EAE 4900-002 Virtual World Studies
Instructor: Gabriel Olson
University Of Utah
Location: LIB 1735
Days: Wednesday
Time: 2-5pm

EAE 4900-002 - Virtual Worlds

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Course Description: Both the ontology and epistemology of virtual worlds have been discussed since the early 80's. How we understand, navigate, and perform using virtual bodies in virtual worlds, as well as how we know, learn, and engage one another are at the core of the readings and questions of this class. Students will not only read about and explore virtual spaces, they will construct and analyze them as well. Students will be well versed in intentional design based upon a thorough understanding of salient literature, study of available virtual worlds, and hands-on creation of their own virtual spaces.

Course Objectives: The goal of this class is to provide students with an understanding of the current conversations and research in virtual worlds so that they may both be fluent in the language and literature as well as be able to construct new arguments to further the field. A strong focus of the course will be in the use of industry standard game engines, primarily Unreal 4 to build game levels structured around concepts, research, and documents developed in class by the student.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course, the student will be able to closely read and participate in conversations, through writing and discussion, about virtual worlds and game spaces. Understand the philosophical differences and questions that drive virtual world research. Create portions of virtual worlds based upon research and specific goals. Understand the residents, both real and simulated, of a virtual world. Publically present and critique virtual worlds. The student will gain confidence in the practice of building a playable level from written concept, researching, 2d maps, in engine block out, blueprint,sound implementation, to a final roughed out level.

Teaching and Learning Methods: Both the instructor and the students are expected to fully participate through lecture, discussion, presentation, and writing.Students will be expected to not only participate but as active learners they will be responsible for the presentation of the materials with the instructor.

Evaluation Methods and Criteria Methods: Presentations, papers, production and public critiques.

COURSE GRADING: 100 %

Attendance and Participation:	20 %
Location Study Paper:	10 %
Molecule/2d Map:	10 %
Unreal White Box:	10 %
WhiteBox Postmortem Paper:	10 %
Game Research:	10 %
Micro-Mechanic Unreal Study:	10 %
Final Project:	20 %

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-96.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-89.9
C	73-76.9
C-	70-72.9
D+	67-69.9
D	63-66.9
D-	60-62.9
F	0-59.9

Weekly Schedule: Subject to change as needed

AUG 23rd Week 1: Introduction, level design vs game design, intentional design – HW: Real-world spaces

AUG 30th Week 2: Spacial relationships, pacing and structure, narrative – HW: Molecule and Top Down Map first pass

Sept 6th Week 3: Technical overview of virtual worlds, building methods, re-use, limitations – HW: Top Down Second Pass

Sept 13th Week 4: Level Design Breakdown, reference examples – HW: Unreal White Box

Sept 20th Week 5: Mapping, scenario design, technical considerations, play patterns – HW: White final pass

Sept 27th Week 6: Unreal Blueprints, scripted events, emotional feedback – HW: White Box Post Mortem

Oct 4th Week 7: Review Core Mechanics – HW: Game Study

Oct 11th Week 8: Fall Break

Oct 18th Week 9: Level building tools, Review concepts, map feedback – HW: Blueprint Mechanic Study

Oct 25th Week 10: Sound in Level Design Review Machanic study - HW: Finish Mechanic study

Nov 1st Week 11: Gameplay metrics, sp vs mp maps. HW: Game research

Nov 8th Week 12: Modular level Design, Design documents HW: Design Doc/ 2d Map

Nov 15th Week 13: Review Design Doc – HW: Start level

Nov 22nd Week 14: Designing inside a box HW: Continue work on final level

Nov 29th Week 15: Movement and Speed, Class play through and critique of final level

Dec 6th Week 16: Class play through and critique of final level

Week 17: Final Review

ADA Statement: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union **Location:** (810) 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Faculty and Student Responsibilities: All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

Non-Contract Note: The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. The instructor may modify it when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.

Plagiarism Software Policy: Your professor may elect to use a plagiarism detection service in this course, in which case you will be required to submit your paper to such a service as part of your assignment.

Copyright Notice: By participating in this course, students allow the instructor and the university to use materials submitted to the class for educational use, including but not limited to presentations and research conducted by the instructor.

Accommodation Policy: The instructor shall offer no accommodation based on class content. Students must learn to negotiate personal beliefs with objectionable in a professional manner. Should students require assistance in this they may solicit informal advice from the instructor, however no formal exceptions nor accommodations shall be provided for content.

Texts:
Concept, Theory, and Practice - Rudolf Kremers - AK Peters (October 30, 2009) Book Review Available at Amazon

The instructor and students may provide additional readings as the semester progresses.