

Course Syllabus: DIG 4855C Converging Media
Spring, 2012
3.0 Credit Hours
Instructor: Eileen Smith
Office Hours: Tues, Thurs 10am-noon with appointment

Course Description

Students integrate converging forms of media and interactive entertainment techniques to create innovative concept development projects to address a specific research question. This course is organized around readings, presentations, critiques and experimentation that will guide students through the production process, resulting in a concept prototype and critical analysis of their product as to its suitability for diverse applications. The class will develop professional attitudes and discipline toward understanding the process of creating cross-disciplinary innovative projects in interactive digital media. This course is intended to follow lower-level courses that develop the students' abilities in graphic design, storytelling, etc; this course has a team development focus in how to apply those basic skills to a real-world project.

The course format will include team-based story development and experimentation, lectures, lively discussions and intensive creative brainstorming. Students will create design documents, individual analysis essays, as well as research and develop interactive projects that will be presented to and evaluated by the class in open critiques.

Learning Objectives

The overall learning objective is to survey the diverse media traditions and gain experience in how to adapt them to innovative media experiences. In self-forming teams, students design, experiment and create innovative content for diverse applications using interplay conventions of story, play and game. Students will demonstrate the ability to use creative interplay conventions in the production process of creating novel emerging media technology experiences that engage audiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will understand the relationship between new and traditional media, from historical and theoretical approaches; the differences in how audiences engage with new and traditional media from aesthetic, narrative, psychological, and usability perspectives.

Measures:

- In Converging Media, students will complete a team semester project – an interactive project containing complete, experimental converging media experiences. These projects will be presented to and evaluated by the class in open critiques, and potentially evaluated by invited reviewers representing SVAD faculty and UCF researchers. All projects must include practical application of creative design and development tools in the production of a media project to address a specific research question.

- In Converging Media, students will create a personal web presence that demonstrates their individual management process understanding, and their ability to research, create, evaluate and articulate ideas into robust concepts using traditional as well as emerging techniques and technologies to engage all aspects of human experience. Entries to this website will document their specific contribution to the project on a weekly basis.

Students will be able to construct a variety of communication vehicles to present self and work to a variety of audiences.

Measures:

- In Converging Media, students will present a semester-long project, as a member of a creative team, which demonstrates unique creativity and innovation. The project is to be posted separately including only accepted materials and demonstrating the status of the project for grading at midterm and at the end of the semester.
- In Converging Media, students will be required to submit their project to local/regional showcases (such as the Showcase Of Undergraduate Research Excellence each spring at UCF) in order to understand the reality of presenting a creative project to an end-user audience.

Assignments

Students will be required to design and create an innovative converging media **experimental project** as part of a self-forming team. It is to be directed towards a specific research question (entertainment, education, marketing, etc.) as well as specific psychographics and demographics. It will include as many forms of converging media as support the team's goals.

Essays will be evaluated on their research worth and their value as a discussion tool. Essays are formally written with a topic sentence, supporting body with reading, lecture and experience references, and finally a thought-provoking conclusion. This is not a journal entry or an evaluation. Students are expected to include references to support their opinions.

All assignments are due by 9pm on the date due. Points will be reduced every day the assignment is late.

Grades

There are no plus/minus grades in this course. All grades are full letter grades. Grades are based on the quality and originality of the work presented and demonstrable evidence of a professional attitude and discipline in performing all assignments, acute observation and critical evaluation, as well as attendance and class participation.

Letter Grade	Number Grade	What Grade Means	Real-world parallel
A	90-100	Recognized as excelling above most others for your contribution	Award/Promotion
B	80-89	Achieved your personal best as assessed by the instructor	Bonus

C	70-79	Simply accomplished all the tasks and assignments	(pay)Check – nothing of note
D	60-69	Delinquent on assignments, attendance or quality standards of work	Demotion
F	50-59	Failed to achieve the quality of work expected of an undergraduate	Fired

Course Timeline (subject to change by Instructor)

Week of		Class Activity
1/9/12	Class intro – syllabus review; Play/Story/Game continuum of experience development Media research team selection and initial discussion.	Identify short-term media research groups; standing meeting to meet group members on Wednesday.
1/16/12	Expression (Art) Literature (Text) Print (Comics & Graphic Novels) Voice & Music (Radio) Moving Images (Film) Broadcast (Television) Emotions (Role playing games) Interactivity (Games) Society (Web Communities) Storytelling (Interactive Performance)	NO CLASS ON MONDAY, 1/16/12 Discussion of key principles of each media and how they might be used in potential projects; group reports woven into discussions. Introduce project titles and tag lines.
1/23/12	Projects begin their journey. Introduction of Preliminary Design Review Document structure and sections.	Choose project teams; begin planning and development leading up to a completed Preliminary Design Review Document.

1/30/12	Essay Assignment Due 1/30/12: What would you identify as the low-hanging fruit for media convergence, to most easily contribute to an innovative media experience? Defend your creative opinion in this essay.	Creative Development
2/6/12	Review Preliminary Design Review Document for each project during Wednesday's class.	Creative development leading up to a completed Preliminary Design Review Document by Wednesday class.
2/13/12	Introduction of Critical Design Review Document.	Creative Development
	SURE applications due Feb 17; process on Feb 15 in class. http://www.showcase.ucf.edu	Creative Development
2/20/12		Creative Development
2/27/12		Creative Development
3/5/12	SPRING BREAK	Project Production
3/12/12	MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS – CRITICAL DESIGN REVIEW DOCUMENT PRESENTATION, AND PLAN FOR COMPLETION	
3/19/12	Essay Assignment Due 3/19/12: How is the emerging project that you are working on as a creative professional achieving the goal of an innovative media experience? What are the pitfalls that must be overcome for success?	Project Production
3/26/12		Project Production
4/2/12	SURE Event is Thursday 4/5/12 – final details!! Event only gives 4' x 2' of table space, 2 presenters at the table at any time; rotate through afternoon.	Event Testing and Presentation
4/9/12		Final production elements.
4/16/12		Final presentation planning.
4/23/12	Final Presentations to Class and Visitors Note: This date opens the review period for invited faculty and researchers.	Presentations
Final Exam	Recap of reviewers' comments.	Discussion

TBD	Delivery of CD with all individual work compiled into a complete Project Final Report.	
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Grade Categories	Description of the requirements	Weight toward midterm/final
Class Attendance, Participation and Professionalism	Class Participation and Professionalism is measured by your attendance and your active and intelligent participation and attitude toward your colleagues during critiques and discussions. You are responsible for all material and announcements presented in class whether you are present or not. Keep in mind that a measurable percentage of your grade is based on your attendance and contribution to class discussions. If you are frequently absent your contribution grade will suffer. Assignments will be posted on WebCourses, but being in class all semester is the key element here.	25/25
Writing Assignments (essays)	There are two writing assignments due; see lecture grid with dates above. Points will be reduced every day the assignment is late. No assignments will be accepted more than 4 days late. 50% of each grade is quality of writing 50% of each grade is timely submission	15/15
Individual Website Development - Midterm	Each student must maintain an online site that documents their individual commitment and accomplishments in the group project. Those sites will be graded at both midterm and final.	20/10
Concept Project Development - Midterm	Each team will launch and maintain a project website that will include title, tagline, artwork, experience concepts, designs and intent of their emerging technology project up to the midterm point, and at the final. Your midterm grade for this component is valued at 10% of your final grade.	30/10
Final Media Project	The overall project will be graded. How original is your experience? How well did you articulate your process? Will your audience be impacted if this is carried forward? Did it go far enough to be innovative? This	0/30

	grade will cover the concept as a whole in terms of real world possibilities, but not necessarily mainstream (Niche markets can be selected as audience targets).	
Instructor Points		10/10
	TOTAL POINTS	100/100

Delivery Specifications

Each personal and project web-site should be accessible online on an ongoing basis. Your project website should also have a link to information about each student whether it's a biography, portfolio, or both. No assignments will be accepted via e-mail or hardcopy. The final deliverable is due on a single CD or DVD on the date of the final exam.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are found cheating you will receive an F for the course, and the incident will be reported to the University student judicial office for possible disciplinary action.

Educational Use of Work Assignments

The assignments handed in for grading are considered public disclosure and intended for public distribution. Students provide the right to the University of Central Florida and its affiliated centers to use works in whole or in part for public distribution for educational, non-commercial use. Do not submit any work that is a trade secret or that you do not want published. If you have any questions regarding the intellectual property created during the class please contact the Office of Research and Commercialization.

Technology Requirements

Technology	Expectations for Use
E-mail:	Updated address posted with Polaris with WebCourses communication with classmates and instructor.
Special tools:	A web creation tool of the team's choosing in order to build and present their media project.
Tape recording:	None required; can be used as desired.
Calculators:	N/A
Other	Some requirements may arise during project development and should be considered based on the technology's availability and the team's expertise.