GAME 300: Portfolio Preparation
George Mason University
College of Visual and Performing Arts
Computer Game Design
Fall 2019
V1.0

Credits: 1
Section: DL1
Office on Campus: Room 2023, Art and Design Building

Instructor: Paul Eric Piccione
Contact: pniccio@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Virtual: Mon 3-5 pm
Campus: Thu 3-5 pm

Course description:
The objective of this class is to create and refine an online portfolio to use throughout the course of study in presenting projects and to aid in internship application and professional development.

Objectives
Student will understand what makes an effective portfolio.
Student will understand the language of portfolio critiques and participate effectively in peer critiques.
Student will understand how to manage a web portfolio, including acquiring a web host.
Student will understand how to effectively present content.
Student will understand how to package, render, and assemble multi-media content for use on the web.
Student will understand how to effectively leverage their portfolio in an interview.
Student will have an efficient portfolio at the end of the course.

Assessment and Grading:

Assignments
Students will be given several assignments throughout this course. Students will also be modifying previously existing content and creating new content for their portfolios. Specifics will be given on Blackboard. It is the students’ responsibility to refer to Blackboard to see the exact date and time assignments are due.

Older Portfolio Content
Because of the limited time given during a semester, students may include previously existing content with which to build a portfolio. This material might include assignments or game projects made during other courses or earlier personal projects. In these cases, it is expected that the student will update all older work to match their current skill level. Material used in the portfolio will be graded on polish and ability to demonstrate the student’s skills.

Quizzes
At the instructor’s discretion, there may be in-class “pop” quizzes covering assigned material.

Final Portfolios
Students will turn in their final portfolio during week 15. Specifics will be given on Blackboard.

Online Participation
Students are expected to participate in any live online discussions that may occur through Blackboard Collaborate, and are encouraged to join conversations, and ask or answer questions, on the class channel on Discord. The Discord invitation is available on Blackboard.

Grade Weighting and Scale
All grading is done on a point scale used to assess assignments, participation in classroom activities, and the final project. At the end of the course, the student’s grade is a percentage of total points earned over total points possible. Students will see the point value for each assignment posted on Blackboard.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments (each)</td>
<td>Varies (see Blackboard assignment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios Drafts (each)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (each)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Grade Scale**

To receive a grade of "A" a student must earn a minimum of 90% of the coursework point total.

To receive a grade of "B" a student must earn a minimum of 80% of the coursework point total.

To receive a grade of "C" a student must earn a minimum of 70% of the coursework point total.

To receive a grade of "D" a student must earn a minimum of 60% of the coursework point total.

Failure to receive a "D" grade will result in a grade of "F".

Failure to turn in a Final Project will result in a grade of "F" for the course, regardless of the student's point total, as this project replaces the final exam.

***Note that after points are totaled, the instructor may adjust a student's final grade to better reflect their accomplishments.***  
Blackboard is not an accurate determination of the final grade.

**'C' Grade Minimum**

Students must have earned a 'C' grade or higher in prerequisite courses in the Game Design Major and Minor. For example, to take GAME 398, a 'C' or higher must have been earned in GAME 231.

**Grading Criteria**

Assignment and projects are graded based on the criteria given below:

- completeness
- ambition/effort
- specification adherence
- technical execution
- aesthetic qualities

Specific criteria are given on Blackboard for each assignment.

**Late Work and Make-up Policy**

The first late assignment is given half credit. *No late work will be accepted beyond the first.* Please pay careful attention to the DUE DATE & TIME for each assignment. DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!!! If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from finishing an assignment, the student must contact the instructor BEFORE the assignment is due.

Students are responsible for checking in to the course on Blackboard for each week's lessons and activities.

Each class is a building block for the next. Students who do not keep up will miss important material and typically do not do well in this course. In the event that you have to miss a week's activities, you are responsible for making up the work and completing the assignments on time.
Resources

A traditional textbook is not used in this course. Instructions and lessons will be covered in class, in some cases with online video examples linked on Blackboard that will review the in-class lessons. In such cases, these are meant to augment class lectures, not replace them and ARE NOT a viable alternative to attending class.

Game Lab

In the Art and Design building, room 2001 is a monitored computer lab available outside of class hours for students to work on their projects. Hours are posted on the door and on the program website: http://game.gmu.edu/students.php

Required Class Material:

It is the student's responsibility to obtain consistent, stable access software used in the class (listed below).

Software Needed:

The software below is needed in this course. It is installed on all class and game lab computers. Students do not need to acquire this software IF they are able to use the lab to complete assignments.

- Zip or Rar archive program
- FRAPS (free version available)
- Handbrake (free version available)
- Online backup. It is strongly recommended that students use an online backup service to prevent their project files from being lost. Every semester multiple students report lost work due to damaged or misplaced thumbdrives, corrupted files, or dead hard drives. Dropbox, Google Drive and OneDrive are example services that students should explore. Most services offer free storage that is sufficient in size for this course.

Web Hosting Fees

Creating an online portfolio is the core of this course. Students are responsible for creating a free account on the web service WordPress.com. Students are not required to purchase an account upgrade or a domain address for this course, although it is eventually recommended in order to be competitive and professional in the job market.
GMU Honor Code:
GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Disability Accommodations
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, http://ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Privacy
Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.

Course Schedule
The Course Schedule is listed on Blackboard. The schedule may be revised, based on the instructor’s discretion, to meet the needs of the class.