

GAME 610: Game Production

Term: Fall 2017

Section: 001

Room: Art & Design Building 1018

Meeting Time: Friday 4:30PM – 7:10PM

Instructor: James Casey

Office: Art & Design Building

Email: <mailto:jcasey9@gmu.edu>

Office Hours: By Appointment (Friday)

Course Description

This course is presented in combination with the capstone experiences of the Game Design Major and Minor which serves to prepare students to pursue further game education or possibly to enter the game design and development workforce.

The 400/490 capstone courses require 3/6 credits to complete and is designed to be completed over one/two semesters. The first semester will result in a project being 'greenlit' and include a fully fleshed out design document and production plan as well as a demo or vertical slice of the game design. The second semester takes the 'greenlit' game and uses it as a blueprint for a fully functional game that will be developed by the student or student team and be presented to a panel of colleagues, instructors, and industry professionals at the end of the semester.

The 610 Masters course will coincide with the above courses and students in Game Production will be assisting the professor and the individual students and student groups in accomplishing their projects within the timeframe and resources provided.

Course Objectives

The course objectives for 400/490 are listed below:

- Write, design, and develop a professional Game Design Document.
- Analyze the game design in terms of theory and historical context.
- Compose a comprehensive, itemized development schedule.
- Design, conduct and assess a prototyping process for their game design.
- Produce a fully functioning platform, PC, or mobile game.
- Present their game, game design, and process publicly to a group of peers, instructors and industry professionals.

The course objectives for 610 are as follows:

- Assist the professor with the classroom experience as needed.
- Assist individual students and student teams in accomplishing their objectives.
- Participate in the planning, production, testing, and general development of assigned student team(s) as directed.
- Develop production schedules and processes for the assigned teams.

Team versus Solo Projects

Students may choose to work with a team of developers on their senior project or decide to develop a project on their own.

Students in 610 will be assigned teams as appropriate by the professor as an additional resource for these teams. The success of the assigned team will be a part of the assessment for this class.

Project Focus

The focus of a student's senior project should function as a synthesis of what they have learned in the Computer Game Design curriculum. Game development is a multidisciplinary field, and our students often have different areas of interest and expertise.

Production Focus

Students will be working with the professor and teams to develop practical production processes for all assigned teams. These processes will be developed using industry standard approaches but will vary based on the team(s) needs and students should be flexible on how they approach each group. As well, analysis of the production processes and overall development timeline will be a key part of the graded assessment for this class.

Requirements and Evaluation

At the beginning of each class, students should be prepared to discuss and demonstrate the state of their assigned team(s) game projects or designs.

The teams will present their progress four times during the two-semester: at mid-term and again at end-of-term. As a defacto resource for the assigned teams, students will provide leadership and guidance in ensuring that each presentation and product is polished and ready.

In the first half of this two-semester course, students will develop their game design in what the game industry refers to as the "pre-production" phase of development. During this phase, the game idea will be refined, the scope will be determined, the look and feel of the game will be decided, and all necessary assets and functionality will be defined. Once the core design is complete, the student will design, conduct and assess prototypes needed for the development of this game. It is the goal of these prototypes to determine the final target feature set of the game and to test any design assumptions the student's design may pose. The final project for this course is a presentation of the design and prototyping process along with analysis, followed by a presentation of the completed game design, accompanied by a demo or vertical slice of the game as developed via the prototyping phase.

During the second half of the two-semester course, students will focus solely on the production phase by developing the game described and prototyped from the first

semester. At the conclusion of the second semester, students will present a professional public presentation of their final fully functioning game.

Required Texts/Materials:

No Text – all reading and other assignments will be given in class or via Blackboard.
Access to a PC Desktop/Laptop – For project and coursework outside of class.
Access to a platform specific device – For development, testing, and presentation of project (as applicable).

Details on presentation requirements and course schedules will be available on Blackboard under Course Content.

Recommended Materials:

USB Flash Drive – 2 GB for storing and transporting project data
Google Drive Account

Grading

Grading will be based on how the class does as a whole and the participation of the graduate student in achieving that success. The following represents where individual groups will be assessed.

Group grading will be based on a number of criteria based on the portion of the class being taken. In general, the following will be used a guideline for what will be evaluated. They are mirrored to match the grading criteria for the assigned teams.

- Participation in the general assessment and running of the class.
- Participation in weekly status updates and demonstrations.
- Development of design documents, production plans and relevant plans.
- Presentation of documentation and projects.
- The final product (vertical slice or fully functional game).

For the first portion of the class, developing the game design and vertical slice, the following is a guideline for expectations on grading:

- Participation in the general assessment and running of the class. (10%)
- Participation in weekly status updates and demonstrations (10%)
- Midterm Grading
 - Game design documentation for assigned team(s) (10%)
 - Prototype development and analysis (10%)
 - Presentation of the Prototype (10%)
- Final Grading
 - The completed game design document (10%)
 - Presentation of the product and game design document (20%)
 - The completed product (20%)

Please note that the above grades may be based on a singular assigned team or an average of grades obtained by multiple assigned teams based on the assignments made and applicable for the class.

Presentation is an important part of the grade. The midterm and final both require students to pitch their projects. Generally, this is done in front of the class to allow peer participation through questions and answers. As noted above, the final presentation may be given before other faculty or industry professionals. The presentations are recorded for review of content and presentation style. This footage is viewed only by the instructor and the student or group involved, who receive a copy of the footage for their own evaluation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

MASON EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information. All digital communication with the professor must be made using your "masonlive" email account.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200;

<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian"

<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;

<http://caps.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.