# Course Syllabus

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EAE 3660 - Interactive Machinima - Fall 2017 - 3 Credit Hours
Location: **Building 72  (http://map.utah.edu/index.html?code=Building%2072)** - EAE Undergraduate Lab.

Section 002: M/W 1:25PM - 2:45PM

## Description & Course Objectives

This class explores the medium of Machinima, where you will work with a team to create short animated movies using 3D video game engine technology.  This class is project based with no required texts, quizzes or tests.

While the fundamental skills needed will be taught through text/video tutorials, completing the projects will require that you are motivated to seek solutions to the obstacles you encounter from *outside* the materials presented in the class.

The goal of the class is to use the context of creating Machinima to learn about digital storytelling, 3D environment design, character animation, filmmaking techniques, and most importantly *teamwork*! You will be required to focus in one or two specialized skill areas and function well in an interdisciplinary team environment. Learning to work effectively with other students who have different skill sets in the team-based environment is a critical component to success in this class.

Instructor — Alex Johnstone
- Office Hrs: *available by appointment only*

Teaching Assistants
- TBD

## Class website

Canvas will be your hub for announcements, lecture and tutorial materials, as well as grade posting. In an effort to keep you updated with important information I'll be sending out announcements with upcoming important deadlines, changes to assignments, grading updates, etc. I may send additional urgent updates regarding class-cancelations, etc. Please make sure these announcements are set to be forwarded to your email inbox!

However, to do well in the class you must regularly check the canvas class pages. Don't assume everything you will need to know will be covered in an announcement.

## Accommodation

There's a possibility that you may find the content presented during class sessions offensive (strong language, graphic imagery, etc). If you find the content of materials presented during in class sessions offensive you may opt to leave the session. However, it will be necessary to talk to us *directly* after the session in order to still receive attendance credit. Our policy for the group assignment work is less accommodating. If you choose the work on a project with prior knowledge of the content (which you always will), you will be required to fulfill your assigned tasks regardless of your comfort with the content.

## University & College of Engineering Policies

Appeals Procedures, Withdrawal Procedures, Repeating Courses, Adding Courses, and Americans with Disabilities Act - The information on these topics is college wide and provided here **http://www.coe.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/faculty/semester_guidelines.pdf (http://www.coe.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/faculty/semester_guidelines.pdf)**

Student Code - Make sure that you follow the **University guidelines (http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html)** for individual work when appropriate.

**Course Schedule can be found here**, however the content is subject to change. If any significant change is made to the schedule you'll be notified through a canvas announcement.

**Grade Scale**
If you do all that is asked in this class (and I will be reasonable with my "standard" expectations) you will have earned a "B" in the class. All those who exceed my expectations will achieve a higher grade. I am not trying to be unfair, I am trying to encourage you to stretch and grow hopefully becoming better and better students of this program and have a greater chance of competing in this industry.

An "A" is not about the amount of time you put into the class or how late you stayed up working on a project (although there may be times when that may be the case depending on your course load, entertainment, family/friend obligations, work, sleep, etc...). An "A" means you did exceptional work and as stated above, exceeded my expectations.

Grades will be based on:
Teamwork, Organization, Work Quality, Communication, Creativity Professionalism.

The A range is for excellent performance and superior achievement.
The B range denotes good performance and substantial achievement.
The C range indicates standard or average performance and achievement.
The D range is for substandard performance and marginal achievement.
An E is given for unsatisfactory performance and achievement.

I grade on a standard system: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93, B+ = 87-89, B = 84-86, B- = 80-83...etc

**Grading Breakdown**
- Individual Homework Assignments 30%
- Group Project Milestones 25%
- Participation 15%
- Final Project 30%

Your assignments in this class will consist of week/two-week long self-directed tasks relating to your Machinima projects. Many of your tasks will be based on your individual skill set and and the demands of the project you undertake. Therefore, it is impossible for us to describe the specific steps of each assignment. Much like the real world, we are expecting your machinima projects to meet certain milestones and qualifications for success. The path you and your team take to meet these requirements will be entirely up to you.

This approach is very different than many other classes. Doing well in this class will require you to be self-motivated and self-disciplined to produce the work to the best of your ability. A core part of this class is developing the ability to **assess** the demands of specific task, find the information necessary to **undertake** the task, and **deliver** the completed product within the deadline.

**Homework** assignments are to be completed _individually_ by the specified deadline. The first two (**Simple Environment (%24CANVAS_OBJECT_REFERENCE%24/assignments/iff5ce7ade5d0fcb21216dcb67b0e0c1b)** & **Basic Skills (%24CANVAS_OBJECT_REFERENCE%24/assignments/i6bd723c2032231815bbef0fd46c53302)** ) are practical assignments, designed to introduce you to the tools and give you a specific skill set for the later group project. In the "Contributions" assignments you will outline and analyze your individual contributions to group projects. It is very important that you keep track of the work your contribute, and the time you spend!

**Group Project Milestones** are the culmination of 2-3 week long "sprints" of work on your group machinima projects. At each milestone we will have a review of each team's work and discussion on the process (either in class or through Canvas comments). It is your own individual responsibility to coordinate with your team to complete the required work and turn it in by the deadline specified.

**Participation & Attendance** consists of regular class attendance as well as graded in-class activities. I will allow up to three absent class sessions per semester _only_ if you send me an email prior to the class session with a valid excuse.

Many of the class sessions will be open-lab work sessions where you can meet with your team, work on your project, and get 1 on 1 help from the teaching staff. During our class work days, all work during class sessions _must_ be related to this class. Homework for another class, random youtube videos, etc, are not related to machinima! If you aren't engaged in machinima related work during a class session you may lose attendance credit for that session.

**The Final Movie Project** is worth a large portion of your grade. Additionally it will be likely shown during EAE Fest at the end of the semester. Around 1/3 of the grade will be based on just getting the work done (Final Movie Production Checkpoints), the remainder will be based on critical assessment of the movie (Final Project). This critical assessment grade will be awarded to the team as a whole, so each team member will get the same final project grade regardless of how much work they have individually contributed. For this reason it's important to try your hardest to help foster a productive team atmosphere and make sure work is distributed evenly among the team!

**Late Assignments** will receive a 10% grade reduction each 24 hours an assignment is late. With machinima it's easy to underestimate the amount of time required to complete your work. This is compounded my problems caused by working with demanding software and unfamiliar tools. If you can develop a healthy habit of setting realistic goals, asking for help, and tackling your tasks early you will have a stress free semester!

**Submitting Assignments** may require you to use a file sharing service (Dropbox, Google Drive, uBox, etc) outside Canvas, due to large file sizes. Please submit a website URL where we can access the shared folder. This is true even if you have previously shared the same folder in a previous assignment. Don't rely on us to go digging through messy folders to find assignments!

**Software**

All the software necessary for completing each assignment will be available in our lab classroom. Additionally, the Unreal Engine and Autodesk products will be available in the WEB L130 Undergrad Computer Lab. The classroom will be NOT be open for use outside of our class sections, so it's encouraged that you use WEB L130 for group work sessions.

- **Unreal Engine 4 (https://www.unrealengine.com)** Available on the lab computers, and free to download! You may use Unreal on your home pc/laptop, just be aware it is a _very_ demanding program and will be frustrating to use on a machine with limited graphics capability. If you are having trouble getting the program to run smoothly ask the teaching staff for help, we have some tricks that might help!
- **Autodesk Maya & Motion Builder (http://www.autodesk.com/education/free-software/all)** Available on classroom/lab computers, also available for free download as a student from Autodesk. Maya is your one stop shop for creating 3D assets (I highly recommend getting the Bonus Tools, and learning the auto-unwrap tool for quick texturing!). New features of Maya also

allow for animation editing similar to motion builder. Motion Builder is an industry standard program to edit and work with animation data (especially motion capture). Make sure to install Motion Builder 2014! Otherwise you may have some FBX compatibility issues with Unreal.

- **Adobe Photoshop & Premier (http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud.html)** Available on all school computers and free for students. Photoshop will give you the tools needed for texturing your 3D models, while Premier allows you to edit your final machinima video.
- **Adobe Fuse (https://www.mixamo.com/fuse/)** (and other products from Mixamo) is now available through your free student Creative Cloud subscription. Mixamo is an online resource for 3D characters and motion capture animation. Fuse CC allows you to construct and dress a 3D character (much like the character building feature in many RPGs).
- 3D Content: You are not required to produce every asset for your machinima (that would be impossible in the time provided!). You may use content from the **Unreal Marketplace (https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace)** or online resources (**Turbosquid (http://www.turbosquid.com)** , **TF3DM (http://tf3dm.com)** , **Google Model Warehouse (https://3dwarehouse.sketchup.com)** ). However, using content that copyrighted may limit your ability to distribute the machinima. Additionally, much of the content available for free will not be optimized for game engines, and is generally more trouble than it's worth! Our recommendation is to use the free content provided by Unreal, or split the cost of a key asset/environment between your team members.

## Hardware

Since there are no required texts for this class you can technically complete the class without any additional cost. However, I do highly recommend purchasing a USB 3.0 Flash Drive or external Hard Drive. This will help you back up your data and transfer it quickly between computers if needed.

## Concerns and Re-Grades

All concerns must be addressed within one week of receiving the grade in Canvas.

## Plagiarism

You are not required to produce every asset used in your Machinima movie, in fact we recommend you use whatever tools and resources are available at your disposal. However, claiming another student's work as your own is considered plagiarism. During the personal contributions assignments you must be very specific about what work is yours vs. your team members'. If the work listed in your contributions document is unclear we will ask that you provide an explanation and may ask you to submit additional files. If you are unable to clarify what claimed work is yours versus another student's we will consider it plagiarism and you may be failed from the class. Our department has a 'two strikes and you are out' policy.

## Team Tension & Flake Outs

If there is tension between team members, and you are not able to help resolve the conflict within the team, express your concerns to the teaching staff and we'll assess the situation. If there are any members of the team who aren't contributing to the team (including yourself!) come to the teaching staff and let us help you resolve the situation.

*Thanks & looking forward to seeing what you create in Interactive Machinima this semester!*

# Course Summary:

| Date | Details | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tue Jan 17, 2017 | 📝 **Homework: Personal Info (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108968)** | due by 3:40pm |

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| Thu Jan 19, 2017 | 📝 **Homework: Simple Environment** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108970)** | due by 3:40pm |
| Thu Feb 2, 2017 | 📝 **Homework: Basic Skills** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108963)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Thu Feb 9, 2017 | 📝 **Participation: Movie Teaser Production Planning** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108979)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Mon Feb 27, 2017 | 📝 **Milestone: Movie Teaser** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108974)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Thu Mar 2, 2017 | 📝 **Homework: Movie Teaser Contributions** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108967)** | due by 11:59pm |
| | 📝 **Participation: Pre-Production Planning** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108980)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Tue Mar 21, 2017 | 📝 **Milestone: Final Project Pre-Production** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108972)** | due by 5pm |
| Fri Mar 24, 2017 | 📝 **Homework: Final Project Pre-Production Contributions** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108964)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Tue Apr 11, 2017 | 📝 **Milestone: Final Project Production 1** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108973)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Tue Apr 18, 2017 | 📝 **Homework: Final Project Production 1 Contributions** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108965)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Tue Apr 25, 2017 | 📝 **Milestone: EAE Day Submission** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108971)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Apr 28, 2017 | 📝 **Homework: Final Project Production 2 Contributions** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108966)** | due by 11:59pm |
| Wed May 3, 2017 | 📝 **Final Project Submission** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108962)** | due by 11:59pm |
| | 📝 **Homework: Post-Mortem** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108969)** | due by 11:59pm |
| | 📝 **Participation: Advanced Skills Extra Credit** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108976)** | due by 11:59pm |
| | 📝 **Final Machinima: Characters & Animation Quality** **(https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108958)** | |

**Final Machinima: Cinematography & Lighting (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108959)**

**Final Machinima: Environment & Materials Quality (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108960)**

**Final Machinima: Visual Storytelling Quality (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108961)**

**MVP Extra Credit Points (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108975)**

**Participation: Check-Ins (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108977)**

**Participation: Class Attendance (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108978)**

**Roll Call Attendance (https://utah.instructure.com/courses/459877/assignments/4108981)**