GAME 231: Computer Animation for Games – Fall 2021
George Mason University Korea

Information
Location: G401, Zoom - https://gmu.zoom.us/j/92569398541?pwd=V1VHMIWyOUG5Y2F5QlFpFV0c1dz09
Time: 9-10:15 am, Tuesdays & Thursdays
Instructor: John David McGrew
Email: jmcmgrew4@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm, G553 (email for appointment)

Instructional Mode
The course is currently designed as a hybrid face-to-face and synchronous online course through Zoom but may be adjusted to accommodate or adhere to changing conditions.

Description
2D and 3D modeling, character design, and animation projects are constructed using commercial and proprietary software and game design tool kits and engines. Simple texturing and model rigging for game animation will be discussed and explored. Limited to three attempts.

Succeeding in this Course
Students that attentively attend each class, participate, take notes, read & follow instructions, start and turn in assignments on time, spend adequate time (~10-15 hours per week) outside of class on projects, and communicate with the instructor are far more likely to succeed in this course. 3D modeling and animation go beyond memorizing facts and require students to learn how to problem solve and take on new creative challenges.

Prerequisites
GAME 210 and 230, with grades of C or above.

Objectives
- Build skills in and develop a knowledge of 3D game art tools and techniques
- Model optimized, game-ready 3D Objects
- Create basic model textures
- Develop a basic knowledge of game pipelines and import 3D models into a game engine
- Animate 3D modeled rigs using curves and transforms

Required Software
All required software is available on Game Design classroom lab computers for on-campus work:
Autodesk 3DS Max 2020 (free student version available through students.autodesk.com)
Unity 2020.X (free version available at unity.com)
Adobe Photoshop CC (7-day trial and student discount subscription available at adobe.com)
Cloud storage account for back-ups (Google drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Apple Cloud, etc...)

Recommended Texts
There are not any required texts for this course, but the following resources are recommended:
Grading
Assignments are graded on a point scale, based on the following criteria: Completeness, Adherence to Requirements, Technical Execution, and Visual Aesthetic Quality. Grade penalties will be applied for any problems with attendance (see below), professionalism, and participation.

Assignment 1 100 points
Midterm Project 300 points
Final Project 500 points

Assessment
90% or above will receive an “A” grade.
80-89% will receive a “B” grade.
70-79% will receive a “C” grade.
60-69% will receive a “D” grade.
59% or below will receive a grade of “F”

A minimum grade of “C” or above is required for Game Design Majors and Minors to take upper-level coursework for which this course is a prerequisite (example: GAME 398).

Late Work and Resubmissions
Deadlines are a key aspect of the game and film industries. Students are expected to turn in all work by the due date. The first late assignment a student turns in will receive a 10% grade penalty. The second late assignment will receive a 25% grade penalty. After the first two late assignments, a student will receive a failing grade on any additional assignments that are turned in late.

Students can resubmit any assignment twice for a new grade. Resubmissions must be turned in no later than two weeks after the initial submission was graded. In case of the final project, the deadline for resubmissions is no later than December 15, 2021. If the initial submission was turned in late, any late penalties will also apply to the resubmitted work’s grade.

Attendance Policy
Class attendance and participation are mandatory. Students who frequently miss or do not participate in class are far less likely to meet course objectives and contribute to the class. Absences are subject to following grade penalties.

1-3 Absences: No grade deduction
4 Absences: -5% off Final Grade
5 Absences: -10% off Final Grade
6 Absences: -15% off Final Grade
7+ Absences: Automatic “F” grade

Three tardies are counted as one absence. Students that miss more than 20% of the scheduled class time or leave before class is dismissed will be counted absent.
If you must miss all or part of class for a university approved event or medical issue, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible and provide documentation with proper signatures and dates. Upon reviewing the documentation and student’s attendance record, the instructor will decide whether an absence will be excused beyond the initial 3 absences.

Course Schedule
The class schedule is available on the course’s Blackboard shell. Please consult the schedule often and attend class regularly to ensure you meet all class requirements.

Academic Integrity
It is expected that students adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code as it relates to integrity regarding coursework and grades. The Honor Code reads as follows: “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this Honor Code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found on the Committee of Academic Integrity’s website at https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/cai/overview.

Title IX
Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking
As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason Korea’s Deputy Title IX Coordinator pursuant to University Policy 1202 and 1412. If you would like to speak confidentially with a Mason Korea counselor, please see https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/counseling-and-wellness for more information. For further information about what Title IX is, please see https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/title-ix.

Disability Services and Accommodations
This course is meant to be accessible and the instructor will make reasonable efforts to remove barriers to learning that a student brings to his attention. If at any point in the semester you would like to apply for specific accommodations relating to physical, learning, and/or psychological disabilities, please contact the Director of Academic Affairs (Jiye Chang - ichang22@gmu.edu), who will connect you with Disability Services on the Fairfax campus.

Changes to Syllabus and Schedule
The instructor reserves the right to make changes and adaptations to the syllabus and schedule as needed. Any changes will be announced in class.

*This GAME 231 course and syllabus are adapted from materials provided by the Computer Game Design Program and Professor Paul Eric Piccione of the GMU Fairfax Campus.