

Syllabus: Interactive Media II COM 356L111

Time/ Room: R – 12:30–3:15p/LT209 Prof. Brett Phares, 136A LTC
Brett.Phares@marist.edu Office Hours: M 1-2p; W 11a-5p; TH 11a-12p

Overview

The senior Interactive Media II course is intended to build on skills acquired in COM355. Students will become proficient in production skills that will take them beyond the camera, to be able to produce short-form animation/cinema or broadcast commercials within the confines of a game engine such as SecondLife, Unreal Tournament 2004 or Uni-verse.

Objectives

Students in this course will develop the following competencies by the end of the semester:

1. Proficiency in making films in a virtual 3D world
2. Proficiency in basic techniques in puppeteering, skinning, camera and sound design
3. Researching and procuring game assets
4. Integrating earlier production skills into useful products.

Required Textbook

Machinima by Matt Kelland, Dave Morris and Dave Lloyd, Thomson Course Technology 2005

Schedule

Module 1

1. Introduction to Machinima, short history and state of current production
2. Work with basic virtual puppetry, organizing a 3D studio, planning shots
3. Create animated short (<30 sec.) using SecondLife as game engine

Module 2

1. Each student prepares and presents a protocol on an software tool used for producing Machinima TBD
2. Propose animated short (1-3 min.)
3. First draft of animated short/crit
4. Research group project (5-10 min animated short)

Module 3

1. Draft of group project/ crit
2. Propose final individual project (expansion on first or new)
3. Week 9 - Break

Module 4

1. Advanced topics in Machinima
2. Production of final individual project, draft/crit

Module 5

1. Final project production

Portfolio presentations

Grading Items:

Team project w/project report (30%)

1. Outcome: The student will be able to function as part of a team to design, produce a machinima short that will have content and utility to a target audience. This project will be conducted in the context of a small self-managed workgroup. The group will be required to engage in all the steps usually required in professional media production, including conceptualization, writing, storyboarding and budgeting. A project report will be required at the end of the production.
2. Assessment: Working with a group of other students, you are required to develop a machinima short for presentation on the World Wide Web or packaged to run on a personal computer. The topic and focus of the project will be chosen by the group in consultation with the instructor. Note that web projects are not to be published on the Web without the instructor's review and permission. You will be graded on:
 1. A report documenting the project. Include scripts, storyboards, sketches, or other pre-production drafts and testing results
 2. Technical quality
 3. Content – i.e. is the production meaningful and substantive
 4. Originality and Impact
3. Connection with Goals: This main project is grounded in the college-wide mission of career preparation and for entry into the world of work. The project relates to the Communication and the Arts Program mission with a focus on application of theory to the hands-on practice of communication

2. Individual projects (70%)

1. Outcome: The student will demonstrate knowledge of details of the machinima environment and systems as well as theoretical issues surrounding digital media and new technologies as presented during the total duration of the course.
2. Assessment: Create projects that will showcase your skills to potential schools or employers. Points will be assigned in keeping with the following criteria:
 1. Creativity/Originality
 2. Content
 3. Technical quality
 4. Originality and Impact
3. Connection with Goals: This item will test students' recall of course material. It relates to the college-wide goal of cultivation of a free and enlightened mind through the discipline of scholarly study and dialogue. It relates to the program mission statement that pledges to challenge students interested in studying the many forms of human communication - its processes, outcomes, and effects. This item also relates to the departmental goal requiring students to have an understanding of communication theory and how to translate this theory successfully into practice.

Attendance

Students will be expected to attend all sessions and hand in all assignments on time. Absence or failure to hand in assignments will be excused only with acceptable documentation from a Marist College official. There will be no re-sits of the mid-term or final presentations except for medical or college-validated absences with documentation. If you have to miss class, you will need to spend time with a classmate to catch up. If you miss 3 classes (remember there are only 15), you will not receive an "A".

Content and Copyright

Wherever possible, students are urged to develop original content. This includes artwork, photography, video and music. Under no circumstances will the instructor condone republishing of copyright material on the web or elsewhere, unless intention is clearly articulated through other theory and purpose. Students choosing to appropriate multimedia content from any other source must obtain written permission from the relevant copyright owner.

Grading

These are guidelines which I will be using to determine grades:

A Student explored, researched, experimented, learned and was fully involved in the class and with all aspects of his/her work. He/she produced excellent work that was some of the best in class.

B Student satisfied assignments, but lacked full involvement and inspiration. Work was good, but not among the best in class.

C Student satisfied assignments with some effort, but with problems in understanding of ideas, satisfactory manipulation of the material, lacked involvement. Work was adequate.

D Student turned in incomplete or poorly executed assignments. If completed, work was not as good as most students in the class.

F Student failed to turn in work or if it was turned in it was incomplete or very poorly executed. If completed, work was inadequate.