ZACHARY TIEU
GAME DESIGNER AND GAMEPLAY ENGINEER

University of Southern California '25   **Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Games**
ztieu@usc.edu   310-251-0859

Summary:

USC CS Games graduate, experienced in mechanical and narrative design with a passion for mechanics that breathe life into stories the way only games can. Strong background in problem-solving and collaborative development from Game Jams and class projects. With a solid computer science foundation, I'm adept at playtesting, assessing feedback, and using said feedback and data to iterate designs and find solutions. Eager to learn and committed to doing whatever it takes to help the team cross the finish line.

Relevant Skills:

- **Languages:** JavaScript, HTML, C++, Python, C#, and SQL
- **Engines:** Experience in Unreal, Godot, and Unity
- **Production:** Familiar with both concentric, agile, and waterfall style of production as well as working and scoping within various time horizons and deadlines, whether it be two days, a few weeks, or a full year. Experience with all phases of production, from pre-production and ideation to debugging and preparing for release
- **Collaborative Development:** Experience working alongside fellow developers of all stripes: programmers, artists, designers, producers, and more through AGP, class projects, and Game Jams
- **Prototyping and Playtesting:** Skilled in rapid prototyping, playtesting, and assessing playtesting feedback for both physical and digital games

Projects and Experience:

Unchained - AI Engineer
Turn-Based Tactical RPG, USC Advanced Game Project, 2025 release
- Lead designers and fellow programmers in designing and implementing 10+ AI patterns and pathfinding algorithms
- Worked with a team of more than 20 to flesh out and develop a turn-based tactical RPG experience over a year

Gallows Manor - Lead Programmer, Designer, Producer
Horror Puzzle Game, Class Project, 2024
- Over the course of a full semester, ideated, designed, produced, developed, and tested a fleshed out short horror puzzle game alongside and artist and audio designer

Trendsetters - Usability and Playtest Lead, Gameplay Designer
Party Game, Class Project, 2023
- Ran 10+ playtests over the course of 3 weeks, recorded feedback, and used the data to guide the gameplay design, both fine-tuning and fully overhauling lacking mechanics in the process

Cosmic Cafe - System Designer, Narrative Lead, Programmer
Cooking Sim, MEGA 2023 Game Jam, 2023
- Presented the concept for the game, designed the core loop, lead the team in forming the narrative for our game, and implemented low level features like movement, level transitions, and interaction with the 'cooking' station for an *Overcooked* inspired Game Jam project

Exodia - Gameplay Co-Lead
3v3 Strategy Card Game, Class Project, 2023
- Pitched an original game idea while working under the constraints of making a 3v3 resource trading game to create, expand, and physically develop the idea of a social deduction strategy game,

Crab Fight () - Gameplay Lead
Competitive Strategy Game, Class Project, 2023
- Lead the development of a competitive board game, pitching the original gameplay idea and leading playtests and refinement of the project

Education:

- Computer Science Games (B.S), University of Southern California - Graduating May 2025
  - Honors: Dean's List, 3.54 GPA
  - Relevant Coursework: CSCI-491 Advanced Game Project, ITP 380 Video Game Programming