

Course: DMED 520: Projects 1 (6 credits)
Term: Fall 2024
Instructor: Bill Zhao, Dan Scott
Email: bill_zhao@thecdm.ca, dan_scott@thecdm.ca

Acknowledgement of Coast Salish Peoples and Land

We respectfully acknowledge the x̣ṃəθḳʷəỵəm (Musqueam), Sḳẉx̣ẉú7mesh Úx̣ẉumix̣w (Squamish), səilẉətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples on whose unceded traditional territories our campus resides.

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 requires 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 (digital or physical) 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

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, in-class exercises 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.

Course Schedule

The course will run on Thursdays, September 12 – December 5, 2024 from 9AM – 4PM. Your instructors will confirm the schedule.

The following schedule outlines the majority of the topics covered during the course. Based on the interaction with students as well as the topics covered by parallel courses, some topics may be added or modified during the semester at the discretion of the instructor.

Class	Topic
Week 0 (Thursday, Sept 5)	Design Jam
Week 1 (Thursday, Sept 12)	Design Jam Retro
Week 2 (Thursday, Sept 19)	
Week 3 (Thursday, Sept 26)	Project 1-A Assigned
Week 4 (Thursday, Oct 3)	Project 1-A Development
Week 5 (Thursday, Oct 10)	Project 1-A Development
Week 6 (Thursday, Oct 17)	Project 1-A Presentation
Week 7 (Thursday, Oct 24)	Project 1-B Assigned
Week 8 (Thursday, Oct 31)	Project 1-B Development
Week 9 (Thursday, Nov 7)	Project 1-B Development

Week 10 (Thursday, Nov 14)	Community Playtesting
Week 11 (Thursday, Nov 21)	Project 1-B Development
Week 12 (Thursday, Nov 28)	Project 1-B Presentation
Week 13 (Thursday, Dec 5)	Course Retro

Course Topics

- Production and pipeline practices
- Developing business value through primary and secondary research
- Human-centred design (HCD) and Technological-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

Course Assignments

Note: Assignments, due dates, and weighting are subject to change before the start of the semester

Assignment	Weight
Design Jam	5%
Project 1-A	20%
Individual Assignment 1-A	5%
Project 1-B	35%
Individual Assignment 1-B	5%
Participation	25%
Self and Peer Review	5%

Required Readings/Materials

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

Attendance and Participation

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.

- Students are expected to attend every class on the schedule (based on their assigned group) and be fully present. While sickness is sometimes inevitable, understand that due to the experiential nature of the material, classes cannot be made up.
- Lateness also informs grading. Classes start punctually every week according to the schedule. Instructions will not be repeated, nor will it be tolerated if a latecomer bothers another student for instructions. If arriving later than half an hour into a class, a student may be marked as absent.
- Due dates: Assignments granted an extension beyond the due date will have no extended comments; assignments handed in late without prior permission will be returned with a grade only, no comments, and 2% per day late, including weekends (i.e., 4% for Saturday and Sunday), deducted from the grade assigned to your paper. Assignments submitted after the assignment has been returned to the rest of the class will not normally be accepted.

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/enrolment-services/policies-and-procedures/academic-concessions.html>

Grading Profile

A+	95-100	Exemplary expectations
A	90-94	Exceeding expectations
A-	85-89	Meet expectations
B+	80-84	Approaching expectations
B	75-79	
B-	70-74	Below expectations
C	60-69	Far below expectations
F	0 – 59	Fail (Students must retake the course).

A student in a master's or doctoral program must maintain a CGPA of 3.0. Under no circumstances will a student whose CGPA is below 3.0, be awarded a graduate degree.

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/advising-resources/calculators/gpa-calculator.html>

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 pen and paper to class.

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> 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.

Inappropriate use of technology in coursework

If you are using any technology, including generative AI, to produce or edit 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.