

AET 339  
(UID 20678)  
spring 2019

The University of Texas at Austin | |  
**Syllabus**

**Course  
Information**

Game Production  
Mon. & Wed 3:30 - 5:00 in room DFA 4.106  
Course website at <http://canvas.utexas.edu>

**Instructor**

David (D.S.) Cohen  
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office hours: Wednesdays 10:00a - Noon in DFA 4.112

**Catalog  
Description**

Creating and executing plans and roadmaps to strategize how game development will be executed, organized, scheduled, budgeted, and managed from the high level to day-to-day development.

**Course Overview**

In-depth look at how to make a video game through the creation of a roadmap that can be used to manage both the high level and day-to-day development of a game. Identifies the tools and techniques used to break down a game into measurable components that can be scheduled, staffed, budgeted and scoped. Analyzes development methodologies to determine the best approach for the project type. Teaches the assembly and execution of flexible plans for multiple types of game productions, from full console and mobile games, to live operations of games as a service.

**Objectives &  
Assessment  
Instruments**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1)Construct and propose structured production plan for the development and release of an industry standard digital game
- 2)Compare and identify the proper production methodology and system based on the need of the game, team, and market.
- 3)Formulate and Show a resource structure and budget for a multi- game production

**Course materials**

All required readings and media will be posted to Canvas.

**Required  
Equipment**

All students MUST have access to a portable computer capable of running Google Docs, Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Powerpoint, Excel) Photoshop (or comparable software program) and Adobe Acrobat. Cell Phones and Tablets are not acceptable.

**UT Electronic Mail  
Notification Policy**

Electronic mail (e-mail) is a mechanism for official University and instructor communication to students. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University- and course-related

communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week.

It is the responsibility of every student to keep the University and instructor informed of changes in his or her official e-mail address (do so at

[https://utdirect.utexas.edu/utdirect/bio/address\\_change.WBX](https://utdirect.utexas.edu/utdirect/bio/address_change.WBX)). Consequently, e-mail returned to the University with "User Unknown" is not an acceptable excuse for missed communication. Similarly, undeliverable messages returned because of a full inbox or use of a spam filter will be considered delivered without further action required of the University or instructor.

(see

<http://www.utexas.edu/cio/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>)

#### Use of Class Materials

The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, exams, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students.

(from

<https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/coursematerials/Sample+Use+Statement+for+Syllabus>)

#### Attendance/Absences

Attendance is tied directly to your professionalism grade. Missing a class will result in a zero professionalism grade for that day. If attending a scheduled class meeting is not possible, students are expected to promptly notify the instructor of extenuating circumstances (hospitalization, death in the family, etc.). In addition, see the exception below for religious holy days.

Arriving more than ten minutes late at the beginning of class or after a break, leaving class without permission, and leaving class prior to dismissal for the day all count as being tardy. Points will be deducted from your professionalism grade for each of these occurrences.

#### Religious Holidays

Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code states that a student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy requires students to notify each of their instructors at least fourteen days prior to the date they will be absent from scheduled classes to observe a religious holy day. (from [http://www.utexas.edu/provost/policies/religious\\_holidays/1555\\_001.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/provost/policies/religious_holidays/1555_001.pdf))

Q Drop Policy	<p>The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231: "Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number."</p>
Classroom Etiquette	<p>Please observe the following rules during class as a courtesy to fellow students and the instructor. These will have an impact on your professionalism grade, so it is important that you follow these guidelines...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Be on time at the beginning of class and after each break. If you must come in late at the beginning of class, please enter the room and seat yourself as quietly and unobtrusively as possible. And please don't hold up the entire class by failing to return promptly at the end of an announced break, since often the second part of the class period is when we will engage in group activities.</li> <li>2) Turn your cell phone off or on silent, and put it away. Looking at your cell phone during lectures, exercises and discussions is not acceptable. Use your computer for taking notes, not your cell phone.</li> <li>3) Don't distract other students. Everyone benefits from a classroom free of distracting sights, sounds, and smells. If you would like to update your Facebook page, talk to your friends, listen to loud music, polish your nails, doodle with Sharpies, Sleep etc., please do so outside the classroom during breaks.</li> <li>4) Headphones and sunglasses are not allowed to be worn during lectures, exercises or discussions. Even if your headphones are not playing music, they should never be in your ears during these times.</li> </ol>
Grading	<p>This course is project based. There will be no exams. Grading is based on successful completion of project objectives. Assignments are worth 40%, the final project is worth 30%, and the remaining 30% of the final grade is based on professionalism which is earned by attending class during the scheduled meeting times and conducting oneself in a professional manner.</p> <p>No late work will be accepted. No incompletes will be given. If you feel you will not be able to complete all work on time, you should ask the instructor for a grade of Q or drop before the deadline for doing so passes.</p> <p>Note: If you catch the flu, get a flat tire, or otherwise cannot attend class, please send an email and attach any class work as needed.</p> <p>Final grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any</p>

stage. Thus a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999. The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

Letter grade equivalents:

A = 94-100	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-93	C = 74-76	D = 64-66
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63
B = 84-86		F = 0-60
B- = 80-83		

File Format  
and Naming  
Convention:

You must use the following file formats and naming convention when submitting your assignment. This is a requirement. No submission will be accepted that does not follow these guidelines...

Required File Format

Presentations, docs, spreadsheets, flowcharts, concept art, etc. File Format: PDF;  
Game Builds – File Format: Executable file (.exe), Video Files: MP4, AVI

Required File Naming Convention:

FirstInitialLastname\_AssignmentName\_NumericDateSubmitted  
Example: dcohen\_conceptpitch\_07042018

IMPORTANT: Do not use slashes (/) in the date, as the system will not accept it and it may not read correctly.

REQUIRED:  
Cloud Storage

You must keep all of your work in cloud storage (IE: UT Box, Dropbox, Google Drive). Do not keep your work on a computer hard drive, external hard drive or flash drive. If you keep your work offline on a hard drive or flash drive and it is lost, crashes or becomes corrupted, you will not have the opportunity to make up that work.

Academic  
Integrity

The University's [Honor Code](#) states that “As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.” You are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

(adapted from [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php))

Academic Dishonesty

In promoting a high standard of academic integrity, the University broadly defines academic dishonesty as including any act designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage, such as:

- Cheating
- [Plagiarism](#)
- [Unauthorized Collaboration / Collusion](#)
- Falsifying Academic Records
- Misrepresenting Facts (e.g., providing false information to postpone an exam, obtain an extended deadline for an assignment, or even gain an unearned financial benefit)
- [Multiple submissions](#) (submitting essentially the same written assignment for two courses without authorization to do so)
- Any other acts (or attempted acts) that violate the basic standard of academic integrity

(adapted from [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint\\_whatish.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_whatish.php))

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

(from [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_faculty\\_syllabus.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_faculty_syllabus.php))

Plagiarism

“Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course requirement (from Sec. 11-402, <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/>).

Copyright and Fair Use

Understanding the basic principles of copyright and fair use is of critical importance to designers. Many of the uses we will make of texts, images, and videos this semester will be covered by the doctrine of fair use. However, as creators, you need to be aware of your own and other copyright holders’ legal rights, and to properly identify and license your own and others’ works. We will discuss these issues during the semester as needed, but when you have questions about whether or when you can appropriate someone else’s work, a useful resource is Georgia K. Harper’s Copyright Crash Course, available at <http://copyright.lib.utexas.edu/>.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities (512-471-6259, [ssd@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ssd@austin.utexas.edu), <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>, or videophone 512-471-6644). Please

	<p>provide documentation of your needs during the first week of class, if possible, so that I can make the necessary accommodations promptly.</p>
Student Support Services	<p>There are numerous free and/or low-cost support services available to students at UT. They include (but are not limited to) the following:</p> <p><b>Fine Arts Career Services</b> (512-232-7333, <a href="http://utexas.edu/finearts/careers">utexas.edu/finearts/careers</a>) provides a full range of services and resources to support students and alumni.</p> <p><b>The Undergraduate Writing Center</b> (512-471-6222, <a href="http://uwc.utexas.edu">uwc.utexas.edu</a>) helps students with every phase of writing assignments for their courses.</p> <p><b>The Sanger Learning Center</b> (512-471-3614, <a href="http://utexas.edu/ugs/slc">utexas.edu/ugs/slc</a>) provides study skills, time-management, and note-taking courses.</p> <p><b>University Health Services</b> (512-471-4955, <a href="http://healthyhorns.utexas.edu">healthyhorns.utexas.edu</a>) provides medical and health promotion services for currently enrolled students and some non-students who are officially enrolled in certain University programs.</p> <p><b>The Counseling and Mental Health Center</b> (512-471-3515, <a href="http://cmhc.utexas.edu">cmhc.utexas.edu</a>) helps students with their personal concerns so that they can meet the daily challenges of student life.</p>
Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)	<p>If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <a href="http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal">http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal</a>.</p>
Emergency Procedures	<p>Mass e-mails (in addition to sirens and fire alarms, when appropriate) will be used to provide students, faculty, and staff with information regarding potential threats to the safety and security of the campus community. E-mails will also be used as a way to notify students, faculty, and staff of emergency situations and keep them updated on the situation. Emergency officials also have the ability to disseminate important information via text message directly to the cell phones of users subscribed to the service. Please consider subscribing to this service at <a href="https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/csas/text/main/">https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/csas/text/main/</a>. (adapted from <a href="http://www.utexas.edu/safety/preparedness/plans/EmergencyManagementPlan2013a.pdf">http://www.utexas.edu/safety/preparedness/plans/EmergencyManagementPlan2013a.pdf</a>)</p>

## Overview of Schedule

Please be aware that on occasion the order and timing of the course schedule may need to be altered to accommodate UT closures, instructor illness, student needs/interests, and design program workshop opportunities and lectures. Any significant alterations to the schedule will be announced via Canvas.

Reading assignments and an agenda for each day of class will be posted to Canvas.

## Calendar

*Note – This is outline, assignments, and reading are subject to change by the instructor, without notification in certain cases.*

1 Week of 1/21 (Classes start 1/22)	1/21 - No Class MLK Jr. Day
	<div>1/23 - First Day of Class</div> <div>In Class</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Course Intro</li><li>• What is Game Production</li></ul> <div><b>HW:</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise 1: Review a <a href="#">game postmortem on Gamasutra</a>. Identify what went right and what went wrong with the production, and what lessons were learned from the process.</li></ul>
2 Week of 1/28	<div>In Class:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phases of Game Development</li></ul> <div><b>HW:</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise 2: Examining a game: Take an existing game and break down each component (Design, Tech, Art, Sound) that was used in the creation of the game.</li></ul>
	<div>In Class:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is an RFP (Request for Proposal)</li><li>• Executive Summary/Pitch</li></ul> <div><b>HW</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each student will receive an RFP. This will be the basis for their course project.</li><li>• Project 1: Game Concept Proposal - Create a Executive Summary/Pitch</li></ul>
3 Week of 2/4	<div>In Class:</div> <div>User Analysis/User Centered Design/UX</div> <div><b>HW</b></div> <div>Identify the User and their needs - Create User Profiles/Persona and Analysis</div>
	LAB

4 Week of 2/11	In Class: Game Design Document - The Producers Role Review GDD Checklist <b>HW:</b> Create a Game Design Brief that identifies base design, number of levels, mechanics, art, audio and tech.
	Lab
5 Week of 2/18	In Class: Epics, Stories, Tasks and the Backlog Stories vs User Stories <b>HW:</b> Break down the design into Epics and Stories.
	LAB
6 Week of 2/25	In Class: Production Methodologies in game development <b>HW:</b> Break the stories related to your highest Epics into tasks Identify which methodology your production will follow.
	LAB
7 Week of 3/4	In Class: Milestones and the Milestone Schedule <b>HW:</b> Create a milestone schedule for your game production
	LAB
8 Week of 3/11	In Class: Staffing: Teams, Structures and Dynamics <b>HW:</b> Create a staffing plan for your game production
	Lab
9 Week of 3/18	<b>Spring Break: No Class</b>
	<b>Spring Break: No Class</b>
10 Week of 3/25	In Class: Time Estimates <b>HW:</b> Create time Estimates for the tasks and stories.
	In Class: Break into groups to play planning poker.



11 Week of 4/1	In Class: Tools, licenses, hardware <b>HW:</b> Research what tools and hardware needs are necessary for your game production. Review licenses and costs.
	LAB
12 Week of 4/8	In Class: Budgeting a game production <b>HW:</b> Create a full budget for your game production
	Lab
13 Week of 4/15	Scoping and Rescoping throughout development <b>HW:</b> Will be announced in class
	Lab
14 Week of 4/22	Live Service Game Production HW: To be announced in class
	Lab
15 Week of 4/29	Prepping materials for clients, teams and first parties Final Prep
	Lab / Check-In
16 Week of 5/6	Video Game Legal Lab / Check-In
	In Class: Where do you go from here. <b>FINAL DUE</b>