

ARTG 91 - INTRO TO GAME ART PRODUCTION

Summer 24 Syllabus

ARTG 91 is a project-centered studio-lecture hybrid course that introduces the process of world-building and interaction design from the standpoint of the art director. Each project addresses a milestone in the art direction development pipeline, and demonstrates corresponding entry-level technical and conceptual skills and strategies. Utilizing this split methodology, the "big-picture" game development process is presented in tandem with related fundamental digital art and design skills at an achievable scale for an introductory course.

Basic Format

This entire course is held online, via this Canvas site. Every week, 1 Lecture Module and 1 Studio Module will unlock, with corresponding content, recorded studio instructional videos, and assignments in each. There are no required online meeting times, but starting Week 1 there will be optional Zoom Studio Sessions open to all students for questions about projects and other course content. Each module will utilize standard timelines and set due dates, but you can schedule when you work each week.

Teaching Team Info + Office Hours + Course Meeting Times

Course Instructor

Kristen Gillette - she/they - contact kgillett@ucsc.edu
Office Hours - TBA Week 1

Course TAs + Office Hours

Alyssa Castaneda alccasta@ucsc.edu
Office Hours - TBA Week 1

Kai Jacobs kalujaco@ucsc.edu
Office Hours - TBA Week 1

Course Introduction

I.1 Welcome to Summer Session 2 - 2024

Welcome everyone to ARTG 91 - Introduction to Game Art Production, and Summer Session 2 for 2024. I am the instructor and the course designer, Kristen Gillette, and have been teaching this course for the past 6 years - I also designed this course and taught it for the first time in 2018. For this online syllabus, I will be introducing the course format and basic weekly schedule, as well as general summaries of the different assignments and projects, and some important course-policies. This syllabus is also posted to the course's Intro Module and the Canvas Home Page. Five Week Summer Sessions like this one go by very quickly, so, it will be important to read through this as soon as possible, and to get started on the Intro Module and the Module 1 Set during Week 1.

This course was always designed to be completely online and asynchronous - and because of this, the format might be a bit different from your remote courses from the past few years due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. All of the content and projects are tailored and designed to fit the online format. Over the past few years, I have made several adjustments and additions in order to accommodate the fact that many folks were taking several courses remotely, and I believe that these have further improved the course overall.

I.2 Course Teaching assistants

This quarter we will be joined by 2 TAs, who will be introduced during Week 1. Each TA will be in charge of 1 group of students for grading projects, but they will participate with everyone as moderators on the Course Discord and hosting weekly optional Zoom Studio Sessions - kind of like a combo of studio sessions, Q+A, and office hours - that anyone can attend, regardless of your grading section. Your Grading Section will be assigned during the end of Week 1, and the TA + Instructor bio page will soon be posted to Canvas with contact info, Zoom Studio Session schedules, and more info about their professional experience and individual game, visual design and other digital media practices.

I.3 Using Canvas

Canvas is the "Learning Management System" we will be using to host this course. Think of Canvas as the door to your classroom - every time you are doing any work for this course, you will want to first log into Canvas, which will then link you to our course site via your Canvas Dashboard. You will be using this site to do everything required/graded for this class - including accessing videos, tutorials and content, submitting assignments, viewing lecture content, and receiving all course updates and announcements.

Before you go any farther, log into Canvas at canvas.ucsc.edu. Once logged in, please go to the Account option, and click on Notifications - ensure that all ARTG 91 announcements will also be sent to the email you will be checking throughout the quarter. This will also be a step for a Week 1 Intro Assignment.

I.4 Module Format

This online course will use "modules" to organize content and projects into multi-week sections. Starting Week 1, every week from Week 1 to 4, there will be a related Lecture Module and a Studio Module posted on Monday mornings. The lecture modules will feature lecture content and a short lecture review quiz, while the Studio Modules will feature project tutorial videos and 2 corresponding projects {a 10 pt project and a shorter 5 pt project}, along with a few small corresponding - and hopefully helpful - secondary assignments related to the projects.

The modules will be organized by week and listed in order - they will be under Modules in the Canvas Navigation. Modules will unlock each Monday morning, and everything will be posted to them at that time. I try to list everything in the modules - instead of a separate section for "Assignments" or "Discussion Posts" - to keep things as simple and straightforward as possible. After Week 1, the modules will also overlap slightly - you might still be finishing up the projects for the previous module once a new module has unlocked.

I.5 Contacting Instructor + TA's

Contact us via email with "ARTG 91" in the subject line about any general questions or inquiries about the course and policies, extension requests, or questions about grades, assignment requirements, or course subject matter or material. The only questions we are not able to respond to via email are technical questions about how to do things in Photoshop or Illustrator for the projects - there will be several other options in place to address these types of questions, and those will be discussed in detail more in the syllabus.

During the week, M-F from 9AM to 5PM, please allow ~4 to 8 hrs for a response - it will usually be quicker, and sometimes a general concern might be addressed via an announcement - if this happens, it means that multiple people had similar issues or questions. Over the weekend starting after 3PM on Fridays, response time and availability is limited, but always email anyway, as this will allow you to "timestamp" any serious issues.

I.6 Students Who Have Also Taken ARTG 10 - Aesthetic Designs

ARTG 10 was a new AGPM course in 2023, and was designed as a lower division requirement several years after this course, ARTG 91, was designed. Since ARTG 91 is a lower division elective for AGPM students, and not required to take, and is also a class that a lot of other students at UCSC take to fulfill a GE, there will be a bit of overlap between the two courses, especially around some of the technical aspects introduced in the projects. That being said, if you did take ARTG 10, there will be plenty of new material, and ways to utilize and continue to build upon those skills in this class, that it should still be very useful. I just wanted to be transparent about this potential overlap, and also let folks know I am making a few adjustments

to try to differentiate a few projects a bit more {and also to continue to improve this course in general}.

Course Requirements + Assignments

Below are detailed descriptions about each aspect of the course content. Below is the breakdown of each of these categories in terms of the final grade.

5% Intro Module Assignments (1pt each x 5)

12% Lecture Review Quizzes (3pts each x 4)

8% Project Sharing Assignments (2pts each x 4)

45% Studio Projects (5 or 10 pts each x 6)

7% Project "On-Time Submissions" (1pt each x 7)

3% Final Project Proposal

10% Final Project

2% Final Project Post-Mortem

8% Assignments + Quiz "On-Time Submissions" {2pts per module-set x 4}

C.1 Module Structure + Due Dates

When you decide to work on assignments, view course content and videos, and participate on discussion boards is totally up to you throughout the week. There will be Zoom Studio Hours held each week at specific times, but these are optional. All required assignments within modules will have weekly due dates which will be specified under each individual assignment.

Modules unlock on each Monday morning of Weeks 1, 2, 3 + 4. Week 1 has an extra intro module, and Week 5 only an extra-credit module will unlock with no new information or required assignments.. Below is a sample structure for the Week 1 + 2 Module. Most of the Modules follow the exact same format:

Week 1 Monday:

Lecture Module 1 and Studio Module 1 Unlock

Week 2 Monday:

Lecture Quiz 1 Due

Lecture Module 2 and Studio Module 2 Unlock

Week 2 Wednesday - Studio Module 1 Projects Due

The Monday + Wednesday due dates are intended to give folks the weekend to work on assignments, and it is not recommended that people wait until the following Monday to start working on things. Studio Projects are the bulk of the work for the course, require a lot of time

and effort, and cannot be completed in a single session. Additionally, keep in mind that these Modules do overlap - starting Week 2, as you are completing the tail end of Module 1, you will need to be starting on the Week 2 Modules. All specific due dates + deadlines will also be outlined in the schedule and the Module lists.

C.2 Lecture Modules, Lecture Videos + Viewing Lecture Content

Each Lecture Module will include content that relates to a key aspect of Game Art Production, and will present relevant case studies to offer historical, real-world context and opportunities to explore a variety of conceptual and aesthetic perspectives and outcomes. These lectures are a mix of written text, image galleries and videos, along with a few outside article links to read-through. They are viewable on a range of devices, including mobile platforms. A short 10 question lecture review quiz, worth 3% of the final grade, is due for each Lecture Module. These quizzes are "open-book", not timed, multiple choice / select all that apply questions via Canvas, but can be taken only once.

C.3 Studio Module Projects

This quarter, you will create a series of studio projects that cover intro-level aspects of game-art production, and also aim to introduce digital programs, tools, and techniques that are useful in game art production and other visual art + design. These projects will build on one another, and be loosely centered around developing visuals for a hypothetical game, inspired by your personal experiences. Since this class is about creating visual game art, you will not need to program this imagined-game, or worry about any aspects of the game design other than the specific, visual production elements that will be covered by each project. It is totally fine - and for the most part expected - that your visual ideas for this game will shift as the course progresses.

Each project addresses a milestone in the art direction development pipeline, and demonstrates corresponding introductory to entry-level technical and conceptual skills and strategies. Utilizing this split methodology, the "big-picture" game development process is presented in tandem with related fundamental digital art and design skills at an achievable scale for an intro, lower-div course.

While these studio projects are all highly related to art production in the gaming world, they are also introducing different programs, technical and conceptual visual processes, and other digital tools that will be useful to a broad range of art and design practices. Many of the projects you work on for this class will be simplified or streamlined compared to what might happen in a "real-world" game art production scenario. This is in order to prioritize a broad range of introductory learning outcomes, cover a bit more ground, and work with the time and scope constraints of the quarter. Due to these factors, many of the processes addressed by the

Studio Projects will look a little different than they do when presented in the Lecture Module case studies.

For Module Sets 1 - 3, there will be 2 projects due EACH MODULE, one worth 10 pts and a shorter one worth 5 pts, for 45% of the final grade.

Studio Tutorial Videos + Instruction

Each studio project is accompanied by a set of tutorial videos that go over the processes and techniques needed to complete the project, step by step. Think of these videos as the hands-on instruction that you would receive in a studio-setting with the TAs and the Instructor in an in-person course. These projects and the videos make up the majority of the instruction of the course, and the majority of the workload, so it is important to go through the videos while working on the Studio Projects. The written project descriptions contain basic instructions and requirements only, and do not provide enough info to fully complete the studio projects.

Grading Studio Projects

These projects are intended to be creative ways to explore and learn the technical aspects of these digital tools, and to better understand ways these tools - or similar ones - could be used for different parts of the game art production process. For those of you who have taken art courses before, we are not emphasizing concepts or ideas, and are mostly evaluating these assignments based on your exploration and application of the technical steps presented in each video tutorial, as well as your creative problem-solving efforts. The tutorials and the instructional videos are centered around the project requirements, so, it is very important to watch through these videos, especially if you have questions about the project requirements.

For all Modules, completing the project to the end point of the video tutorials will earn around 70% - 75% of the grade. The final 25% - 30% of the grade will be based on creativity, effort + time, and/or skill in execution. If you encounter a technical challenge that you could not solve or work-around, provide a note of this in the comments section and describe how you tried to solve it. If this is the first time you have encountered the issue, and it is well documented, any grade deduction will be minimal.

C.4 Final Project

During Week 4, the final project assignment will be posted. It will require producing additional art assets and components using the same processes covered by the previous 6 studio projects, and further refining and developing visuals for the hypothetical game you have been working with throughout the quarter. This project will be an opportunity to work with these processes a second time, make improvements, and explore them further in a slightly more cohesive and narrative-centered focus.

C.5 Asking for Technical Help with Programs + General Project Processes

For this course, there is a procedure for asking technical questions about Photoshop and Illustrator, and also questions about technical project requirements {such as dimensions, file-type, video format, etc.} I define “technical questions” as any question about a program or tool presented in the project tutorial videos, or any process required to complete a project, or any general questions about the requirements posted in the project descriptions. It is not realistic or efficient for the TAs and I to answer individual questions about a project requirement, program, or a process via email - because of this, we ask students to utilize the optional Course Discord, and/or the optional weekly Zoom Office Hours, for these types of questions.

Reminder - this is for technical project questions only, and does not include things like questions about the course, individual assignment grades or concerns or questions about project rubrics or individual project content, extension requests, issues accessing your course portal, DRC accommodations, or any other course concerns. Any questions like these should be sent directly to your grading TA and/or me.

Never hesitate to contact us if you aren't sure how to classify your question. No one will be penalized for sending a question via email that is better suited for Discord - if this happens, we will just direct you to another resource.

For Technical Questions About Projects, Use One Of The Two Options Below

1. Optional Studio Project Discord Channel

Each Module there will be a place to ask technical questions about the software and technical processes needed to complete the module's Studio Projects via our optional Course Discord. This will be the best place for most folks to seek out help from peers about the software that are not addressed in the Studio Instruction Videos. These discussion channels are completely optional, but are one of the systems that we are using for these types of questions. The TAs and I will be active on these boards - but mostly in a moderation role - and all course policies and conduct expectations are in place. We will provide details for joining the Discord during Week 1. Using these will not be required, but they are recommended as a dynamic option for receiving help quickly if needed.

2. Optional Zoom Drop-In Office Hours

Each TA will host at least 1 Zoom Studio Session per week. You can attend any of these sessions, regardless of your assigned grading section TA. You are not required to have

your cameras on, and can ask questions via the chat - just be sure to check the Zoom Policies + Expectations section below to ensure that the Zoom space can be as accessible and safe for all students and instructors as possible. At the beginning of each Zoom Session, if multiple folks are present, the Module's two Studio Projects will be introduced, and the Project Review Checklist will be covered.

After the Project Checklist is discussed, the sessions will open up for hands-on support with the projects, requirements, and technical processes. If you are running into issues with the Studio Projects, attending a Zoom Studio Session is one way to get direct help with a program or process. If you are unable or prefer not to attend a Zoom Studio Session, the course Discord is a great option for similar support.

C.6 Module Lecture Quizzes

Each Lecture Module there is a 10 question Lecture Quiz covering the lecture content. Each of these quizzes are worth 3% of the final grade, 12% total. The questions are a combo of multiple choice, select all that apply and true / false. The quizzes are "open book" and are not timed, but can only be taken once.

C.7 Project Share Assignments

Project Share Assignments will be completed for each project-set and the final project. {4 total} They will be a way to share work and exchange feedback with peers guided by framing questions, via the Canvas discussion boards. Folks can complete these assignments for full credit without sharing their own projects - to do this, you will need to respond to an additional project following the guiding response questions.

C.8 Project Comments

Project Comments will be submitted for each project. They will be very short written comment assignments where you have a chance to briefly describe your production experience, including any insights, successes, and/or any challenges, and to also note if you are using any extension options.

C.9 Assignment + Project "On-Time Submission" Credit

Even though this course is asynchronous, it follows a timeline integral to the teaching, grading and other learning support offered by the Teaching Team, as well as peer feedback, interaction, and support. Optional Zoom Studio Sessions will center around the projects covered in that week's module, the Project Share assignments will be most relevant and helpful if completed in order, as the course progresses, and the Course Discord will also be shifting from module to

module. For all of these reasons, the timelines and due dates for every assignment and project are pretty important, especially with this accelerated 5-week quarter.

Instead of trying to track late deductions by the assignment and project, we will instead use this "on-time submission" credit to grade the general timeliness of submissions throughout the quarter. Each module-set {4 total} of submitted assignments + projects is worth 2 pts each. This "On-Time" submission grade is worth 8 pts total. Each project submitted "on-time" receives 1 pt of credit, separate from the other assignments and quizzes for that module.

These minor late deductions alone will not keep anyone from passing the course, but, if you submit a lot of things several days late, multiple times throughout the quarter, it might be a little harder to earn an "A" grade.

C.10 Optional Project Checklist - Extra Credit

These optional assignments will provide a short, multiple choice quiz to test your understanding of the requirements for each project - it is strongly recommended to complete these before starting the projects, to ensure you understand what is required and expected for each project.

Folks who complete these before the initial project due date each module can earn up to 3 pts of extra credit towards the final grade {1 pt per quiz x 3}.

Course Rules + Policies

P.1 Emails, Discussion Board + Discord Conduct

Course communications will not be graded for spelling or grammar, but it will be helpful to be as clear as you can because you want your question to be understood. When answering your peer's questions, remember that everyone is coming into this class with different levels of experience with - and access to - these tools, processes and programs, as well as experience with game design production as a whole. This course is open to all UCSC students and fulfills a GE, so, it is not limited to AGPM or CSGD folks.

Any intentionally disrespectful communication, bullying, or trolling will be immediately deleted and will subtract 1 pt from the student's 100 point final grade. Any intentional hate speech or directly violent speech will also be deleted and further grade penalties and additional disciplinary action will be applied. This includes all communications and post made via emails, as well as Canvas Discussion Boards and the Course Discord.

If anyone is feeling bullied, uncomfortable, or unsafe with a course communication, post, or message, or if you notice any posts that describe self-harm or harm towards other folks, please do not engage or reply, and email me and your TA immediately.

P.2 Zoom Conduct

If attending a Zoom Meeting, please use respectful communication and language. Cameras are not required to be on, and you can always ask questions via the chat instead of using video / audio. The TAs and I will never pressure you to turn on your cameras or audio, but you are welcome to, as long as you present and act as you would if attending an in-person lecture. This is to keep everyone attending the Zoom Session feeling comfortable and safe.

During Zoom Sessions, be sure to mute audio at all times except when participating in the session conversation or asking a question. Disruptive actions - via video, audio and/or chat - will result in loss of Zoom access and potential further discipline or grade penalties. All Discussion Posts and Written Communication content rules above also apply to verbal or chat communication via Zoom.

P.3 Time Management, Computer Issues + Internet Access

As a professional in the digital design field, I know that some of you are going to encounter equipment issues - like internet outages, or crashed computers - at probably the worst times. I have found this happens more often the past few years. These issues do not automatically excuse late assignment submissions. If something does come up, complete the following steps:

- Take screenshots of any error messages or issues, or photos of any equipment malfunctions.
- Email me and the TA with the issue and any of the above documentation ASAP, even if it is over the weekend
- For internet connection issues, you will need to show a documentation of a network outage from your internet service provider

Each issue will be considered on a case-by-case basis - communication and pro-activeness is very important with these kinds of problems, in both the academic world and in the professional world, and will factor into our decisions to grant re-submissions or extensions. For example, if you notice your computer crashing a few days before an assignment is due, figure out a troubleshooting or repair plan as soon as possible, and let us know as soon as you notice it.

P.4 Extensions + Late work

The last several years have been filled with unprecedented challenges as many individuals, families, and communities have been navigating the ongoing multiple and intersecting challenges of COVID-19, economic loss, systemic and/or targeted racism, climate-change driven environmental disasters, democratic backslide and loss of human rights and protections, war and conflicts happening abroad, and increasing fascist threats of violence and oppression in the US. I hope that folks are finding solidarity and support within their community networks, and I want to ensure that this course's policies and requirements reflect the incredibly challenging circumstances that so many folks are dealing with.

I also understand that all of this is happening in addition to any individual's more "typical" set of academic challenges. For all of these reasons, we want to make it very easy for folks to utilize extensions for late work for the course. Below are the 2 types of extensions granted to each student. Students with DRC accommodations can utilize their accommodations in addition to these extension options.

Every required Project and Assignment in the course has a 48-hour window to submit without late deductions. This does not need to be requested.

Each of you are allowed 1 "Module Set" (Lecture Module + Studio Module) throughout the quarter to submit all assignments and quizzes late without penalty. This is to accommodate any illness or other more disruptive issues or circumstances. If using this option, try to email your TA by the Wednesday that the Module Assignments are originally due - you do not need to wait for a response. Email them again when you have submitted all module assignments.

After utilizing this one-time extension, any assignments submitted after the 48-hour window closes will impact the 8pt "On-Time Submission" credit for the Module Sets {1-4}. Each module set of assignments and quizzes will max-out at 2pts of deductions if submitted up to this deadline.

Each project {out of 7} has a 1 point "On-Time Submission" credit attached to it as well. Everyone has 2 project extensions that can be used - these allow you to submit any two projects by the end of the quarter for no late deductions. If using a extension, it should be noted in the Project Comments once submitted.

If you find yourself consistently submitting assignments and projects more than 5 days after the deadline, please be in touch with your TA and me in order to figure out a plan to better support your progress in the course. This is very important for the quick 5-week quarter.

P.5 Grading Scale

100% and Above A+
99% - 94% A

93% - 90% A-

89% - 87% B+

86% - 84% B

83% - 80% B-

79% - 77% C+

76% - 74% C

73% - 70% C- Considered not passing for graduation / credit requirements

69% - 67% D+ / 66-64% D / 63% - 60% D-

59% - 0% F

P.6 Course Software + Hardware Requirements

Course projects will require full computer {desktop / laptop} versions of Adobe Photoshop + Illustrator {tablet, chromebook, and iPad versions will not work for all of these projects}. All UCSC students have free access to Adobe CC software. I will post more info on how to access this software on the course Canvas site. If you do not have a desktop or laptop that can run these programs, there are many UCSC labs with these programs.

Since this is an opportunity to work with these programs for free, all students are required to use Photoshop and Illustrator as much as possible. All other course content and materials can be viewed on mobile and tablet devices.

A stylus device is not required, but could be used for this course.

Please contact me with any questions regarding these software subscriptions and requirements. There are a few alternative programs that can be used for students who already have experience with them, as long as they are approved via email.

University Policies + Resources

DRC ACCOMMODATIONS

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, we would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. We encourage all students who

may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

GRADE DISPUTES

If you have questions about the grading of your work, please contact your teaching assistant (TA). If your questions are not resolved, please contact me. If the matter still remains unresolved, I will advise you on further options.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty. Acts of academic misconduct during the course, including plagiarism, can and usually do result in failure of the course, at the sole discretion of the instructor of record. If I believe academic misconduct has occurred and a resolution has not been reached after checking in, to be as fair as possible, the case will be reported to the College Provost as per the Academic Integrity guidelines found on the web at: https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct.

Specific to this course, submitting any visual designs that you did not solely author for any of the projects is considered fabrication or plagiarism. This includes visuals made by or with someone else, even if they are "open source", or visuals authored by a generative AI program, even one that you prompt. Visuals include UX/UI assets, character designs, or any other visual aspect submitted for the studio projects that is required to be individually authored. One of the main course objectives is to understand how to design and author visual assets utilizing physical processes like drawing, and digital tools like pixel-based image editors, vector editors, and keyframe animation - using another person's work, or AI generated assets would not meet this learning objective.

Additionally, while co-working is totally welcome for this course, all of the studio projects are individual. If you are working with a friend or roommate who is also taking this course, be sure that the work you submit is fully your own.

COURSE SURVEYS

Course Surveys for faculty will be available online for students to complete towards the end of quarter. You will be sent emails to your @ucsc.edu email from the course survey system to complete your evaluations online for all of your classes. Please be thoughtful in your responses, as we take these evaluations seriously. Course surveys help faculty consider ways to improve instruction and are completely confidential.

TITLE IX

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies call 911.

Faculty and Teaching Assistants are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Office should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment.