ART4612C, Section 3062: Digital Media Workshop

TR 5 - 7 (11:45 am - 2:45 pm), FAC306
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Introduction
The workshop this semester will focus on the Game Engine as a method of artistic production. We will NOT be creating "games" as an entertainment form, but will look at how the idea of gaming can interface with culture in a critical way. We will study current artists who produce work in this manner, and we will become familiar with contemporary game studies/theory. Some may choose to create work that uses the tools as a visualization technique, while others may choose to investigate the form as a critical medium. In any case, the goal is to use this form in an experimental fashion that transgresses our current expectations of the videogame. The class is project-based and students will be encouraged to work in small teams. This will compensate for disparate technical proficiencies and allow everyone to contribute to a project idea. Sample project ideas include but are not limited to: installations, networked experiences, spatialized audio, place visualization, info-viz, general research, interactivity experiments, etc. Experience with 3d modeling and/or programming will be beneficial.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students will demonstrate their understanding of how to:
1. Become aware of the history and foundation of game studies.
2. Develop an ability to analyze and evaluate works from an informed point-of-view.
3. Gain an awareness of related work in the field.
4. Learn to engage in meaningful discussion and develop a sense of criticality.
5. Develop a level of comfort with the integration of digital processes where appropriate.
6. Learn to propose and present ideas in a way that clearly demonstrates intent.
7. Have FUN!

Course Methods
This course is designed to introduce students to basic principles of game development using various media. The emphasis is on practicing an experimental art practice that combines form, method, and content.

There will be four projects emphasizing different aspects of gaming from minimal games without gameplay, abstract games featuring form and color, eccentric games which bend time and space paradoxically, and a final "art game" project for exhibition in a gallery space. Lectures on the principles and methods of game development, introduction to the history of game production, and screenings/playthroughs of past and contemporary works are planned. Guest experts on course software will give demonstrations of the user interfaces and basic working methods. Reading, writing, and gaming assignments will lead to class discussions upon the nature of game development for the art discourse.

Course Components and Requirements
1) Attendance is required.
2) Participation will be judged by game reviews, classroom decorum, discussion preparedness, critique commentary, and presentation of resources not covered in class.
3) Completed projects will meet assignment handout parameters, show technical and artistic proficiency, and be ready for scheduled critique participation.
4) 10 Online Game reviews will be required of each student.
5) Students will give one oral presentation based upon a list of provided animation artists and topics.
6) Students will maintain an online sketchbook (wiki) containing development ideas and outside drawings that will periodically be shown to the instructor.
7) At the end of the semester, an archive of all completed projects will be turned in.

Critiques
Critiques are conducted on the due date of the project by the instructor and class. Evaluation shall be based upon resolution to assignment objectives and parameters: creativity, inventiveness, and initiative; effort; technical proficiency and craft; and overall artistic design. You are expected to participate in all critiques.
Course Materials
Standard materials necessary for a sustainable digital media practice are required. Other materials include:
- External Flashdrive or Hardrive (at least 10 gigs)
- 3 button Mouse
- DVD and CD Media

Course Readings
Readings will consist of .pdfs and URLs available on the class website as well as this textbook:
First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game, eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan,

Course Software
Most software will be made available in the lab or open source. Exceptions to this rule include:
- Braid by Jonathan Blow and David Hellman
- Portal by Valve Corporation
- The Path by Tale of Tales
- Lynda.com Tutorials (for Photoshop and Maya if necessary)

General Class Information
Absence and Late Work:
An assignment turned in late will not be graded. All work is due on the stated deadlines unless a doctor’s note is provided.

More than three absences will cause a one-letter grade reduction in your final grade. Quizzes missed due to university sanctioned reasons shall be made up by contacting the instructor for a make-up quiz on the next available class date. Students must discuss any foreseen absences with the instructor in advance.

Evaluation and Grading:
15% Participation
15% Game Reviews
15% Project 1, Minimal Game
15% Project 2, Abstract Game
15% Project 3, Eccentric Game
25% Project 4, Final Game

New grading guidelines can be found at http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html

Classroom Behavior
Appropriate behavior is expected of all students during class (no late arrivals, cell phones/pagers, etc.)

Cell Phones
Students in the SAAH must turn off beepers and cell phones during class.

Academic Honesty Policy:
Please consult the Academic Honesty Guidelines section of the University of Florida’s Student Guide. “An academic offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage.” Unless otherwise stated, projects are considered individual assignments.

Students with Disabilities:
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.
Disability Resources Center
0020 Reid Hall
392-8565, ext. 200
http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc

University Counseling Services:
Free counseling services are available to all students.
Religious Observances:
You must notify the instructor “prior to the class or occurrence of that class, test or activity” of any religious holidays for which you will miss class.