Creating Video Games and Startups
DIG 4905, Section 12

Instructor: Marko Suvajdzic, MFA, Visiting Assistant Professor, Digital Worlds Institute
Class meetings: M/W/F, Period 9
Classroom: Online
Office hours in person (Marko Suvajdzic): Tuesdays, 2:00pm – 3:00pm; Thursdays, 2:00PM – 3:00PM;
Additional online office hours will be made available after the first week of classes;
Office: E424, Computer Sciences/Engineering
Phone: (352)283-0831
Email: marko@digitalworlds.ufl.edu

INTRODUCTION
This is the syllabus of a online/live undergraduate/graduate course on video game design. The course is changing according to the needs of the students and the pace of our learning, and the syllabus may change during the semester to meet the needs of students and the instructor.

“Creating Video Games and Startups” is a course offering an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of video games and startups. This course will be focused on the intersection of arts, technology, and the business of innovation. It will be structured as a series of talks that cover a variety of topics, including video game production, startups, entrepreneurship, networked existence, the process of building a new entity and more. Prof. Suvajdzic will share his own experiences in the world of startups and also give students a look into his current studio.

“Video Games and Startups” class is targeted towards serious undergrads and graduate students, this will be an intense 15 week adventure through the most relevant topics in successfully starting and running your own video game company. The class is intended for a wide variety of majors, and does not require any previous experience or specific skillsets.

Entrepreneurship in New Media:

- Starting, running, and succeeding with your video games business
- Bootstrapping your business for success
- Choosing a digital marketplace for your games
- Analysis of facts and figures in video games industry
- Careers in Video Gaming
- So you want your business to be a non-profit? Here's the scoop.

Video Game Technologies:

- Cross platform development
- Comparing Game Development platforms: Starling, Cocos2D, Unreal Engine, and Unity 4.3
- Comparing Professional 3D Animation Platforms: what should you know?
- Audio Engines for Game Design: SuperCollider, Csound, RTCmix & Libpd
- The revolution of Natural User Interfaces (NUI)
- 8 Bit Audio Design for Apps
Creativity and Storytelling:

- Brainstorming and idea generation
- Storyboarding for Game Design
- Storytelling in Education
- Interactive narratives, Character development and Data structures: content meets function
- Dramatic structure in interactive narratives
- Assessment, Screening, and Distribution

While synchronous online participation is highly recommended, the recorded class sessions will also be available online 24/7 for those who cannot participate online synchronously.

GRADING SCALE

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SUBMISSION OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
Unless otherwise specified, all class assignments are to be submitted via the course web site. Said email submissions will be made no later than 6AM on the day upon which the assignment is due.

GRADES
30% Written assignments
30% Activity on class website, commenting other projects, class participation
40% Final Paper/Project

ASSIGNMENTS AND DELIVERABLES
1. Papers and comments – You will be required to write a one, five-hundred words or more, paper and post it on the course web site discussing and analyzing a reading theme. This online essay can analyze a digital community, even in digital culture or a piece of digital media as it relates to one of our reading themes. Additionally, you are required to write two (2) one-hundred word comments on another students post. You are required to have one of these posts done by class
on Week 8 and one of the blog comments done by class on Week 10. Extra credit up to one letter grade will be given for additional paper writing and comments on the course web site and forums.

2. Final Paper or Project – In lieu of a final exam, this course requires that you either a) write a one thousand word paper on a reading theme or b) work with a group of two-to-three other students to create a digital media project. The project you create can be, but is not limited to a computer game, a piece of digital software, or a digitally-augmented presentation or performance in the Digital Worlds’ REVE (Research, Education and Visualization Environment) in Norman Gym. Digital project must be approved by the instructor BEFORE it begins.

FOCUS OF THE GRADING
I will be grading your writing only insofar as it adds or detracts from the ideas you are trying to communicate. In other words, the focus of the grading will not be on your writing abilities. I will mostly be looking at your understanding of the assigned readings and class discussions, and the quality of your ideas about them. You should make sure your writing is adequate enough to communicate your understanding and ideas.

Your papers will be graded according to the following rubric:

1. A clear and concise thesis, central argument or main point
2. Evidence that clearly supports that main thesis
3. Relationship between the thesis and the readings and material discussed in class
4. Clarity in writing, use of proper formatting and use of proper paragraph structure in articulating your ideas
5. The relevance, creativity and strength of your arguments and analysis in examining an potent and important issue related to some aspect of digital culture.

CLASS POLICIES
Attendance is required. Contents of missed sessions will not be repeated for individual students; it is your responsibility to obtain notes and other information discussed during any given session from classmates or web postings.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

EMAIL
Each student is required to maintain and check their registered UF email account capable of sending and receiving 1-3MB files. Information necessary for upcoming classes will be discussed in weekly class sessions and if any changes or modifications to existing schedule or requirements become necessary, will be emailed to students 24 hours in advance of the next class meeting.

UF HONOR CODE
All students are expected to abide by the UF Honor Code at all times, which reads, in part: “I affirm that this work in its entirety is mine alone, and that I have received no outside assistance from anyone else,
including classmates, other students, or faculty. I understand that plagiarism, seeking or receiving other unauthorized assistance, or any false representations regarding this exam [or other work] are serious offenses punishable under the Student Honor Code.” Academic dishonesty, as defined by UF polices will not be tolerated and will carry appropriate penalties. All Intellectual Property created by other entities must be given proper reference in all materials submitted in class.

READING AND WRITING CENTER
If you have trouble with the writing required by this course, you are encouraged to a) visit the instructor and/or TA during office hours; and b) visit the University of Florida Reading and Writing Center (RWC), which offers mentorship and editing services to University of Florida students. Here is how the RWC’s website (http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/) describes the center and its services:
“The Reading and Writing Center (RWC) is committed to helping University of Florida students become better writers and readers. We aim to support independent learning and encourage scholarship by fostering writing and reading skills. We provide individual assistance to those wishing to develop their writing, better understand the writing process, and improve reading comprehension and study skills. Students of all levels and disciplines are welcome!”

STUDENT CONCERNS
If you have any concerns or questions about any situation in the course please consult the instructor ASAP. If after consultation with the Instructor, the student has unresolved concerns or questions, they may request an appointment with the program director.

* SYLLABUS CFA Version 1.0 (DIG4905 Section 16E6; Fall 2013)