**LMC-6330 Expressive Virtual Space**

**Expressive Virtual Space**

**1. Instructor Name, Contact Information and Office Hours**

Instructor: Michael Nitsche

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Phone:

Office: TSRB 322

Meetings by Appointment

**2. Course Prerequisites:** (None)

**3. Core Area/Attributes Fulfilled by this Class:** (None)

**4. Course Description**

The main topic for 6330 is space in 3D video games. It will look at virtual game worlds but with a wider perspective than that of "traditional" level design. Spatiality itself has multiple aspects: rule-based, mediated, imagined, social, play space – among others. The first third of the course will provide a theoretical basis for this discussion. It will connect game worlds to a number of different traditions and concepts (from architecture to film theory and psychology) and provide a context for our work. The second section is more analytical and looks at existing video game spaces. The last third will let students design and implement own virtual spaces. The main goals of the course are: exploration of different perspectives to virtual spaces as multi-layered but interconnected. Analysis of games to exemplify key features we discover in this exploration. Testing and questioning of these key features in practical experiments. The sessions are divided into one theory and one practical lab session per week. Students will have to design, learn how to model (using Maya), and implement virtual environments in a real-time 3D engine. Although no in-depth knowledge of either package is required, participants should bring some basic technical knowledge and willingness to learn new packages. Knowledge of video games is considered helpful but not obligatory. The final project is a team project. There is no single reader for the course but relevant authors include David Herman, Marie Laure-Ryan, Henry Jenkins, Paul Dourish, Ted Friedman, Espen Aarseth, and Bordwell/ Thompson.

**5. Learning Outcomes:**

Demonstrate the ability to analyze and critically evaluate existing digital media artifacts, services, and environments using formal knowledge, and to explain and defend one's critical evaluation.

Demonstrate the ability to devise, design, create, and assess prototypical digital media artifacts, services, or environments and to contextualize them within recognized traditions of practice.

Demonstrate use of digital media to create prototypes

Demonstrate good time management skills

Can design and create digital artifacts that create the experience of agency for the interactor.

**6. Required Texts:**

**Aarseth,Espen J., 'Allegorien des Raums: Räumlichkeit in Computerspielen', Zeitschrift für Semiotik, 23, 3‐4, (2001),301‐318 (English version at http://www.hf.uib.no/hi/espen/papers/space/)**

**‐ Boroditsky, Lera, ‘Metaphoric Structuring: Understanding Time through Spatial Metaphors’ in:**

**Cognition (2000) Vol 75,1, 128**

**‐ Jenkins, Henry, 'Game Design as Narrative Architecture', in *First Person: New Media as Story,***

***Performance and Game*, ed. by Noah WardripFruin and Pat Harringan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press,**

**2004)**

**‐ Bordwell, David and Thompson, Kristin, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 7th edn (New York: McGrawHill Inc., 2003)**

**7. Grading Assignments**:

* Participation seminar **25%**
* Practical work **25%**
* Game space analysis **25%**
* Final project **25%**

**8. Attendance Policy**

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a half grade point reduction. An **excused** absence is one in which permission is requested in advance and you have a legitimate reason to skip class, such as an illness. You are expected to make up what you missed by checking with other students and reviewing lecture materials on the web site.

**9. ADAPTS**: **Information for Students with Disabilities**

Please notify the instructor if you have any disabilities with which you need special assistance or consideration. The campus disability assistance program can be contacted through ADAPTS: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>

**10. Honor Code**

Students are expected to abide by the Honor Code of the Georgia Institute of Technology. Information on the Honor Code can be found at: <http://honor.gatech.edu/>. Violations to the Honor Code have serious consequences and will be enforced at all times.

1. **Course Schedule**

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| **Week #** |  | **Read [Due Thurs]** |
| **Week 1** | Intro to course – What space?  Intro to lab (maya interface – engine discussion)  **Assignment: short story world** |  |
| **Week 2** | Narrative space – an Overview  Maya |  |
| **Week 3** | Space and presentation  Maya |  |
| **Week 4** | Spatial Interaction  Maya |  |
| **Week 5** | Architectural space  Maya  Due: Short story world  Assignment: perception of poly-world |  |
| **Week 6** | TBC |  |
| **Week 7** | Due: Own text presentation (alphabetically)  3D engine  Due: Own text presentation (if needed) |  |
| **Week 8** | Recess  3D Engine |  |
| **Week 9** | Spiritual Space – Mind Spaces  **Due: tell MN your chosen digital space**  **3D Engine Due: perception of poly-world** |  |
| **Week 10** | Time  TBC |  |
| **Week 11** | **Due: Game presentation** |  |
| **Week 12** | Final Project work |  |
| **Week 13** | Final Project work |  |
| **Week 14** | Final Project work |  |
| **Week 15** | **Due: Final Project** |  |
| **Week 16** | **FINALS WEEK NO CLASS** |  |