Course guides
804139 - DDN - Level Design

Unit in charge: Image Processing and Multimedia Technology Centre
Teaching unit: 804 - CITM - Image Processing and Multimedia Technology Centre.
Degree: BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN VIDEO GAME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT (Syllabus 2014). (Optional subject).
Academic year: 2021 ECTS Credits: 6.0 Languages: Catalan, Spanish, English

LECTURER

Coordinating lecturer: Pons López, Juan Jose

Others:

DEGREE COMPETENCES TO WHICH THE SUBJECT CONTRIBUTES

Specific:
CEVJ 1. Design the mechanics, rules, structure, script and artistic concept of a video game, maximising immersion and criteria of playability and balance to provide the best possible user experience.

Generical:
CGFC6VJ. Analyse, design, build and maintain video game applications robustly, securely and efficiently, choosing the most appropriate paradigm and programming languages.

Transversal:
CT1a. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION: Being aware of and understanding how companies are organised and the principles that govern their activity, and being able to understand employment regulations and the relationships between planning, industrial and commercial strategies, quality and profit.

CT2. SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT: Being aware of and understanding the complexity of the economic and social phenomena typical of a welfare society, and being able to relate social welfare to globalisation and sustainability and to use technique, technology, economics and sustainability in a balanced and compatible manner.

CT4. EFFECTIVE USE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES: Managing the acquisition, structuring, analysis and display of data and information in the chosen area of specialisation and critically assessing the results obtained.

07 AAT N3. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING - Level 3. Applying the knowledge gained in completing a task according to its relevance and importance. Deciding how to carry out a task, the amount of time to be devoted to it and the most suitable information sources.

04 COE. EFFICIENT ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION. Communicating verbally and in writing about learning outcomes, thought-building and decision-making. Taking part in debates about issues related to the own field of specialization.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Class sessions are divided into two areas of activity:
1. Descriptive part, in which the professor explains new contents, describes work materials, and solves doubts of the students.
2. Participatory part, in which the students work, explain and comment on the exercises proposed

LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE SUBJECT

- Learn the basics of the design of levels based on the objective of the public, the genre of play, the mechanics, the metaphor (theme) and user experience
- Learn the elements necessary to evaluate a game or prototype, finding its weak points and strengths, analyzing Each game or phase in three segments, early game, middle game and end game. Learning to identify what elements are important in each phase.
- Learn the latest techniques for creating levels, procedural, manual, based on architecture, the design of theme parks, etc ...
CONTENTS

**Level Design I**

**Description:**
Introduction to the course
1. Syllabus
2. Evaluation system
3. Review of the main sources and resources

Preproduction blueprint
1. References: Location, subject and environment
2. Mockup, constraints and bubble diagram
3. Case analysis

Professional playtesting: physical prototypes
1. Professional playtesting methodology
2. Playtesting report
3. Proposal for improvement and conclusions

**Related activities:**
Desarrollo de niveles I: RPGMaker
1. Introducción a los juegos de rol P & P
2. Documentación y funcionamiento básico de la herramienta
3. Portabilidad de un módulo de un juego de rol en un escenario RPGMaker (one page dungeon)

**Full-or-part-time:** 37h 30m
Practical classes: 15h
Self study : 22h 30m

**Level Design II**

**Description:**
Level design minute by minute
1. Top-down versus bottom-up approaches
2. Script, storyboard and storytelling
3. Level Flowchart

Applied digital playtesting methodologies
1. Methods of Q.A. (Functionality testing, Compatibility testing)
3. Mobile Test automatization frameworks

**Related activities:**
Development of levels II: Analysis of level editors
1. Selection of an editor from the list
2. Search for levels and proposal of blueprint
3. Level development

**Full-or-part-time:** 37h 30m
Practical classes: 15h
Self study : 22h 30m
## Level Design III

**Description:**
- Schools and Approaches
  1. Design based on architecture and theme parks
  2. Procedural generation
  3. Manual generation
- Professional Playtesting III: Checklist and frameworks
  1. TRC, XR, Lotcheck, Lotcheck
  2. Playtest friendly code
  3. Automated tests and continuous integration: Extreme programming

**Related activities:**
- Level III development: Unreal Engine
  1. Basic notions of the editor: Blueprints vs. C
  2. Search for levels and design blueprint proposal
  3. Level development

**Full-or-part-time:** 37h 30m
- Practical classes: 15h
- Self study: 22h 30m

## Level Design IV

**Description:**
- Level design second to second
  1. Objectives, obstacles and programmed events
  2. Rewarding and monetization of micropayments
  3. Documentation and level GDD (LDD)
- Playtesting professional IV: Objectives and analysis
  1. Playtesting of functionalities
  2. Analysis of blind reactions and playtesting
  3. Target, difficulty, duration and fun
- Worldbuilding
  1. Level Up and difficulty increase
  2. Target oriented design (target)
  3. Design oriented to the game experience (Feeling)

**Related activities:**
- Development of levels IV: Unreal engine II
  1. Search levels
  2. Design blueprint proposal
  3. Level development

**Full-or-part-time:** 37h 30m
- Practical classes: 15h
- Self study: 22h 30m
ACTIVITIES

Guided activity I

Description:
1. Elevator pitch
2. Showroom of projects
3. Project analysis and popular leaderboard

Full-or-part-time: 5h
Laboratory classes: 1h
Self study: 4h

Guided activity II

Description:
1. Playtesting of 2 projects
2. Internal critical comparison
3. Critical reference comparison

Full-or-part-time: 5h
Laboratory classes: 1h
Self study: 4h

GRADING SYSTEM

1. First assignment: 1 Level made with RPGMaker or a level editor of a video game, 20% of the final grade
2. Partial exam: 30% of the final grade (this is the only part that can be recovered in the recovery exam)
3. Third and final assignment: A level made with Unreal Engine, 40% of the final grade
4. The evaluation of the student's participation in the formative activities of the subject and the learning attitude will be evaluated by means of a follow-up of his interventions, voluntary presentations and optional tasks. This evaluation corresponds to 10% of the final grade.

EXAMINATION RULES.

The practice exercises begin during the class hours in the band assigned to this and are completed outside the class schedule hours following the instructions given in the corresponding Practice Sheet document and the indications that to such effect have been given in the part of the corresponding class.

The resolution of the practical exercises will be delivered using the virtual campus with the delivery space enabled for each practice, following the instructions described in the corresponding Practice Sheet document, in the indicated periods. At the end of the practice, the files that are required will be delivered. The correct management of the documentation provided is an aspect related to the competencies to acquire and is, therefore, an object of evaluation.

The evaluation of the practices does not only involve the resolution of the exercises proposed, but also the defense of the results when the student is required to do so at the beginning of the classes.

Any incident that does not allow to solve the practice within the indicated period will be communicated to the corresponding professor by means of a message by the Virtual Campus; After this communication, the relevance or not of any cause that motivates the non-presentation of the exercise will be resolved and the alternatives will be established to complete the evaluation if the causes are justified. The reasons for non-presentation of exercises that are communicated to the faculty by the Head of Studies will also be considered justified.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Basic:

Complementary:

RESOURCES

Other resources:
http://www.gamasutra.com/category/design/
http://www.worldofleveldesign.com/gettingstarted
https://www.reddit.com/r/gamedesign/
http://trenchescomic.com/tales