GAME 150 – Game Project I

UNM Valencia, Digital Media Arts   updated 1-2012
Spring 2012
Tuesday & Thursday, 1:30pm – 2:45pm
WebCT Enhanced Course
Professor: Alexa Wheeler
alexa08@unm.edu

Campus Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday   10am-10:30am & 1pm-1:30pm
                        And by appointment

Virtual Office Hours: by email, text, IM, and by appointment for live chat
                          **see "How to Contact the Instructor" below

Office: Business & Technology Building Rm. 110A

Course Description

This course focuses on 3D modeling and animation, motion capture, and the creation of computer game graphics and characters. Topics covered are common to all game art: game setup, development studio, manipulating graphic images, pictures, and animation. Lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and other content will introduce various issues of game development, design, and art. Assigned projects, readings, video tutorials, presentations, and group critiques will assist in a critical understanding better preparing the student for further study in game development.

Objectives

- Demonstrate an excellent working knowledge of Autodesk Maya software.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of 3D space.
- Create characters and props with polygons.
- Plan and implement keyframes, motion paths, cameras, lights, rendering techniques.
- Discuss the importance of ethics and copyrights in the computer industry, and the role they play in the field of 3D computer art creation.
- Gain an excellent working knowledge of the Mac computer and it's operating system

Required Online Subscription

lynda.com Online Video Tutorial Library – DMA Spring 2012 class
A link will be given in class – DO NOT subscribe without this link or you will be overcharged $36.67 for the semester

Student Responsibilities/Attendance/Participation

Student Responsibilities:
- Students <u>must</u> have basic computer and file management skills for all DMA courses. Custom tutoring services are available through the TLC. Required pre/co requisite is IT 101: Computer FUNdamentals. Students that fall behind due to lack of basic computer skills will be dropped.
- Bring a USB Flash Drive (at least 4 GB) OR an external hard drive (highly recommended!!!) to every class. Make sure it is clearly labeled with your name on it. Always keep a back-up of ALL classwork.
- Purchase 1 DVD for final project submission.
- Have a UNM email to access WebCT:
  - Students will access supplemental information, class agenda/syllabus, and their grades through WebCT at https://vista.unm.edu. Just enter your NetID and your password. You must set-up a UNM email account (https://netid.unm.edu) if you do not already have one.
- If you have a disability, please inform me of your needs as soon as possible to ensure that your needs are met in a timely manner.
- Cell phones need to be muted during class times. If you must receive a call, leave the lab before you answer. No phone conversations in the studio. No web browsing, email, or text messaging during lectures, demos, discussions, or critiques.
- **COMPUTERS WILL BE OFF DURING ALL CRITIQUES!!!**

Attendance/Participation:
- Students are required to complete all projects on time, participate in scheduled critiques/class discussions, watch posted Lynda.com video tutorials in the week they are posted, and maintain a safe, respectable, positive lab environment.
- Students are required to attend class, arrive on time, remain present until the end of class, and be prepared for each day's work. More than three absences without prior consultation may result in a failing grade or a drop from the class. Leaving early or arriving late three times results in one absence.
- If you have not attended class for three consecutive class periods and have made no attempt to text/email/IM/contact me, you WILL be dropped.
- Students who do not attend the first week of class will automatically be dropped.
- Students will need to work a few hours each week in addition to the scheduled class times. Open lab hours will be announced

Grading Policy

Grading:
- Grading is based on a timely completion of course assignments, the quality of individual technical and critical development, conceptual progress, personal commitment and the ability to work in a community studio setting. Personal commitment involves regular attendance, consistent effort, completion of work, participation in critiques and class discussions, and the general willingness to try. Make each project meaningful to yourself!
- Each assignment will culminate in a critique, which will consist of projecting your completed films in class for all to see. All due dates will be announced in the YELLOW BOX on WebCT, as well as on the syllabus. No full credit will be given for any late work. If an assignment is not presented on time, an automatic 0 will be issued. You will need to make arrangements with me if you are planning to make-up the work, and a fair grade will be issued once the work has been submitted, presented, and critiqued, minus an automatic one letter grade deduction.
- Incompletes are rarely issued. If 75% of the semester's work/projects/deliverables and participation/attendance have been completed with a satisfactory grade, and incomplete may be issued.

Grading Breakdown

Semester Requirements:

Projects (4)	60 points	15 points each
Final Project	30 points	
Individual Meetings	10 points	for attendance & preparation

Extra Credit:

Extra Credit	10 points maximum for the semester

Points will be added up and a letter grade will be issued according to the following scale:

A+	101+
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	88-89
B	84-87
B-	80-83
C+	78-79
C	74-77
C-	70-73
D+	68-69
D	64-67
D-	60-63
F	50-59

How to Contact the Instructor

Weekly Office Hours:
- Office Hours are held weekly on-campus and virtually.
- On campus, the office hours are:
  o Monday & Wednesday   10am-10:30am & 1pm-1:30pm in B&T Rm. 110A, or check other DMA classrooms
  o Also, by appointment
- Virtually, reach me any other time through email, text, IM (see below).

Email:
I prefer all email to be from the internal WebCT class email. I will check this WebCT email regularly and will respond to all emails within 48 hours (72 hours weekends), and usually sooner.

Although less preferred, you can email me at alexa08@unm.edu. In the Subject Line of the email, ALWAYS write your full name and class number. For example – "Laurie Anderson GAME 150"

Instant Messaging:
If I am available to talk, I will set my status to online. You will first need to set up an account with the following services, then you can use these IM services:

> Google Talk - "alexatoast"
> > Set up a Gmail account: gmail.google.com
> > Email me with your gmail address: alexatoast@gmail.com
> > I will add you & you add me to your buddy list
> > GOOGLE TALK HELP: http://www.google.com/support/talk/?hl=en

> Yahoo Messenger – "alexatoast"
> > Download Yahoo Messenger:
> > > Mac: http://messenger.yahoo.com/download/
> > > PC: http://messenger.yahoo.com/download/win/
> > Once successfully downloaded, open the program. Add me to your contacts by clicking on the "+" at the bottom left of the screen. My Messenger ID is – alexatoast@yahoo.com

> AIM (AOL instant messaging) – "alexawheeler"

> Skype – "alexatoast"
> > Download a Skype account:
> > > Mac: http://www.skype.com/download/skype/macosx/
> > > PC: http://www.skype.com/download/skype/windows/
> > Once successfully downloaded, open the program. You can "call" me by typing – alexatoast – in the search bar.
> > SKYPE HELP: http://www.skype.com/help/guides/

WebCT Chat:
If I am online in the WebCT system, invite me to chat!

Text:
You can also reach me **BY TEXT ONLY** at: 505-515-1055. I WILL NOT answer phone calls and ask that you please NEVER LEAVE A MESSAGE!!! Any messages left by students will be deleted and will not constitute an attempt at communication. In the event of an absence, you will be counted unexcused if you only left a message and made no other written attempt at communication. All communication between instructor and student outside of class time MUST be in written format for this class. If you must reach me or have an emergency, USE: email, IM, text, or my office phone (if needing to leave a message – as a last resort) at 925-8702.

Support Information, Resources, & Tutorials

Open Studio Time – Digital Media Arts Open Lab & Darkroom:
- Located in Room 123A in the Business & Technology Building (directly in front of the current B&T open computer lab Room 123). You will need to enter the lab through the current B&T computer lab and sign-in to use the computers.
- Monday through Thursday 8:00am to 8pm
- Friday 8:00 am to 2:00 pm

Support for WebCT:
- o   - WebCT help: http://webctinfo.unm.edu/student/.

DMA / UNM Valencia Tutoring Services:
- We are proud to have our very own DMA tutor available for Digital Media Arts specific courses! You can walk-in or if you prefer to make an appointment during these times, please call the Learning Center at 925-8900.
- Custom tutoring services are available through The Learning Center http://www.unm.edu/~tutor/. Even online tutoring is available

Other tutorials:
- I will post a number of links to video tutorials in WebCT for this course.

Instructor Support:
- Please see "How to Contact the Instructor" for methods of contacting the instructor for help.

Community Support:
- We will have a HELP FORUM discussion board in the WebCT course. Use this as a place to post questions to the community. It is important for peer learning and peer communication to enhance our community.

Method of Instruction

Methods of instruction include in-class lectures, demonstrations, discussions, presentations and critique. There will also be supplemental out-of-class and online instruction that will include tutorial videos, lectures, reading online articles/websites, and other activities presented to the student through Learning Modules or posted on the WebCT class homepage.

In-Class Lectures, Demonstrations, Discussions, Work Time – each week we will meet twice on campus. A variety of issues will be presented and discussed.

Project Presentations and Critiques – There will be a total of 5 projects due throughout the semester. Guidelines will be detailed weekly in class, on the syllabus, and in WebCT. On days where you present your finished work to the class, we will come together as a group to critique the work and provide feedback to each other.

Video Tutorials – In the Learning Modules in WebCT, the student will access links to online video tutorials introducing, explaining, and/or reviewing techniques and concepts current to the material covered in the classroom. Students must watch the required online video tutorials in a timely manner, within the week they are posted, and before the class in which we will be discussing the content of the tutorials.

Other Activities – There may be other learning activities associated with the weekly content of the course that will be found in the Learning Modules or given in class.

Course Schedule

Spring 2012:
Semester begins Tuesday, January 17
Semester ends Saturday, May 5
HOLIDAYS:
Spring Break: March 11 - 18 – Week 9

Dates	Schedule	Projects
Week 1	• Introductions • Review Syllabus • Review WebCT • Lecture • Equipment Overview • Supplies Overview	
Week 2	• Maya Interface Basics	
Week 3	• Basic Polygonal Modeling & Duplicating	
Week 4	• Project 1 due	***Project 1 – Robot*** Thursday
Week 5	• Lecture • Demo • Work time	
Week 6	• Selecting, points, edges	
Week 7	• Project 2 due	***Project 2 – City*** Thursday
Week 8	• Texturing, Hypershade, UV Mapping	
Week 9	• SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	• Project 3 due	***Project 3 – Color & Texture*** Thursday
Week 11	• Animation Basics • Cameras	
Week 12	• Joint • Skin • Parenting	
Week 13	• Project 4 due	***Project 4 – Animate*** Thursday
Week 14	• Lighting, Rendering	
Week 15	• Individual Meetings	
Week 16	• **Final Project critique**	***Final Project*** Tuesday & Thursday

Project 1 - Robot

Design and model a robot using primitive objects and duplicating shapes. See the learning module for more details and guidelines.

Project 2 - City

Design and model a cityscape based on an actual photograph (yours or found). Multiple techniques will be covered. Your robot will reside in this environment once finished. See the learning module for more details and guidelines.

Project 3 – Color & Texture

Apply textures and colors to your robot and cityscape with Maya and/or downloaded textures and colors, as well as with textures you have made yourself. See the learning module for more details and guidelines.

Project 4 - Animate

Animate your robot. Animate views in and out of your cityscape using cameras. Animate at least 3 other objects. Understand parenting and how to joint and skin. See the learning module for more details and guidelines.

Final Project

Finish your scene for your final project. You must include lighting, interior & exterior animations and modeling, and render (in the form of a "Playblast"). Explore motion capture. See the learning module for more details and guidelines.