ABOUT ME

• Before UofT
  • Built social games (before Facebook existed)

• At UofT
  • Took this class (several years ago)
    • Presented my (mobile) game at Level Up
  • Graduated with a CS degree

• After UofT
  • Technical Lead at Uken Games
  • Teaching this course since 2016
  • Engineering Manager during the day
  • Independent Game Developer at night
COURSE OVERVIEW

Learning the Art of Design
Learning the tools to succeed as a Game Developer
So much more to games outside of programming
COURSE OVERVIEW

• Game Jams
  • Saturday 14th 10:AM to 4:00 PM – BA 2270
  • Saturday 21st 10:AM to 4:00 PM – BA 3200

• Group Project
  • Demo sessions with industry experts throughout the semester
PROJECT OVERVIEW

• **Theme:** INDIE GAMES

• **Groups:** UofT + Centennial College + Faculty of Music

• **Design options:**
  - Unity, Android, Oculus, etc
  - No keyboards or mice
  - 3D Game

• **Demo sessions:**
  - In-class & playtesting
PREVIOUS PROJECTS
PLUNDER - 2016
FACE OFF - 2016
CHIAROSCURO - 2017
LEVEL UP STUDENT SHOWCASE
DELIVERABLES

10% • Game Jams – bring your own laptops

10% • Participation – taking part in class, presenting, attending events, organizing playtesting sessions
DELIVERABLES

- **Game Brainstorming** – submission of potential game ideas
- **Game Pitch & Creative Brief** - conceptual description; includes key components of the game
- **Design Document & Prototype** - structure of how the game is going to be built. Small playable prototype
- **Alpha Release** - Key gameplay functionality
- **Beta Release** - All the features of the final version
- **Playtesting Demo**
  - Includes report, peer evals and game trailer.
RECOMMENDED TOOLS
GAME JAMS

• Making a game in 6 hours
• Ideal for prototyping
• Popular in the community:
  • TOJam
  • Global Game Jam
REASONS WHY PEOPLE TAKE CSC404

- Interest in game development careers
- Real-world industry interaction
- Working with artists and musicians
- The challenge of a capstone course
- Having a game idea that you want to work on
- Enjoy playing games
- Need a 4th-year course
COURSE GOALS

• Developing your creative abilities:
  • Brainstorming
  • Designing
  • Developing
  • Refining

• Applying your development skills:
  • Agile development
  • Working with others
  • Dealing with failure
MORE IMPORTANTLY...

I want you to make an awesome game!
HOW NOT TO SUCCEED IN CSC404
DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY
TAKING OVER THE PROJECT
IGNORING FEEDBACK
FAILING CSC404
BAD TEAMMATE

• Not doing your work
• Not showing up for team meetings
• Not showing up for presentations
• Not communicating with your team

• This is why we have peer evaluations
A NOTE ON PEER EVALUATIONS

• Everyone must submit them by end of term.

• I will review each one personally

• **May** have implications on your final project mark*.
  
  • Positive evaluations: Possible positive multiplier
  
  • Negative evaluations: Possible negative multiplier

• * Only in special circumstances
BAD TIME MANAGEMENT

- Rushing your work
- Poorly defined goals
- Procrastination
  - Researching vs playing
- Prioritization
- Perfectionism*
CARING MORE ABOUT MARKS THAN ABOUT THE GAME

• Entire focus of the course is the project
  • No midterm or final

• Making a good game will lead to good marks
• Getting good marks will not always lead to a good game
GOOD HABITS
COMMUNICATION

• Listen
• Be active on Discord
  • Check in with your team regularly
• Be active on GitHub
  • Commit often
• Be clear
• Be clearer
PLAYTESTING

- Get feedback as often as possible
- We’ll have a lecture on this later on
- Never too early to get feedback
- Playing your own game does not count
ASSIGN ROLES

Clearly define who is responsible for what
INDIE GAMES
WHAT ARE INDIE GAMES?

Usually small teams

Little to no budget available

Our focus: innovation
- Cool and unique
MONUMENT VALLEY
DON’T STARVE
JOURNEY
BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

• Start thinking about what you want to build in CSC404
• Come up with an Elevator Pitch (more on this next week)
• If your idea can fit in a tweet (280 chars), it’s a good submission
• Submit to TAs by Wednesday September 18th at 11:59pm
• Course info sheet and website will be up by end of day Friday
PLAN FOR NEXT WEEKS

• Saturday September 14th
  • Game Jam 1
• Wednesday September 18th
  • Lecture
  • Deadline to submit game ideas
• Thursday September 19th:
  • TAs will shortlist game ideas and pick top X
• Friday September 20th
  • Instructor will pick which ideas will be worked on and will notify class via email
• Saturday September 21st
  • Game Jam 2
• Wednesday September 25th
  • Pitch presentation