with an opportunity to practice designing and implementing video games using professional tools and iterative design techniques. Using agile development principles and contemporary software, students engage in small team game development. This is not a competition, and students are highly encouraged to assist others.

Learning Objectives
The goal of this class is to apply the knowledge students have learned throughout their classwork towards creating a complete video game with a team.

Students who successfully complete this course will:
- Use agile development to work as a team towards interdependent goals
- Identify and address communication issues within the team
- Apply game design/programming/art knowledge to the creation of a video game
- Coordinate structured user testing to collect feedback on the game
- Prototype and iterate design/programming/artwork integrating feedback from team and user testing

The syllabus, dates, times, assignments, and details are subject to change by instructor notification through Canvas or email.

Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Due
1	1/6	Introduction and Bartok	
	1/8	Asset Maps	1/8 Theme Suggestion due
2	1/13	Team Formation & Team documents	1/13 - Theme Vote due
	1/15		1/15 – Team docs due
3	1/20	1/20 - Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday – No Class	
	1/22	Concept pitches	1/25 - Concept docs due
4	1/27		
	1/29		
5	2/3	Playtesting	2/7 - Prototype due
	2/5	Prototype presentations	
6	2/10		2/14 - Game Design and Technical Design Docs due
	2/12		
7	2/17	Anne is gone – No Class this week	
	2/19		
8	2/24		
	2/26		
9	3/2	Playtesting	
	3/4	Vertical Slice presentations	3/6 - Vertical Slice due
10	3/9		
	3/11		
	3/16	SPRING BREAK	
	3/18		
11	3/23		
	3/25		
12	3/30	Playtesting	
	4/1	Alpha presentations	4/3 – Alpha due
14	4/6		
	4/8		
15	4/13		
	4/15		
16	4/20	Playtesting	
FINAL	4/24	2:40p – 5:30p – Demonstrations of RTM All revisions to slides, projects, videos due by 4/24 - 11:59pm	4/24 - RTM + Post-Mortem due

Requirements and Grading

(Note: you must complete all of these requirements to receive a grade in the course. If you fail to hand in any one of these, regardless of your total points, you will receive a grade of Incomplete)

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade
Documentation	15%
Prototype	15%
Vertical Slice	20%
Alpha	20%
RTM	25%
Post-Mortem	5%
	100%

Assignments

Documentation
This milestone is strictly documentation. Three separate components are needed here.
- *Concept Documents* – covers the high-level concept of a game idea (there should be two of these)
- *Game Design Document* - outlines the general concepts for the game, environment, story, mechanics, and progression.
- *Technical Design Document* - outlines major systems and necessary components. Flowcharts of object/class dependencies may be necessary to properly convey the technical demands of the proposed project

Prototype
This milestone is strictly software. This may be viewed as a Proof of Technology milestone. The core systems that are unique to your game must be demonstrated COMPLETELY in some rudimentary fashion. The specifics of what is expected will be discussed on a team-by-team basis.

Vertical Slice
This milestone contains a solidified Game Design Document as well as a short sample of complete gameplay and visual polish.
The document should reflect the entirety of the design intent for the game, and is likely full of reference and concept art. The gameplay section completed in this milestone should convey all of the major mechanics/features listed in the Game Design Document as well as have a room/area that contains production quality art assets to demonstrate the visual capacity and standards that the rest of the game will meet.

Alpha

This milestone is strictly software. This will be a complete version of your game. It should be playable, start to finish. Bugs are likely present, and art may not be to highest production standards, but all art is present/represented in the game space.

RTM

This milestone is the final build of the game software, marketing materials, and an updated Game Design Document. The GDD should contain no reference or concept art and should perfectly describe the game that has been made in clear to understand terms with will formatted technical writing principles applied. The marketing material details will be specified prior to alpha, but expect: screen shots, installer icon, square logo, marketing video, gameplay video, box art, disc art, poster, and written blurbs. The software will contain no exploitative, game-breaking, show stopping, or clearly broken bugs or components. The gameplay will be natural and of high production quality.

Evaluation

Each milestone is accompanied by a peer- and self-evaluation.
Each team member is responsible for submitting this individually. For any student that fails to submit a properly completed peer-evaluation, they will receive a 0 for the entirety of the milestone.

Attendance & Participation

Class attendance and participation is mandatory. Participation in class discussion is imperative because it allows you to explore the readings, design concepts, and projects collaboratively, and in the process, discover meanings and issues that you probably would not discover on your own. Participation in class also challenges you to continuously question, refine, and articulate your own ideas and interpretations.

General Policies

- Students are expected to indicate the source and authorship of any work not original to them, including copyrighted work or work of classmates, friends, outside collaborators, or other practitioners.

- Students are expected to come to class having done their work on time, and to actively respond to presentations by the instructor and fellow students.

- Students are encouraged to bring their laptops and mobile devices to class, and are always welcome to look up information related to the discussion during class and to take electronic notes for private use.

- Students are expected to refrain from distracting and disruptive behaviors in class and in the shared lab, and to treat one another with professional respect and courtesy. Engaging in non-course related activities such as browsing unrelated material during class is considered disruptive behavior because it is distracting to others and disrespectful of the shared enterprise.

- There is zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment on any basis, including but not limited to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Georgia Tech is committed to providing its staff, faculty, and students the opportunity to pursue excellence in their academic and professional endeavors. This opportunity can exist only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. Georgia Tech's full anti-harassment policy is online here:
  http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/anti-harassment-policy
  Violation of any of these expectations will result in appropriate penalties, including but not limited to reduction of grade, rescinding of lab access, or disciplinary action.

Statement on Inclusion and Diversity

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in broader society.

Information for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities at Georgia Institute of Technology will find programs designated to coordinate academic accommodations and promote access to all phases of university life. Such programming is coordinated through the ADAPTS-Disability Services.

The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program is a functional part of the Office of the Dean of Students. ADAPTS-Disability Services Program personnel oversee and coordinate programs to ensure accessibility to students with disabilities on an individual basis. The Georgia Institute of Technology strives to provide equal access to a college education as well as support to students with disabilities in their experience in the university community.
More information is available at: http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/

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What to do if you fall behind

Everybody drops the ball sometimes, and students often find themselves unable to keep up due to an illness or family emergency. If this happens to you, come and see me about it as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements for work that has been missed, and continue coming to class.

Sharing of work

Participation in the course implies permission for sharing work with others in the class and with future students if your work is judged to be a good example. If you are not comfortable with this, please let me know. Unless I am informed by you in writing (email) that you do not want your work shared with others in the context of current and future versions of this course, I will assume that it is available.

Writing and Speaking Support at the Communications Center

Alumni consistently emphasize the value of presentation skills for success in digital media careers. Everyone is encouraged to maximize their writing and speaking skills so that you can do justice to your very smart ideas. You can get help from the Communication Center, located in Clough Commons 447 with trained professional and peer tutors offering help to undergraduate and graduate students with written projects and presentations. Their services are free and confidential and they can be reached at commlab@gatech.edu or 404-385-3612 or via their website http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/.

Coping with our High-Stress Culture

The stresses of the current year from events outside the classroom make clear how important it is to look after ourselves and one another. The beginning of the semester is a good time to think about pacing your work so that you don't have to pull all-nighters and you don't get into a cycle of accelerating anxiety.

Try to set aside some regular time to escape to something you enjoy for its own sake. The Recreation Center has lots of drop-in classes, organized outdoor activities, and equipment for burning off anxiety, zoning out on something mindless for a while, or revving up your spirits. Many people find yoga and meditation helpful to getting perspective on life. We live in a golden age of TV, and I am a firm believer in the healing power of narrative which can simultaneous distance us from our everyday world and reveal to us what we most deeply love, hate, and long for. So, go binge watch something great – and see if you can get a friend to watch with you or to talk with you about it.

If you are experiencing anxiety or depression or a medical, personal, or family crisis, or if you just feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with the many pressures of being a graduate student at

Tech or a human being on this planet at this moment in time, please do not hesitate to reach out for help. Everybody needs help sometimes, and the college years are often a personally challenging time in ways that can be frightening and isolating. You are not alone, and many of us are available to be sympathetic listeners and to share our own strategies for coping with stressful situations. In addition, professional counselors and medical practitioners have expertise that can be very helpful. The Dean of Students Office has a list of services here: http://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/services.

Honor Code Statement

Students are expected to adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code: http://honor.gatech.edu.

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