

# GAM 383: Game Studio Development

This course focuses on the development cycle in a large game studio with a focus on pushing out a game targeted towards a commercial platform. The game in question is an ongoing development taking place over a number of years, Students participate quarterly and a public build will be made available at the end of the school year.

This class can be taken multiple times but requires permission from the instructor each time. Each student will have a particular role as a development apprentice/intern in the studio where they will focus on developing mastery to help build the game/experience over the course of the quarter. Available design roles include: Level Design, Gameplay design, UI Design, Graphic Design, Character Animation, Blueprint Specialist, Balancing, Narrative and Dialog, Writing, Cinemas and cutscenes, Production. Design roles may shift and change depending on the needs of the current project. Getting into the class requires the student to show a portfolio or display some level of mastery in one of the available areas to participate.

## SOD Learning Outcomes

By the end of the class students will be able to:

- Apply design skill sets to a restricted specialty area.
- Understand workflows and pipelines of a professional studio.
- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the Unreal engine (or other game engine as used by the studio) in a particular specialized module of the engine such as Blueprints, Level Design, Material Design, Sequencer, etc. .

## Projects:

The DePaul Originals Game Studio maintains multiple long term projects. These projects are categorized as entertainment, prosocial, and community outreach. Students coming in will choose a project area to

operate in and a role to occupy. Over the course of the quarter students will dig into their role building skill in that area and documenting their process.

## Readings and Tools:

<https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/the-13-basic-principles-of-gameplay-design>

<https://www.gamedeveloper.com/production/art-design-deep-dive-using-a-3d-pipeline-for-2d-animation-in-i-dead-cells-i->

<https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/the-new-dramaturgy-pt-1-introduction-to-gamic-dramaturgy>

<https://docs.unrealengine.com/5.2/en-US/developing-for-xr-experiences-in-unreal-engine/>

Agile Game Development with Scrum ([Here](#) on GameDeveloper.com)

We will be developing with the following tools.

- Unreal Engine
- Blender
- Adobe Suite

## Class Schedule

- Week 1:
  - Introduction to projects and development pipeline. Review design documents for Haunted Jarvis Project and Sankofa Season. Review of source control. Sprint Planning.
  - Assignment: Skills assessment essay: Modeling and Materials review for artists and Blueprints review for designers.
  - Read: Agile Game Development
  - Read: Developing for XR Experiences in Unreal Engine
- Week 2:
  - Scrum meetings and sprint planning. Art pipeline review. Exploring lighting solutions. Storyboarding Sequences for Unreal production.
  - Read: The New Dramaturgy
  - Blog Post
- Week 3:
  - Scrum Meetings and work Reviews. VR Showcase builds. All work must be checked in by 5PM Thursday Evening.
  - Read: Art Design Deep Dive
  - Blog Post
- Week 4:
  - Sprint Planning: Lighting techniques:
  - Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSbBsXbixPo>
  - Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GYyHDuaPcg>
  - Blog Post

- Week 5:
  - Full project walk through. Discipline reports: Art Review
  - Blog Post
- Week 6:
  - Art and Sound Review; Native VR Build. Bug testing and full project play through.
  - Blog Posts
- Week 7:
  - Project walk through: Lighting and effects review.
  - Blog Posts
- Week 8:
  - Bug triage and assignments.
  - Blog Posts
- Week 9:
  - Project trailer. Shipping build. All work must be checked in by 5PM Thursday evening.  
Wrap and Ship
  - Assignment: Reflection
- Week 10:
  - Post mortem reflections and pipeline reviews.
- Finals Week
  - Showcase at the end of year game showcase.

## Assignments

- 1) Skills assessment paper. This document is a 2 to 3 page breakdown of the students current capacities to do the work. Take some time to reflect on past projects and identify both where you are strong and where you might need to improve. Set goals for improving your individual skills, explain these goals, and identify how you will meet these goals and establish a disciplined routine. When you are done this will be our agreement of the scope of work that you are promising to do on this project.
- 2) At the end of this project you will write a reflection paper. This paper will not only delve into the skills and obstacles you identified in your reflection paper but how successful you were at improving them as well as your observations of how the project progressed and affected your skills.
- 3) DePaul Originals Game Studio Blog Post: Everyone in the studio has a discipline that they are responsible for documenting and teaching to others. Each student will create an entry on the DOGS website that breaks down their design process on a particular task in the project and shows how to work with a given tool or structure in the project. This is 2 to 5 pages with images.

## Grading

- Discipline Responsibilities: 25%
- Participating in stand-ups and writing blog reports and documentation: 25%

- Task deployment and polish: 30%
- Papers and Essays: 20% (*You must have both. Reflection builds off of your Assessment paper. If you have not done the Assessment, the reflection does not count.*)

## Grade Breakdown

A	93-100
A-	92-90
B+	89
B	88-81
B-	80
C+	79
C	78-71
C-	70
D+	69
D	69-61
D-	60
F	59-

## Course Policies

### Source Control Etiquette

Check in often. **DO NOT** leave items checked out for extended periods of time. When you are finished working for the day check in your work with a verbose breakdown of changes you made. DO not check in broken stuff. If you need to keep working with an asset for longer than a day, duplicate in another project and then migrate it back over when you are ready to check in.

### Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

## Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Please see

<https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

## Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

## Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. As a rule, there will be no incompletes for this class. Work is either done or not done. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gergory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course. If during a lab period, you are on social media instead of attending to the current project, to a level that you must be asked to cease the social media, it may be considered an absence as you are not actually present in the class work.

**Class Discussion:** Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

**Attitude:** A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

**Civil Discourse:** DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be [Socially Responsible Leaders](#). It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

**Cell Phones/On Call:** If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undisruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.