ITLS 3560: Character and Level Design – Spring 2024 Syllabus

Course Description
This course provides students with basic concepts of videogame level and character design. Students will also practice design implementation through modeling, skinning, rigging, animation, and lighting using 3D animation software and market-standard game engines.

Course Objectives
After completing the course, students will be able to:
1- explore major concepts in designing, creating videogame characters.
2- purposefully design characters for video games.
3- explore the process of creating characters including modeling, texturing, rigging, and animation.
4- explore major elements of environment/level design
5- design and create different terrain types for videogames
6- determine environmental conditions of videogame levels
7- design an enjoyable play experience

Instructor

Ramy Shaaban, M.D., Ph.D.,
https://itls.usu.edu/people/faculty/shaaban/indexLinks to an external site.
Email (Preferred) ramy.shaaban@usu.edu, Phone: 435-797-0896, Schedule an AppointmentLinks to an external site.

Course Schedule: Asynchronous - The weekly materials/assignments will be posted on Wednesday each week.

Course Resources
No required books to purchase. Required readings will be posted weekly on Canvas

The following books are optional to purchase
Blender 3D By Example by Romain Caudron, Pierre-Armand Nicq
Unity 2020 By Example - Third Edition by Robert Wells

COURSE FORMAT
This course is offered online via Canvas. Canvas is USU's learning management system and the place where you have most of your classes (http://usu.instructure.com). It is very important to

access canvas and your email frequently during the semester. You will have access to the course materials upon registration and successful enrollment to the course.

Weekly online materials include online readings, active class discussions, and weekly assignments. All assignments will be submitted through the Canvas course site. You are expected to be proficient in the use of Canvas.

Evaluation Methods and Criteria

Below are the assignments you need to complete throughout the semester:

Weekly Discussions (10X25)

On Monday of each week, I will post an online discussion. You should post your answer and read your classmates ones. You also have to reply on your classmates' answers. At least two replies are required to complete the assignment. The discussion assignment will be due the following Sunday before midnight.

Mini-Project Assignments (5X50)

Every two weeks, you will be given a project. The project aims to ensure you got the skills acquired during the week

Online Attendance (14 X 10)

Online attendance is the percentage of completing all the materials posted each week. Canvas tracks students' progress and record their completion of the learning modules. Reading all the assigned materials during the assigned period are mandatory to get the attendance points. Late/no attendance have specific policy. You can find this policy below.

Final Project (210)

During the semester, you are going to build a portfolio of blogs reviewing video games you play and reflecting on the different experiences you got. Details and the rubric for this project will be forthcoming. You are going to submit this project at the end of the semester.

BONUS

Each assignment will have bonus points determined by the instructor. The maximum amount of the bonus is 100 points throughout the whole class period. The bonus will be awarded to those who illustrate high creativity and hard work.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Weekly Discussions (10X25)
Biweekly Mini-Projects Assignments (5X80)
Online Attendance (14 X 10)
Final Project (210)
Total (1000)
Bonus (100)

Grade Scheme

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade	Range
A	100 % to 93.0%
A-	< 93.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 73.0%
C-	< 73.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 60.0%
F	< 59.0 % to 0.0%

Course Schedule/Outline

Date	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction to Character and Level Design – Get to know each other	No Assignments
Week 2	Understanding the process of the character and level design	Reading: Week 2 Canvas readings
Week 3	Character Design: Modeling Part 1	Reading: Week 3 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #1 Due
Week 4	Character Design: Modeling Part 2	Reading: Week 4 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #2 Due Mini-Project #1 Due
Week 5	Character Design: Sculpting	Reading: Week 5 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #3 Due
Week 6	Character Design: Rigging Part 1	Reading: Week 6 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #4 Due Mini-Project #2 Due
Week 7	Character Design: Rigging Part 2	Reading: Week 7 Canvas readings Assignments:

		Discussion #5 Due
Week 8	Character Design: Animation Part 1	Reading: Week 8 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #6 Due Mini-Project #3 Due
Week 9	Character Design: Animation Part 2	Reading: Week 9 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #7 Due
Week 10	Level Design: Unity3D Introduction	Reading: Week 10 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #8 Due Mini-Project #4 Due
Week 11	Level Design: Terrain Design	Reading: Week 11 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #9 Due
Week 12	Level Design: Introduction to Character Control in Unity	Reading: Week 12 Canvas readings Assignments: Discussion #10 Due Mini-Project #5 Due
Week 13	Wrapping up	Final Project Draft
Week 14 No Test Week		
Final Exams Week		Final Project Due

Attendance and Excused Absences Policy
All students are expected to read/watch/listen to all the posted materials. This is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of two unexcused absences. Missing a module will result in the loss of 10 points from the student's final grade. You are expected to complete the online readings on time and submit assignments by their due dates. As for the excused absence, you should email a written excuse to your instructor to be considered excused. Not all excuses will be accepted. Acceptable excuses will be determined by the instructor according to the situation. Circumstances that will grant an excused absence are shown below. If the excuse is accepted, the student is still expected to complete their readings/ assignments when they are back from the excused absence.

Late assignments are also unacceptable. A late assignment without an excuse will lead to a zero grade on the assignment. However, submission on time and resubmission after getting the

instructor's feedback is allowed and can result in regaining some lost points of the original submission.

Circumstances that grant excused absences:

- Illness that prevents online attendance. The student must have documentation from the health center or another physician that indicates the student cannot or should not attend class. Health center documentation is not acceptable unless is indicates the student is unable to attend class. Schedule your routine medical appointments at times that do not conflict with class time.
- Family emergency. Serious illness or death of an immediate family member. Documentation of this emergency must be provided.
- Participation in a university-sponsored activity. Permission for an excused absence must be obtained in advance of the activity and the student must have a letter from the faculty sponsor indicating the student's involvement in the activity.
- Assignments due during a time that a student is participating in a student activity must be emailed to the instructor prior to departure or immediately upon the student's return, with the instructor's permission. Assignments due during a time when a student is excused for other reasons will be due at the beginning of the second class following the student's return unless other arrangements are made with the instructor.

Library Services

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at libguides.usu.edu/rc.Links to an external site.

Syllabus Review

This syllabus may go under several reviews and modifications during the semester. The reviews will aim to insure achieving the objectives of the class. All modifications should be in favor of students' learning process. The instructor must discuss these modifications with students prior to implementation, making sure those modifications are understandable and applicable.

Nonattendance Policy

Students May Be Dropped For Nonattendance

If a student does not attend a class during the first week of the term or by the second class meeting, whichever comes first, the instructor may submit a request to have the student dropped from the course. *(This does not remove responsibility from the student to drop courses which he or she does not plan to attend.)*This option is typically used for classes that are full and the instructor is trying to make a seat available for another student, but may be considered for other courses. Requests must be made during the first 20 percent of the course and will be considered on an individual student basis. Students who are dropped from courses will be notified by the Registrar's Office through their preferred e-mail account (see 2018-2019 General CatalogLinks to an external site.).

Assumption of Risk

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at: http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt/Links to an external site.

Library Services
All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at libguides.usu.edu/rc.Links to an external site.

Online Course Fee
A fee of $15 per credit is applied to all online courses to sustain current digital technologies and support services required for engaging and effective online learning.

Classroom Civility
Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read Student Code Article V Section V-3Links to an external site. for more information.

University Policies & Procedures
Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities
Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. Faculty Code Policy #403Links to an external site. further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"
Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:
"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."
A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty
The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating**: using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
  - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
  - Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
  - Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification**: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism**: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic IntegrityLinks to an external site.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

General Overview
USU strives to provide an environment for students and employees that is free from discriminationLinks to an external site. and sexual misconductLinks to an external site.. If you experience sexual misconduct or discrimination at any point during the semester inside or outside of class, you are encouraged to contact the USU Title IX CoordinatorLinks to an external

site. via Old Main room 161 in Logan, 435-797-1266, titleix@usu.edu, or at equity.usu.edu/reportLinks to an external site.. You can learn more about the USU resources available for individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct at sexualrespect.usu.eduLinks to an external site.. Resources for individuals who have experienced discrimination are listed at equity.usu.edu/resourcesLinks to an external site..

Required Reporting of Sexual Misconduct
The instructor is designated by USU as a "reporting employeeLinks to an external site.." This means that if you share information about sexual misconductLinks to an external site. (sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, or sex-based stalking) with the instructor, they *will report* that information to the USU Title IX CoordinatorLinks to an external site.. The instructor is also required to tell you about designated confidential resourcesLinks to an external site., supportive measuresLinks to an external site., and how you can file a reportLinks to an external site. with the USU Title IX Coordinator.

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy
Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students with Disabilities
USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) Links to an external site. as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.
Students who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 or who contract COVID-19 may also be eligible for accommodations.

Respect for Diversity
Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:
- Division of Student Affairs: https://studentaffairs.usu.eduLinks to an external site., (435) 797-1712, studentservices@usu.edu, TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-servicesLinks to an external site., (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: http://accesscenter.usu.eduLinks to an external site., (435) 797-1728, access@usu.edu; TSC 315

- Multicultural Programs: http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multicultureLinks to an external site., (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqaLinks to an external site., (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversityLinks to an external site., (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State
University: https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcodeLinks to an external site.

Grievance Process
Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VIILinks to an external site..

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:
- Student ConductLinks to an external site.
- Student CodeLinks to an external site.
- Academic IntegrityLinks to an external site.
- USU Academic Policies and ProceduresLinks to an external site.
- Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility PolicyLinks to an external site.

Emergency Procedures
In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

General Health Protocols
The cold, flu, COVID-19, and other illnesses can have an impact on the health of our university community. USU welcomes the wearing of masks in all university buildings and encourages taking measures to mitigate risk as recommended by federal and state public health officials: getting vaccinated, staying home if you are sick (even with mild symptoms), and frequent hand washing.

Mental Health
Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)Links to an external site..

Students are also encouraged to download the ["SafeUT App"Links to an external site.](#) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.