

# Video Game Production

## (Arts College 753 ~ Digital Media Production)

### Course Number, Prerequisites, Credits

*number:* 02591-9  
*prerequisites:* permission of instructor  
*credits:* 5

### Description

Advanced studies in the production of video games. Production duties will be divided among team members specializing in art, code, or sound and will contribute to the collaborative creation of a game.

### Spring 2009 Information

*instructor:* Peter Gerstmann (pgerstma@accad.ohio-state.edu)  
*website:* <http://www.accad.osu.edu/~pgerstma/class/gmz/>  
*times:* TR, 5:30 – 7:30pm  
*hours:* TR, 7:30 – 8:30pm; by email  
*location:* 1224 Kinnear, Rm. 205

### Objectives

Video games present unique challenges for development, requiring interdisciplinary skill sets and efficient teamwork. Video games also present unique opportunities for building creative interactive art that is experienced collaboratively by multiple players.

It is the main objective of the course to train students from different disciplines to work together while creating an innovative multiplayer game. This will require development of skills in all of the following areas:

- Collaborative and independent work habits
- Conceptualizing and communicating
- Articulating constructive technical and aesthetic criticisms
- Prioritizing, delegating, and scheduling tasks among team members
- Building components and integrating them into larger systems
- Coding, illustrating, animating, sound engineering
- Testing, testing, testing, and testing

### Methodology

The instructor will ensure core members of a video game production team will be assembled for this course.

Students will be introduced to techniques for game production and apply them to create a playable game. Production will progress from concept to prototype to playable game by the end of the course. Students will work in teams, complementing each other's skills by implementing different aspects of the game: code, art, and sound. The final game will be playable on the course arcade machine.

Examples will be given to illustrate various concepts and techniques, but students will learn primarily by creating, presenting, and discussing their own work. The class format will follow a general schedule of lecture, demonstration, class work, homework, presentation, critique, discussion. Examples will be presented in lectures and demonstrations. Students will present their work in critique sessions, to facilitate discussion of their methods and results, and sharing of their findings.

Students will document all their work on individual web pages which will be burned to CD-ROM by each team and turned in as part of the final project during finals week. Final games will be installed on the course arcade machine and posted on the course site. Game development teams will be credited by name. Any student wishing not to have their name posted should inform the instructor. This will not affect course grading or participation.

## Weekly Topics

### Week01

introductions and course overview  
assigned, *Task00: Game Proposal*  
assigned, *Task01: Arcade Review*  
due, *Task01: Game Proposal*  
receive team assignments  
discuss and select concepts  
assigned, *Task02: Game Design*  
actionscript boot camp for programmers, part I

### Week02

due, *Task01: Arcade Review*  
due, *Task 02: Game Design*  
assigned, *Task03: System Design*  
assigned, *Task04: Style Guide*  
actionscript boot camp for programmers, part II  
due, *Task03: System Design*  
assigned, *Task05: Prototype*

### Week03

due, *Task04: Style Guide*  
due, *Task05: Prototype*  
critique prototypes and record feedback  
assigned, *Task06: Release 01*

### Week04

due, *Task06: Release 01*  
assigned/due, *Task07: Task List*  
assigned, *Task08: Release 02*

### Week05

due, *Task08: Release 02*  
review, update, and revise Task List  
assigned, *Task09: Alpha*

### Week06

due, *Task09: Alpha*  
review, update, and revise Task List  
assigned, *Task10: Release 04*

### Week07

due, *Task10: Release 04*  
review, update, and revise Task List  
assigned, *Task11: Release 05*

### Week08

due, *Task11: Release 05*  
play test Release05 and record feedback  
review, update, and revise Task List  
assigned, *Task12: Beta*

### Week09

due, *Task12: Beta*  
review, update, and revise Task List  
assigned, *Task13: Release 07*

### Week10

due, *Task13: Release 07*  
play test Release0y and record feedback  
review, update, and revise Task List  
assigned, *Task14: Final Game*  
assigned, *Task15: Final Presentation*

### Finals

due, *Task14: Final Release*  
due, *Task15: Final Presentation*

## Course Grading Scale

A	=	100%	-	95%
A-	=	94%	-	90%
B+	=	89%	-	87%
B	=	86%	-	84%
B-	=	83%	-	80%
C+	=	79%	-	77%
C	=	76%	-	74%
C-	=	73%	-	70%
D+	=	69%	-	64%
D	=	63%	-	60%
E	=	59%	-	0%

## Assignments

Students taking this course will be given a grade based on the following assignments and milestones:

- 4% Task00: *Game Proposal* (pitch for new game concept)
- 4% Task01: *Arcade Review* (survey of previous student work)
- 4% Task03: *System Design* (detailed plan for technical implementation)
- 4% Task04: *Style Guide* (detailed plan for audio / visual implementation)
- 4% Task05: *Prototype* (10% complete)
- 4% Task06: *Release 01* (20% complete)
- 4% Task07: *Task List* (live priority list of remaining tasks)
- 4% Task08: *Release 02* (35% complete)
- 4% Task09: *Alpha* (50% complete)
- 4% Task10: *Release 04* (65% complete)
- 4% Task11: *Release 05* (80% complete)
- 4% Task12: *Beta* (90% complete)
- 4% Task13: *Release 07* (98% complete)
- 20% Task14: *Final Release* (100% complete)
- 10% Task15: *Final Presentation* (discuss game production and present features and gameplay)
- 5% *Play Test 01* (feedback from random volunteer playtesters)
- 5% *Play Test 02* (feedback from random volunteer playtesters)
- 4% *Website Documentation* (wiki contents and linked assets)

## Text

There are no required textbooks for this course. Reading selections will be presented in lectures and students will be referred to technical reference texts appropriate to their skill focus.

## **Grading Policy**

Students must demonstrate satisfactory achievement of course objectives by skillfully completing course assignments and contributing to class discussions and critiques. Course assignments will require students to use a wide variety of software and equipment to produce video games. Collaboration between students in the course and other faculty, staff and students at ACCAD is encouraged.

All students are required to be on time and in attendance for each and every class. Students arriving to class more than 15 minutes late will be counted as absent. Two absences will lower a final grade by one level (e.g. B to B-), three absences will lower a final grade by one letter (e.g. B- to C-) and four absences will result in failure of the course.

Adherence to deadlines is expected. It is the individual student's responsibility to keep track of deadlines and to present the work to the class and instructor on the specified dates. 15% per class will be subtracted from late assignments.

Students choosing to use "at home" hardware and software must have their current working files on the course system and available for review at the beginning of each and every class. Problems with home systems or incompatibilities will not be an acceptable excuse for missed goals. Technical problems will happen frequently during the quarter and students will have trouble accessing the computer lab during "prime time" hours. Students must make their own arrangements for overcoming these difficulties and submitting their work on time. Unless there is a complete system failure in a computer-related course, technical difficulties are never an acceptable excuse for not meeting a deadline. Students should plan their time and workload to anticipate the technical hurdles that are a part of this profession.

The college will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services and the instructor of any special needs. The instructor should be notified the first day of class.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Any and all suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to university procedures. Students are referred to the student handbook for further information on academic dishonesty and the accompanying procedures and penalties.

Students can read the code of student conduct at:

[http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)

## **Personal Safety**

The University Escort Service operates until 3am when classes are in session (i.e. not during quarter breaks and University holidays), and will assist OSU students who live off campus as well as on campus. The University Escort Service can be contacted at 614-292-3322, and scheduled pick-ups are taken in advance.

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

It is the intent of the University and its instructors to provide access to support services and programs that enable students with disabilities to succeed in this course. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking available assistance in a timely manner. Students will be referred to the Office for Disability Services (ODS), located in Pomerene Hall, for further assistance (call 614-292-3307 or visit 150 Pomerene Hall).