Course title and number	VIST 491 – Research (1 credit hour)
Term	Fall 2011
Meeting times and location	Tuesdays 9:35am – 10:50am, Langford Architecture Center, room A-302

Catalog Course Description and Prerequisites

The catalog description of this course is as follows: Research conducted under the direction of faculty members in visualization; emphasis on visual studies. May be repeated 2 times for credit. Prerequisites: Upper level classification; approval of instructor and undergraduate program coordinator.

The specific description for the way this course will be taught this semester is as follows: This course will focus on answering the question of the applicability of agile game development techniques, specifically scrum, to the process of producing a team-based short computer animation. The affordances and conflicts of using an agile scrum approach will be investigated and reported upon.

Learning Outcomes or Course Objectives

By the end of this course it is expected that students will understand the process of animation production as a linearly constrained process by virtue of both the historical roots of narrative storytelling production processes and the technical limitations of the software used to create 3D animation. These limitations will be viewed through the lens of agile development, particularly scrum, which is relatively widely used in game development. By striving to work in an agile manner students will be forced into a pattern of inquiry and investigation to solve problems, overcome limitations, and make elegant compromises. Students will develop and practice their collaborative engagement and communication skills. At the end of the course students will have produced a visual example of their capacity to produce animation using an agile development process and will have produced a written document detailing the affordances and limitations of the capacity to use agile development practices for animation development. Specific learning objectives include:

- Hypothesize about the affordances and limitations of agile development practices for animation.
- Map the processes required to meet performance specifications.
- Solve problems caused by limited resources and/or limited time.
- Match verbal, written, and 2D descriptions of story elements to 3D computer graphics techniques.
- Estimate the time and resources required to accomplish specific tasks.
- Prioritize specific efforts and/or elements relative to the production goal.
- Critique the work of others.
- Defend personal opinions about techniques, aesthetics, and management.
- Produce an animated short film.
- Analytically evaluate the results affordances and limitations of agile development for animation.

Instructor Information

Name	Tim McLaughlin
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Office hours	Upon request
Office location	Langford Architecture Center Building C, Room 109

Textbook and/or Resource Material

Agile Game Development with Scrum by Clinton Keith (ISBN 0-321-61852-1)
The Visual Story –Second Edition by Bruce Block (ISBN 978-0-240-80779-9)

Grading Policies

This is a research-oriented course with an embedded team-based project. Assignments will focus on exploration, inquiry, assessment of results, and teamwork. There will be four sprints, the final project, and a written assessment of the results relative to the research question. The specific definition and requirements for each sprint, the final

project, and the written assessment will be provided in written form in class.

Each assignment will be given a number grade between 0 (lowest) and 100 (highest). The number grade for sprints is based upon the aesthetic quality (1/4), and technical quality (1/4) of results, plus the presentation of issues within the scrum/agile workflow (1/2). The number grade for the final project will be based upon the aesthetic quality (1/3), and technical quality (1/3) of results, plus the degree to which the final results match the original expectations (1/3). The number grade for the written assessment will be based upon the clarity of communication regarding the context of the inquiry (1/2) and the meaning of the results relative to the research question (1/2). Participation is a key factor in this course. The participation grade will be based upon attendance (1/3), capacity to speak appropriately about project related issues (1/3), and evaluation by fellow project members (1/3).

Each project's value in relationship to the composition of the final grade is:
        17.5% Sprint #1 –Project grade * 0.175
        17.5% Sprint #2 –Project grade * 0.175
        17.5% Sprint #3 –Project grade * 0.175
        17.5% Final Project –Procedural Rigging project grade * 0.175
        15% Written Assessment * 0.15
        15% Attendance/Participation grade * 0.15
        100 Total Points Possible

Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Major Assignment Dates

Week	Topic
1 Tues. 8/30	Course introduction; Research questions; Team roles; Expectations; Story development; Resource needs.
2 Tues. 9/6	Agile vs. cascading development. Compatibility of story, art, and model tasks with agile development.
3 Tues. 9/13	Evaluating scope of work; Estimating task time;
4 Tues. 9/20	Use of "toys" in development; increasing the capacity to iterate.
5 Tues. 9/27	Sprint #1 due; Sprint #1 review; Sprint #2 planning. Compatibility of rigging and animation tasks with agile development.
6 Tues. 10/4	Critical review and responding to "owner/client" feedback.
7 Tues. 10/11	Quality control and communication.
8 Tues. 10/18	Sprint #2 due; Sprint #2 review; Sprint #3 planning. Compatibility of surfacing and lighting tasks with agile development.
9 Tues. 10/25	Managing expectations for quality and quantity.
10 Tues. 11/1	Breaking down tasks into sub-tasks. Compatibility of effects animation and compositing tasks with agile development.
11 Tues. 11/8	Sprint #3 due; Spring #3 review; Final delivery planning.
12 Tues. 11/15	Maintaining flexibility late in development.
13 Tues. 11/22	Assessment requirements.
14 Tues. 11/29	Final Project Due.
15 Wed. 12/7	Final Project Screened in VIST Fall Show.
15 Fri. 12/9 by 9:30am	Written assessment paper due.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu

Academic Integrity
For additional information please visit: http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor

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