

KXH111: Fundamentals of Interactive Entertainment (Digital Games and Animated Film)

UNIT DESCRIPTION

The goal of this unit is to provide students with an understanding and overview of interactive entertainment and new media from the perspective of the developer, storyteller, designer, artist and audience. This unit will provide students with the theories, tools and techniques to create and analyze stories that can be told as digital interactive games, animated films, immersive experiences or various forms of mixed reality design to help them in the analysis of properties and the creation of new ones. The unit will delve into the sociological and psychological dimensions of design for digital entertainment and new media along with a historical perspective and social significance. The unit will also look at business and marketing considerations along with an overview of the game and entertainment industry. It will also include practical aspects by bringing in speakers from various industries and reviewing case studies in each area.

This unit is a companion unit to the Virtual Reality and Advanced Media Technology. Both units are precursors to a new cross-disciplinary program in **Human Interface Technology and Experience Engineering** that is being started at the (proposed) HIT Lab Australia. The new major is a instructional companion to the organization of the Tasmania Research Centre of Human Interface Technology Laboratory in Australia. This Laboratory is linked to the HIT Lab at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, USA and the HIT Lab NZ, located at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, NZ and will promote the development of advanced human interfaces and media technologies.

This unit is offered by the HIT Lab Australia. The unit will be taught by staff members from the HIT Lab Australia as well as selected international experts from the Human Interface Technology Laboratories in New Zealand and the USA. Notable international authorities and staff from various UTAS schools, especially from the School of Computing, will also be invited for lectures.

PREREQUISITES

This unit is open to all students regardless of background. Taking any previous classes is not necessary.

The thrust of the course is to expose students to all disciplines and interests, to modern technology and cutting edge tools that can influence and contribute to all walks of life. This unit is especially suited to beginning students who are interested in diversity and the spectrum of opportunities across disciplines at the University of Tasmania. Students should have a deep interest in the future of advanced media technologies. Students should also have willingness and some enthusiasm for working on group projects. Since these games and interactive experiences play a key role in this course, students will be expected to play, discuss and analyze a variety of games and online/interactive environments.

APPROACH

The unit will consist of academics from the HIT Labs and guest lecturers, case studies, video presentations, game play, readings and demonstrations with open discussion in a seminar setting.

The presentations will be offered by way of lecture, guest lecture, and workshop experiences. Students will be expected to be active participants and will be asked to get involved in the creative process by joining a collaborative team. The group will experience the challenge by taking the time to find the most powerful and engaging manner to tell a story along with the appropriate medium to present it. Each group will design a story and the accompanying production pipeline required to develop it to completion.

TEACHING STAFF

Professor Young Ju Choi, Coordinator

Ms Wanda Gregory
Adjunct faculty, Computer Science & Engineering, University of Washington, USA
Executive Producer – Hidden City Games, Seattle, USA

Ms Barbara Mones
Creative Director, Animation Research Labs, University of Washington, USA

Other teaching staff: to be announced.

COURSE MATERIALS

A CD containing course materials (presentations and course outlines) will be distributed the first day of class. Students will also have access to a course website that will provide up to date information about assignments, activities and schedules relevant to the course.

DRAFT COURSE SCHEDULE

Part One

Course overview

Story Fundamentals and the development of intellectual properties (IP) including world development, plot, back-story, and character development?

What is the relationship between game, story and narrative play?

How is meaning constructed through game play?

Linear and Interactive Stories

Composing Designing and Developing Engaging, Efficient Stories

How has New Media Changed and Enhanced our Opportunities to Tell stories?

Workshop on the Fundamentals of Story Design.

Visual Story and Interactive Design
Roles and responsibilities in the game industry
Pre-Production Pipeline for Games
Pre-Production Pipeline for Animated Films
The Production Pipeline for Games

The Production Pipeline for Animated Films
Workshop on Graphic Storytelling, Storyboarding and Character Development and Design.

What is a game? What is play?
How Would We Design A Successful Game or Film?
Case Studies of Two Successful and Two Unsuccessful Games
Case Studies of Two Successful and Two Unsuccessful Animated Films
The Current State of the Art in Games and Animation including Hybrid Media.

Developing Your Own Creative Vision
How to Organize your Idea and Pitch your Project?
The role of Audio in both Games and Animated Film Production
Role and creation of design personas
Workshop: Improvisation Session

Assign Theme Topics and Break Into Groups
How to Organize your Idea and Pitch the Most Successful Story for New Digital Media.
Story Assignment Review.
Workshop
Story Pitches.

Part Two

History of video game industry and game genres
The State of the Art in Video Games
The player experience – cognitive aspects of games
Demographics and psychographics of players
Social aspects of games and virtual worlds
MMOs

The State of the Art in Animated Films
The Fundamentals and Origin of Digital Video Film
Types and Styles of Animated Films

Student Pitches and Review
Practical Aspects of Working in Digital Games and Film
Business/marketing Considerations in Games and Film—the Realities of the Industry

The Future of the Industry and of Digital Entertainment Including:
User Created Content for Games and Film.
Transmedia Worlds
Interactivity of Animated Films
Web Based Games and the Rise of Casual Games
Gender and Animation, Gender and Games
Console Wars
Advergaming
Serious Game Movement

Final Student Group Pitches

Panel Discussion
Interactive Discussion about the future of the Entertainment Industry, and a Discussion about the Future of Our Study of Human Experience Engineering and How it Relates to the Course Content.

OTHER RESOURCES

Suggested Readings

Blair, Preston. *Cartoon Animation*
Faigan, Gary. *Facial Expression*
Katz, Steven D. *Shot By Shot*
Mamet, David. *On Directing Film*
Marsh Reginald. *Anatomy For Artists*
Vineyard, Jeremy. *Setting Up Your Shots*
Zimmerman, Eric. *Rules of Play*
Zimmerman, Eric. *The Game Design Reader*
Koster, Ralph. *Theory of Fun for Game Design*
Gee James. *What Video Games Have to Teach us about Learning and Literacy*
Taylor, T., *Between Play Worlds*
Castronova, Edward. *Synthetic Worlds*
Kelley, Tom. *The Art of Innovation*
Jull, Jesper. *Half-real*
Richard, Bartle. *Designing Virtual Worlds*

Useful Websites

Terra Nova
The Escapist Magazine
Nick Yee/Daedalus gateway
Water Cooler Games
Buzz Cut
Gamasutra
Game Girl Advance
International Game Developers Association (IGDA)
Penny Arcade
Joystiq
Kotaku
Slashdot Games
MMORPG.com