

Course: DMED 520: Projects 1 – 6 credits
Term: Fall 2023
Delivery Method: *In Person*
Instructors: Bill Zhao, Dan Scott
Email: bill_zhao@thecdm.ca, dan_scott@thecdm.ca

Course Description

Every digital media project, from web pages to computer games to digital art, involves creating a narrative space, or virtual world. Building large-scale virtual worlds require understanding how to realize creativity in the digital medium, how people see and process information, and how to manage a realistic project that can accomplish an elegant solution.

This course will focus on design thinking, production pipeline, user experience and project management techniques based on real-world examples. This course is extremely hands-on, heavily emphasizing critical thought, design, applied problem-solving, and rapid prototyping. The team-based projects will give students the necessary tools, background and experience to be successful at medium and large-scale digital media projects and will prepare students as they move into Projects II.

All MDM project courses are group-independent studies, where teams of three to six students work on digital projects during that semester. [Projects I](#) focuses on the design and implementation of artifacts in order to solve a client's problem. This rapid immersion into a group problem-solving environment is designed to engage a student in project planning, management and execution. The course aims to provide a solid foundation of problem-solving and methodologies that will apply to future industry projects.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the Projects 1 course students will be able to:

Define and create solutions with value:

- Define the problem space and the project goals
- Identify user pain points/needs
- Effectively articulate the problem statement/business challenge
- Identify different user research approaches and their strengths/weaknesses
- Select appropriate user research techniques to validate your solution
- Identify different prototyping approaches and their strengths/weaknesses
- Rapidly iterate design(s) and prototype(s) that solve the identified problem
- Effectively articulate your rationale for your design decisions
- Successfully complete team-based assignments

Understand and Apply Effective Collaboration Skills:

- Describe and apply agile methodology
- Effectively apply strategies for team communication, conflict management, production process and project planning under time constraints
- Produce effective, well-written, and professional (i.e. appropriate for sharing with a client) documentation that provides context, project goals, and rationale for key decisions
- Demonstrate the ability to work in an interdisciplinary team

Apply Project Management Concepts:

- Explain and apply the key principles of production management and its use in day-to-day practice
- Create an effective, load-balanced project pipeline

- Demonstrate project planning in their projects
- Deliver a professional project within time and resource constraints

Course Topics

- Production and pipeline practices
- Developing business value through primary and secondary research
- Human-centred design (HCD) and Technical-driven design
- User Research to validate design decisions
- Iterative Design/Ideation/Development
- Collaboration via Agile Methodology
- Project management tools and techniques
- Effective Communications and Documentation
- Presentations, pitches, sprint reviews and demos

Format of the Course

Projects I is a course in which student teams design and implement artifacts in a digital environment. The projects have an explicit role in teaching project management, iterative design/development, and best practices for team-based creation. The course will include lectures and workshops that will illustrate techniques.

Students are assigned to groups that balance disciplinary backgrounds. Working together, they will develop a project that meets defined user needs and client expectations. Evaluation in project courses is based on both group and individual work.

Required Materials

Mentoring Digital Media Projects: Project-Based Learning and Teaching for Professional Development: Patrick Parra Pennefather

Recommended Readings

The following list includes suggested readings. Other relevant topics will be distributed through the Projects 1 course page on Canvas.

- ***Design of Everyday Things***: Don Norman
- ***About Face 4.0***: Alan Cooper
- ***100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People***: Susan Weinschenk
- ***Universal Methods of Design***: Bruce Hanington and Bella Martin
- ***Drawing Ideas***: Mark and William Bardel

Schedule

Based on the interaction with students as well as the topics covered by other parallel courses, some topics may be added, modified, or swapped during the semester at the discretion of the instructor.

Week	Date	Assignments
0	Sep 7	Design Jam
1	Sep 12	Design Jam Retro
2	Sep 22	
3	Sep 26	First Project Assignment
4	Oct 3	First Project Development
5	Oct 10	

6	Oct 17	First Project Presentation
7	Oct 24	Second Project Assignment
8	Oct 31	Second Project Development
9	Nov 7	
10	Nov 21	Community Playtesting
11	Nov 28	Project Retro and Presentation
12	Dec 5	Course Retro

Assignments

Assignments will be assigned during the course and all detailed information will be posted on the Canvas.

Assignments in detail

Assignments details will be provided when assigned.

Evaluation

Design Jam	5
First Project	20
Second Project	35
Participation	20
Individual Assignment	15
Self and Peer Review	5

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including participation, group work, tutorials, seminars, online etc.). Students who are unavoidably absent due to illness or disability should notify their instructors of their situation.

Laptops & Cell Phones

The use of laptops and cell phones during class is at the discretion of the instructor. *Please respect your classmates and instructors and refrain from text messages, social media, games and videos during class and workshop times.* Please note you should always bring a pen and paper to class.

Grading Profile

A+	95-100	Greatly Exceeding Expectations
A	90-94	Exceeding Expectations
A-	85-89	Meeting Expectations
B+	80-84	Minimally Meeting Expectations
B	75-79	Marginally Meeting Expectations
B-	70-74	Marginally Unsatisfactory Performance
C+	65-69	Unsatisfactory Performance
C	60-64	
F	0 – 59	Unsatisfactory Performance (students must retake the course)

Tips for Successful Completion of the course:

- Motivation, participation, and attendance should be taken seriously throughout the semester.
- Hand assignments in on time. You have the possibility to extend one assignment per semester. Extensions will only be granted for medical and emergency reasons.

Course Ethics

You are required to use course ethics to do user/play testing. Please speak to your supervisor regarding the steps and policies.

Written & Spoken English

English is the official language of the school and all communication (written and spoken) is expected to be conducted in English. SFU and the MDM Program provide a wide range of free language support for those who need and it's up to each learner to seek that support.

Accommodations

The university accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably the first week of class, if you will require any accommodations on these grounds.

The Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) will make every effort to assist students with disabilities so that they achieve their educational goals.

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/accessible-learning/establishing-accommodations/accommodation.html>

Academic Integrity: Your Work, Your Success

SFU's Academic Integrity website <http://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity.html> is filled with information on what is meant by academic dishonesty, where you can find resources to help with your studies and the consequences of cheating.

Each student is responsible for their conduct as it affects the university community. Academic dishonesty, in whatever form, is ultimately destructive of the values of the university. Furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to the majority of students who pursue their studies honestly. Scholarly integrity is required of all members of the university. <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student/s10-01.html>

Inappropriate use of technology in coursework

If you are using generative AI to produce content that will be part of your graded work in the course, you must be transparent about the tools that you use. Undeclared use of the tool/technology will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. Be aware that any tool used will require you to evaluate the output for accuracies and be responsible for making the appropriate corrections.

Graduate Studies Notes

Important dates and deadlines for graduate students are found here: http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current/important_dates/guidelines.html.