

UC Riverside Department of Music

SYLLABUS: *MUSIC 251 – MUSIC IN COMPUTER GAMING*

MUS 251 Music in Computer Gaming, 4 units, Seminar, 3 hours; outside research, 3 hours. Prerequisite(s): graduate standing or consent of instructor. Introduces students to the history and theory of music use in computer games, including the development of classical commercial gaming and game design and the related use of dramatic music. Topics cover adventure game history, narrative underscoring, commercial computer game genres, and contemporary issues related to interactivity, performance, and reception.

Schedule: Monday, 1:10-4:00 in Arts 213
Instructor contact: timlabor@ucr.edu
Office hours: Mon 10-11a, Wed 9-10a in ARTS 141

Course requirements

1. Attend all classes/sectionals and participate in all class activities.
2. Complete all assignments on time
3. Evaluate the course and your own individual performance

Grading

1. Attendance and class participation 15%
With 3 unapproved missed classes, you forfeit the entirety of this grade.
2. Assignments
A. Weekly directed assignments (6x7.5%) 45%
B. Final project
Individual Scholarly Project or
Structured Creative Collaboration or
Computer Game Prototype with sound/music
Portfolio/Paper 35%
End of quarter presentation 10%

Letter Grades: A: 85-100; A-: 80-85; B+: 75-80; B: 70-75; B-: 65-70; C: 60-65; F: <60

Required Text

Todd, Deborah. *Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light*. Massachusetts: A. K. Peters, 2007.

Music 251 Winter, 2010 Class Schedule

Overview: Weeks 1-7 - directed investigation of game design and dramatic music
Assignments reflect reading and project work in both creative design and scholarly resources
Week 7 - **Final Project Proposals Due**. Student decides on a final project based on a critical/scholarly subject, or creative design.
Weeks 8-9 - undirected discussion based on project work
Week 10 - **Class presentations** (note sessions)
First Monday of Finals (March 15 at noon) - **Final papers/portfolios** are due in the instructor's mailbox. *No email assignments will be accepted.*

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January 4 **Orientation, RPG**
Orientation, RPG history and relationship to Computer RPG, Classic RPG Overview, *Dungeons and Dragons*, the responsibilities inherent in game design, authoring systems introduced; library resources introduced,.

January 11 **Computer Game History and Scholarship, Story and Music, RPG Design Overview**
Overview of scholarly resources, Overview of mechanisms for handling story, Overview of computer game design and production.
ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE

January 18 NO CLASS
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE by email

- January 25** **Game criticism, Implementation Overview**
 Discussion of goals and approaches to game criticism, share critical resources, discuss implementation concerns raised by student projects, discuss testing.
ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE
- February 1** **Game design**
 Critical theory overview, technical, and creative aspects of game design, discuss implementation concerns, discuss design documents and asset specification.
ASSIGNMENT 4 DUE
- February 8** **Music Design**
 Discussion of game criticism (II), Overview of sound implementation in drama, sound implementation in games.
ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE
- February 15** NO CLASS
ASSIGNMENT 6 DUE by email
- February 22** **Special studies I**
 Genre or creative study, discussion of Assignments 1-7, all students are prepared to discuss their final project's work in progress.
Work on your FINAL PROJECT
- March 1** **Special studies II**
 Genre or creative study, discussion of Assignments 1-7, all students are prepared to discuss their final project's work in progress.
Work on your FINAL PROJECT
- March 8** **Formal Class Presentations** (with notes)
 Presentations based on FINAL PROJECTS are short (10-15 minutes tops).
 Students should be prepared to do them twice if required.

FINAL PROJECT portfolios/papers are due MONDAY March 15 at 12:00 NOON in the instructor's physical mailbox.

There is no final exam in this class.

Music 251 - Selected Materials

Writing Guides

- Goldstein, Norm (ed.). *The Associated Press Stylebook*. New York: The Associated Press, 2004.
- Steve Jackson Games. "Author's Guidelines." Steve Jackson Games.
<http://www.sjgames.com/general/guidelines/authors/style.html> (accessed September 15, 2007)
- Thomas, David, Kyle Orland and Scott Steinberg. *The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual*. USA: Powerplay Publishing, 2007.
- Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Massachusetts: Longman, 2000.

RPG history

- Barton, Matt. *Dungeons and Desktops: The History of Computer Role-Playing Games*. Massachusetts: A. K. Peters, 2008.
- Fine, Gary Alan. *Shared Fantasy: Roleplaying Games as Social Worlds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- King, Brad, and Borland, John. *Dungeons and Dreamers: The Rise of Computer Game Culture from Geek to Chic*. USA: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- Montfort, Nick. *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005.
- Perla, Peter P. *The Art of Wargaming: A Guide for Professionals and Hobbyists*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990.
- Plamondon, Robert. *Through Dungeons Deep: A Fantasy Gamer's Handbook*. USA: Reston

Publishing, 1982.

Schick, Lawrence. *Heroic Worlds: A History and Guide to Role Playing Games*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1991.

Weldon, John, and James Bjornstad. *Playing with Fire*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984.

Selected critical theory

Burrill, Derek. *Die Tryin' - Video games, Masculinity and Culture*. USA: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008.

Cogburn, Jon, and Mark Silcox. *Philosophy Through Video Games*. UK: Routledge, 2008.

Flanagan, Mary. *Critical Play: Radical Game Design*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009.

Goldstein, Jeffrey, David Buckingham, and Gilles Brougere. *Toys, Games, and Media*. New York: Psychology Press, 2005.

Mackay, Daniel. *The Fantasy Role-Playing Game: A New Performing Art*. Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2001.

Design/Story resources

Card, Orson Scott. *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1990.

Glassner, Andrew. *Interactive Storytelling: Techniques for 21st Century Fiction*. Massachusetts: A.K. Peters, 2004.

Phillips, Melanie Anne, and Huntley, Chris, "Dramatica: A New Theory of Story" (theory book) Screenplay Systems, Inc. http://www.dramatica.com/theory/theory_book/dtb.html (accessed September 15, 2007).

Salen, Katie, and Eric Zimmerman. *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003.

Tobias, Ronald B. *20 Master Plots and How to Build Them*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1993.

Todd, Deborah. *Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light*. Massachusetts: A. K. Peters, 2007.

Game music composition/Online interviews and articles

Wagh, Eric-Jon, "What makes Music for Games "Music for Games?" Gamasutra (March 18, 2005). www.gamasutra.com/gdc2005/features/20050318/postcard-wagh.htm

"An Interview with Darryl Duncan," interview with Andrew Clark, Gamasutra (May 15, 2001). www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20010515/marks_pfv.htm

Harland, Kurt, "Composing for Interactive Music," Gamasutra (February 17, 2000). www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20000217/harland_pfv.htm

"Alex Brandon Interview," interview with music4games.net (music4games, 2003). www.music4games.net/f_alexbrandon_2003.html

Whitmore, Gary, "Design with Music in Mind: A Guide to Adaptive Audio for Game Designers," Gamasutra (May 29, 2003). www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20030528/whitmore_pfv.htm

"Nobuo Uematsu Interview", interview with Peer Schneider and Jeremy Dunham, IGN.com (July 9, 2004). music.ign.com/articles/529/529490p1.html

Ross, Rob, "Interactive Music...er, Audio," Gamasutra (May 15, 2001). www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20010515/ross_pfv.htm

Boyd, Andrew, "When Worlds Collide: Sound and Music in Film and Games," Gamasutra (January 17, 2003). www.gamasutra.com/features/20030204/boyd_pfv.htm

Clark, Andrew, "Adaptive Music," Gamasutra (May 15, 2001). www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20010515/clark_pfv.htm

Sanger, George Alistair, "The Sound of Money (Down the Potty): Common Audio Mistakes in Kids; Games," Gamasutra (May 15, 2001). www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20010515/sanger_pfv.htm

"A chat with George 'the Fat Man' Sanger," interview with Melanie Cambron, GIG Spotlight (January 2002). www.gignews.com/goddess_fatman.htm

Clark, Andrew, "Audio Content for Diablo and Diablo 2: Tools, Teams, and Products," Gamasutra (May 15, 2001). www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20010515/uelsen_pfv.htm

Land, Michael and McConnell, Peter. "Method and apparatus for dynamically composing music and sound effects using a computer entertainment system." U.S. Patent # 5,315,057 Assignee, LucasArts (filed 1991; granted 1994). Introduction only. <http://patft.uspto.gov/>

Film Music Composition Resources

Davis, Richard. *Complete guide to Film Scoring*. USA: Berklee Press, 1999.

DesJardins, Christian. *Inside Film Music: Composers Speak*. USA: Silman-James Press, 2006.

Karlin, Fred and Wright, Rayburn. *On the Track* (2nd ed.). USA: Routledge, 2004.

Rona, Jeff. *The Reel World: Scoring for Pictures*. USA: Miller Freeman, 2000.

Music 251 - Music in Computer Games

Assignment 1

DUE: January 11, 2010

All written assignments are to be handed in on paper at the start of class:

STYLEGUIDE SUMMARY
STORY

1. Writing Guides

A. Review the following style guides:

Goldstein, Norm (ed.). *The Associated Press Stylebook*. New York: The Associated Press, 2004.

Thomas, David, Kyle Orland and Scott Steinberg. *The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual*. USA: Powerplay Publishing, 2007.

Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Massachusetts: Longman, 2000.

B. Then examine the following:

Steve Jackson Games. "Author's Guidelines." Steve Jackson Games.

<http://www.sjgames.com/general/guidelines/authors/style.html> (accessed September 15, 2007)

Find one other publisher-specific style-guide online (i.e. not *Chicago Manual of Style* or its related derivatives) and write a brief **STYLEGUIDE SUMMARY** of its vital statistics (who, what), and a brief statement of the expressive goals in terms of scholarly/creative writing it attempts to serve.

D. Come to class prepared to discuss the mechanical differences between different kinds of writing - particularly scholarly, business, fiction, and journalism/criticism.

2. Creative Work

A. Read *Deborah Todd's. Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light*. (Massachusetts: A. K. Peters , 2007.) pp. 1-69.

B. Complete the **STORY** exercise, parts 1, 2, 3 from pp. 68-69. Be prepared to share your story in class and have it critiqued.

C. Research game development platforms and come in with suggestions for software tools you'd like to use to create a game.

Easy game engines include website authoring software, text adventure editors (like *Adrift*), free adventure game editors, and online game editors (RPGMaker etc.). You are free to learn a new system, or adapt something you already know.

Students without a preference will (carefully) use text-adventure editor *Adrift*.

Available (\$18.95) from: <http://www.adrift.org.uk/cgi/new/adrift.cgi>

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Assignment 2

DUE: Tuesday, January 18, 2010

All written assignments are to be handed in by email by the end of the business day of January 18:

LITERATURE REPORT

STORY REVISION

CHARACTER exercise

TEST PROJECT - some kind of documentation/screenshots.

(If you're using Adrift, send me the .taf file.)

INTERFACE SPECIFICATION

1. Literature review

A. You will be assigned ONE of the following:

- Barton, Matt. *Dungeons and Desktops: The History of Computer Role-Playing Games*. Massachusetts: A. K. Peters, 2008.
- Fine, Gary Alan. *Shared Fantasy: Roleplaying Games as Social Worlds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- King, Brad, and Borland, John. *Dungeons and Dreamers: The Rise of Computer Game Culture from Geek to Chic*. USA: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- Montfort, Nick. *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005.
- Perla, Peter P. *The Art of Wargaming: A Guide for Professionals and Hobbyists*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990.
- Plamondon, Robert. *Through Dungeons Deep: A Fantasy Gamer's Handbook*. USA: Reston Publishing, 1982.
- Schick, Lawrence. *Heroic Worlds: A History and Guide to Role Playing Games*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1991.
- Weldon, John, and James Bjornstad. *Playing with Fire*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984.

Write a **LITERATURE REPORT** on your assigned reading. Include all vital statistics including bibliographic information, page and approximate word count, number and type of illustrations, and all authors (including illustrators). Write a brief but detailed review in a journalistic writing style in which you describe the book's intended audience, how it works for that audience, features, and limitations.

2. Creative Work

A. Read *Deborah Todd's. Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light*. (Massachusetts: A. K. Peters , 2007.) pp. 71-99.

B. Revise your **STORY** in response to user input and the optional story reading you've done in the first two weeks of this course. I want to see a real revision of this material based on values of its architectural qualities as a commercially viable story.

C. Complete the **CHARACTER** Exercise, parts 1-4 from pp. 96-99.

D. Create a (short!) **TEST PROJECT** loosely based on your STORY using your chosen game authoring tool.

E. (Based on what you learned with the **TEST PROJECT**), produce an **INTERFACE SPECIFICATION**.

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Assignment 3

DUE: Monday, January 25, 2010

Written assignments to be handed in on paper at the start of class:

GAMING REPORT
INTERACTIVE DESIGN

Plus bring in (and be prepared to demonstrate if possible):

SKELETAL IMPLEMENTATION

1. Literature review

A. Select a computer game of any genre (including non-RPG) or era. Write a music-oriented **GAMING REPORT** containing all vital statistics including year, publisher/distributor, lead designer and music/sound personnel, and any other relevant bibliographic information. Briefly discuss

Write a brief but detailed review in a journalistic writing style in which you first describe the book's intended audience, how it works for that audience, features, and limitations and then provide an assessment of the music/sound design's qualities including relationship to the interface and musical/dramatic style.

2. Creative Work

A. Read *Deborah Todd's. Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light.* (Massachusetts: A. K. Peters , 2007.) pp. 101-125.

B. From *Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light: Complete the Environments, Puzzles and Levels Exercise*, parts 1-2 from pp. 124-125 to create an **INTERACTIVE DESIGN**. Be prepared to share your work in class.

C. Create a **SKELETAL IMPLEMENTATION** of your game using your chosen game engine, based on broad strokes (ONLY) of your interactive design.

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Assignment 4

DUE: February 1, 2009

All written assignments are to be handed in on paper at the start of class.

1. Writing Guides

A. Review the following style guides:

Goldstein, Norm (ed.). *The Associated Press Stylebook*. New York: The Associated Press, 2004.
Thomas, David, Kyle Orland and Scott Steinberg. *The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual*. USA: Powerplay Publishing, 2007.
Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Massachusetts: Longman, 2000.

B. Then examine the following:

Steve Jackson Games. "Author's Guidelines." Steve Jackson Games.
<http://www.sjgames.com/general/guidelines/authors/style.html> (accessed September 15, 2007)

C. Find one other publisher-specific style-guide online (i.e. not *Chicago Manual of Style* or its related derivatives) and write a brief **SUMMARY** of its vital statistics (who what, why), and a statement of the expressive goals in terms of scholarly/creative writing it attempts to serve.

D. Come to class prepared to discuss the mechanical differences between different kinds of writing - particularly scholarly, business, fiction, and journalism/criticism.

2. Creative Work

A. Read *Deborah Todd's. Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light*. (Massachusetts: A. K. Peters , 2007.) pp. 127-159.

B. Complete the **STORY** exercise, parts 1, 2, 3 from pp. 68-69. Be prepared to share your story in class and have it critiqued.

C. Research game platforms and come in with suggestions for software tools you'd like to use to create a game.

Easy game engines include website authoring software, text adventure editors (like Adrift), graphics presentation software (powerpoint) and others and online game editors (RPGMaker etc.). You are free to learn a new system, or adapt something you already know.

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Assignment 5

DUE: February 8, 2009

All written assignments are to be handed in on paper at the start of class.

1. Writing Guides

A. Review the following style guides:

Goldstein, Norm (ed.). *The Associated Press Stylebook*. New York: The Associated Press, 2004.
Thomas, David, Kyle Orland and Scott Steinberg. *The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual*. USA: Powerplay Publishing, 2007.
Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Massachusetts: Longman, 2000.

B. Then examine the following:

Steve Jackson Games. "Author's Guidelines." Steve Jackson Games.
<http://www.sjgames.com/general/guidelines/authors/style.html> (accessed September 15, 2007)

C. Find one other publisher-specific style-guide online (i.e. not *Chicago Manual of Style* or its related derivatives) and write a brief **SUMMARY** of its vital statistics (who what, why), and a statement of the expressive goals in terms of scholarly/creative writing it attempts to serve.

D. Come to class prepared to discuss the mechanical differences between different kinds of writing - particularly scholarly, business, fiction, and journalism/criticism.

2. Creative Work

A. Read *Deborah Todd's. Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light*. (Massachusetts: A. K. Peters , 2007.) pp. 1-69.

B. Complete the **STORY** exercise, parts 1, 2, 3 from pp. 68-69. Be prepared to share your story in class and have it critiqued.

C. Research game platforms and come in with suggestions for software tools you'd like to use to create a game.

Easy game engines include website authoring software, text adventure editors (like Adrift), graphics presentation software (powerpoint) and others and online game editors (RPGMaker etc.). You are free to learn a new system, or adapt something you already know.

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Assignment 6

DUE: February 15, 2009

All written assignments are to be handed in by email by the end of the business day of January 18:

1. Writing Guides

A. Review the following style guides:

Goldstein, Norm (ed.). *The Associated Press Stylebook*. New York: The Associated Press, 2004.
Thomas, David, Kyle Orland and Scott Steinberg. *The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual*. USA: Powerplay Publishing, 2007.
Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Massachusetts: Longman, 2000.

B. Then examine the following:

Steve Jackson Games. "Author's Guidelines." Steve Jackson Games.
<http://www.sjgames.com/general/guidelines/authors/style.html> (accessed September 15, 2007)

C. Find one other publisher-specific style-guide online (i.e. not *Chicago Manual of Style* or its related derivatives) and write a brief **SUMMARY** of its vital statistics (who what, why), and a statement of the expressive goals in terms of scholarly/creative writing it attempts to serve.

D. Come to class prepared to discuss the mechanical differences between different kinds of writing - particularly scholarly, business, fiction, and journalism/criticism.

2. Creative Work

A. Read *Deborah Todd's. Game Design: From Blue Sky to Green Light*. (Massachusetts: A. K. Peters , 2007.) pp. 1-69.

B. Complete the **STORY** exercise, parts 1, 2, 3 from pp. 68-69. Be prepared to share your story in class and have it critiqued.

C. Research game platforms and come in with suggestions for software tools you'd like to use to create a game.

Easy game engines include website authoring software, text adventure editors (like Adrift), graphics presentation software (powerpoint) and others and online game editors (RPGMaker etc.). You are free to learn a new system, or adapt something you already know.

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