Games Industry Handbook
Preface

This is a primer for those curious about game-making and interaction design as a career or as a practice. It touches on the many professions and specializations that comprise game development, includes advice for breaking into the industry from community leaders, and offers resources for learning about the craft, culture, and community of games.

While much of this information is geared toward 'game' as object and industry in a mainstream sense, this document doesn’t (and couldn’t) circumscribe all that these practices can be applied toward, nor all that games can be. Interactive experiences take many forms and our own definition of 'game' is constantly evolving. These tools and examples are only some of the ways people make interactive art, and we encourage you to explore and customize a toolset that empowers you to realize your unique vision.

We believe that anyone can make a place for themselves in this medium and that games as a whole are elevated by including more voices. By providing you with information, tools, and resources, we hope that you’ll find some that inspire and equip you to start making interactive experiences for yourself.

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What is the Games Industry?

So! You’re interested in making games - or you think you might be! Fantastic! What exactly is it you’d be getting into?

Games are an interdisciplinary artform. They incorporate many different creative professions, including visual artists, sound artists, software developers, designers, project managers, and many more. Some developers will take on multiple roles to realize their projects, but most teams pull together groups of specialists to bring games to life. If you’re interested in making games, you can probably (almost definitely) find a niche that fits your skills and interests. If you want to see a list of some common roles in a game development studio, check out this powerpoint.

The games industry is quickly becoming one of the world’s largest entertainment markets. There are many kinds of titles, of varying scope, and may be made by large companies with hundreds of employees, small teams, or independent artists (all of whom may also rely on freelance contractors.) If you’re considering getting into the industry, it’s worth considering what scale operation you’re interested in:

- **Console Developers & Publishers**: Huge, multi-national companies like Nintendo, Sony, and Microsoft host both the hardware and brand development of their consoles alongside in-house development and publishing teams.

- **AAA Developer & Publisher Combos**: Companies like EA, Ubisoft, and Take Two Interactive all house massive development teams for their own titles and publishing branches to support other developers. These companies’ releases often have substantial budgets and hundreds of team members.

- **AAA Developers**: Activision/Blizzard, Riot Games, Rockstar, Bethesda, Capcom, Naughty Dog, and many others make up the larger end of development studios. Their games are often the big releases that make headlines.

- **Indie Publishers**: Companies like Devolver Digital, Annapurna Interactive, and Raw Fury support independent development teams with striking ideas, providing platform relations, marketing, PR, and production support.

- **Indie Developers**: This category covers a giant portion of developers, having become a catch-all for small teams (anywhere from single-person to twenty-plus person studios) that aren’t owned by another company. Most of these teams work without guaranteed financial support from a larger, corporate developer and/or publisher, with funding usually sought on a per-project basis.
There are a growing number of terms to describe the studios that don’t fit clearly into AAA or Indie (e.g., **AA, iii.**) Studios like Gearbox Software, Ninja Theory, Supergiant, and Capybara Games exist in this grey area.

- **Hobbyists:** Whether it’s a small personal project that a few people enjoy, or a game jam game that goes viral two years later, hobbyist projects can innovate and influence the industry without needing an enormous budget.

Mapping the Space (and Expanding Your Taste)

A good way to get a sense of the industry and medium is to play more games! Dip into both AAA and Indie titles, switch up your go-to genres, and see what surprises and excites you. If you’re looking to broaden your awareness, the following can be great places to discover fresh titles. Steam and itch.io are also relatively accessible digital storefronts to upload your own projects to, once you’re ready to distribute your work:

- **Steam** — One of the main platforms for PC game distribution. Has a little bit of everything, from major AAA releases to niche indie titles. Charges a $100 fee for uploading your own creations, but making an account to play is free (games themselves must be purchased, but sales happen every few months and lead to heavy discounts).

- **itch.io** — A wildly diverse place to find indie games and personal projects of all kinds. Free to distribute your own work. Also a host site for frequent game jams, offering lots of opportunities to practice your craft.

- **Humble Bundle** — A distribution platform that offers bundles of games, development resources, guide books, comic books, and more, that raise money for charity. The bundles can be a good way to quickly expand your collection and encounter titles you may not have picked up otherwise.

- **IGF nominees** — The Independent Games Festival (IGF) award nominees, while not a comprehensive record of games that did interesting things in a given year, represents a solid annual list of cool indie games to play and an easy way to trace current trends in indie game design. (See also: **IndieCade.**
What is it Like to Work in the Games Industry?

Your experience working in the games industry will depend on where you decide to work and your role within a team. Signing on to a AAA studio as a network engineer will have a very different vibe and workflow from starting up an indie studio with a small team, or doing contract voiceover work.

Thankfully, many games industry professionals are active on social media and share their work experiences online (from talks to editorials to Twitter threads.) Documentarians have also taken interest in game development, producing deep-dive films and series about the process. If you’re seriously considering working in the games industry, check out these documentaries, which provide a glimpse into the lives of different developers:

- **Thank You For Playing** — Follows indie developer Ryan Green and his family as they make a game about their son’s battle with cancer.
- **Double Fine Adventure!** — Catalogues how game studio Double Fine develops a game from Kickstarter pitch to launch.
- **GameLoading: Rise of the Indies** — A collection of stories on various indie developers from 2015.
- **NoClip** — A YouTube channel that produces documentaries on modern and classic games focused on their development processes.

One documentary can’t cover every person’s experience within the games industry, but there are common themes to the pitfalls and challenges that arise.

It’s also worth reading about the current issues surrounding commercial game development. As of the time of this document’s writing (mid-2021), discussions of crunch — the practice of pressuring employees to work unhealthy amounts of overtime in order to meet deadlines — has become an ever-present topic of discussion amongst industry professionals and players alike. To learn more about these discussions, check out these pieces covering various crunch news stories:

- Polygon’s coverage of *Cyberpunk 2077*’s pre-launch crunch
- Kotaku’s coverage on *Red Dead Redemption 2*’s crunch controversy
- Hasan Minhaj’s episode of the *Patriot Act* on crunch in the games industry
Fanbyte also offers coverage of crunch and labor issues in the games industry if you’re looking for further reading.

The games industry has also struggled with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout its existence - despite the early and continued presence of female, BIPOC, and trans and queer luminaries. Discussions of sexual harassment and toxic workplace culture have been consistently relevant and urgent, and the rise of social media extended those conversations to include community relations beyond the studio. GamerGate and other weaponized cultural phenomena reveal entrenched strains of discrimination that permeate a vocal subset of the modern games audience. These troubled patterns are both very important to address and beyond this guide’s scope. We do not feel we can in good conscience promote this space to the widest, most diverse set of creators possible without mentioning these concerns, even as we hold firm and dear the belief that inclusivity in the space is vital to the growth and evolution of games.

To learn more about the discussions surrounding DEI in games, check out these pieces on various current events:

- Polygon’s coverage of a sexual harassment suit levied against Activision-Blizzard
- Polygon’s coverage of the head of Fullbright Studios, Steve Gaynor, stepping down
- Deadspin’s coverage of GamerGate

To combat these problems, advocacy campaigns and labor groups have been fighting for unions to secure healthy working conditions for all developers. More companies are also being founded with an explicit cooperative management structure and/or work-life balance philosophy (e.g. KO_OP, Gravity Well). You can read more about some of these organizations and their work in the Labor Organizations/Movements section of this document. Developers are also talking about how to create working conditions and pipelines that are healthier and more diverse than present standards. This episode of Game Maker’s Notebook presents some of these reformist ideas in an accessible manner.
What Should You Do at Wesleyan?

While Wesleyan currently doesn’t have a game development program, you can still develop a relevant skillset and portfolio during your undergraduate experience. Some of this can be achieved through your coursework, while the rest is best accomplished through extracurricular practice.

For your curricular experience, much depends on your discipline. Since games require coordinating multiple specialists, becoming more practiced in your desired area of expertise will help you bring more to a team. Those ambitiously aiming for solo development should take the time to discover their limits and strengths in a variety of skills.

Whether you choose to get some hands-on experience in others’ disciplines or not, learning to collaborate with team members across specializations is essential to creating a cohesive work. Understanding how to think and talk about design will help you immensely regardless of your practice. Games are all about creating systems and experiences for players to navigate, so being comfortable with the vocabulary used to discuss them will help you communicate across disciplines within a team.

If you’re looking for classes to strengthen your literacy and skills, the Course Lists provided at the end of this document offer suggestions for a few major disciplinary categories (Design, Programming, Art, and Writing) as well as a core set of design classes that are worthwhile for anyone to take.

These lists are not comprehensive. In addition to courses that give you concrete, games-relevant technical experience, many departments (such as AFAM, SISP, RELI, etc.) offer courses that enhance or add to the critical lenses you use to understand the world and create meaning from it. These courses are omitted not because they are irrelevant, but because it is up to you to determine how such lenses fit into your games practice. Enriching your perspective as a creator may mean the difference between making competent games, and making memorable ones.

For your extracurricular experience, the best way to improve at making games is to create them. This will familiarize you with how your discipline fits into the overall creation process. While it may be tempting to jump immediately into a big, impressive project, focusing on creating many small projects will give you more time to iterate on your mistakes and see what sorts of projects you enjoy making. Do not underestimate the value of actually finishing projects, rather than merely starting them, in your development as a game-maker.
Game jams can be a great way to make small games. Community events that provide a theme and time limit, they prompt you to make a small, complete game within clear constraints. This can help you practice your skills and develop a portfolio of small projects with a small time commitment, as jams usually last for two to three days over a weekend. Online game jams also happen frequently, so you can usually find an event that will fit your schedule. For a list of game jams, check out the [Game Jam Resources](#) section of the document.

If you haven't made a game before, the [Learning Resources](#) section of this document can also help equip you with the tools you'll need and tutorials to learn them.
Do You Need Grad School?

The short answer is no. Most games industry job postings emphasize prior experience over graduate-level degrees - but further education can help you accomplish specific goals. Graduate programs for games are more about finetuning your creative or technical craft than getting mandatory training for your role.

If games piqued your interest later in undergrad and you don’t feel satisfied with your portfolio or skills, grad school can be another safe, focused space to develop those. Whether you’re looking to become an Environment Artist, a Network Engineer, or a Level Designer, there are programs that can help you refine your skill set and practice team collaboration within the context of games.

Graduate programs can also be a great way to network. Not only will you meet professors with industry insight and connections, but your classmates may turn out to be exciting collaborators. Joining a talented, motivated, and focused cohort early on in your professional development can be empowering, and these working relationships sometimes last throughout one’s career. Most games-focused programs should have you making games as assignments, giving you chances to find people you enjoy working with and whose skill sets complement your own.

If you do decide to pursue further games education, here are just a handful of notable graduate programs to start your search:

- **USC** — M.F.A in Interactive Media, M.F.A in Interactive Media (Games and Health), M.A in Cinematic Arts (Media Arts, Games, and Health), and M.S in Computer Science with Specialization in Game Development
- **NYU** — M.F.A in Game Design
- **Georgia Tech** — M.S in Digital Media
- **Carnegie Mellon** — Master’s in Entertainment Media (M.E.T degree)
- **UCLA** — M.F.A in Media Arts
- **DePaul** — M.F.A in Game Design
- **DigiPen** — M.S in Computer Science, M.F.A in Digital Arts
Breaking In/Recruiting Tips and Advice

The games industry is constantly changing, as are its hiring processes and paths to visibility. Still, there are some proven practices that will make your journey slightly easier:

- **Build a Portfolio of Your Work**
  - For most employers, merely stating your interest or experience in game-making doesn’t suffice. They’ll want to see it manifest in your work. Depending on your discipline—particularly for implementation-focused roles such as artist, game designer, programmer, etc.—you may want a portfolio that showcases your artistic identity and technical skills when going into interviews.

- **Make Lots of Small Games**
  - The more games you make, and finish, the more chances you have to improve. It is easier to apply lessons learned, and demonstrate growth, on a new project as opposed to mid-project. Showcasing one larger-scale project can be impressive, but highlighting a handful of innovative, polished, and compact games in your portfolio may make a better impression.

- **Make Your Portfolio Accessible and Digestible**
  - Many employers may not have time to actually play through your work. Links to game builds should be accompanied by short descriptions and succinct, polished audio-visual materials. For example, an edited reel of gameplay or artwork with your voiceover commentary providing insight on the development journey can help employers understand your vision and process. (Also good practice for festival submissions!)

- **Polish Your Projects**
  - One of the main differentiators between student and professional work is the attention to detail. Fine, well-tuned systems, interactions and other thoughtful expressions will elevate your portfolio and capture employers’ attention. *(There’s a joke in the industry about the ‘Ideas Guy’: no team needs him. Execution is everything.)*

- **Network by Attending and/or Volunteering at Events**
  - Conferences, conventions, festivals, and trade shows are an excellent way to network with people from all over the industry, and the world. Whether you want to meet potential employers or fellow creators, games industry
events provide a valuable opportunity for introductions that wouldn’t connect as well over email (or take place at all). While events can be nerve-wracking, even for veteran attendees, they can also provide the thrill of discovering or reuniting with your kindred. For a list of potential events to attend (some of which have gone virtual), check out the Conferences Resources section further on in this document.

**“Book the Room, Not the Job”**
- This actor saying means, ‘It’s better to make positive, lasting impressions with people than to get one specific gig.’ Authentic connections can lead to collaborations months or years later, and are worth cultivating with a long-term mindset. We recommend focusing on finding people you genuinely resonate with as a goal in networking and attending events—you’ll find that people respond more joyfully to that energy than to someone seeking to extract a job from them.

For more industry professional advice about hiring, check out these Twitter threads:

- [Kurt Margenau](https://twitter.com/MargenauKurt) at Naughty Dog on applying for games jobs (*Have a portfolio! And make it easy to assess at a glance.*)
- [Thread started by Katey Parr](https://twitter.com/KateyParr) at DICE on what young people need to know about game development before considering a career in it.
- [Jane Ng](https://twitter.com/janeng) on the importance of cover letters (and [sharing a thread](https://twitter.com/janeng) on how to write good ones.)

When you’re ready to start job-hunting, here are a few places to find positions:

- [jobs.gamasutra.com](https://www.gamasutra.com) is an industry standard job board, with postings from larger developers and publishers alongside the occasional indie developer.
- [Workwithindies.com](https://www.workwithindies.com) allows indie developers and publishers from around the world to post openings. They also have an active Discord community that will help people edit cover letters and find openings.
- Twitter is also a great place to look for job listings at studios. [#gamedevjobs](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23gamedevjobs) and [#gamejobs](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23gamejobs) host open roles from all sorts of companies, ranging from internships to senior positions.
- [gamedevmap.com](https://www.gamedevmap.com) has a database of game developers, publishers, and other games organizations sorted by region. If you’re looking to work in a specific place, this website can help you find potential employers there.

Finally, remember that there is no one way to break into the industry. Your path may look nothing like the path that others took before, especially given the industry’s
rapidly-changing nature. And, your eventual specialty may wind up very different from your starting roles. Be persistent, get feedback where possible (and while respecting others’ time), and keep your eyes open for resources and conversations on current hiring practices.
Learning Resources/Game Engines

Online Learning Resources

If you want to start making games but don’t know where to begin, or if you’re looking to acquire additional tools, these resources can help you discover and refine your workflow:

Game Development Tutorials:
- Make a Game in Unity with No Experience — from Tom Francis, maker of Gunpoint, Heat Signature and Tactical Breach Wizards.
- Molly Rocket — “a project designed to capture and teach the process of coding a complete, professional-quality game from scratch.”
- Brackeys — “Top-quality game development tutorials on everything from Unity and programming to game design.” Official Discord.
- Make Games With Katie — from Katie Chironis, Senior Game Designer at Riot Games.
- Derek Lieu — A channel focused on providing information on how to make game trailers and game trailer critique.

Game Design Analysis:
- Game Maker’s Toolkit — “a deep dive into game design, level design, and game production, hosted by Mark Brown.” Official twitter.
- Extra Credits — “Join us on Extra Credits every other Wednesday as we take a deeper look at games: how they are made, what they mean, and how we can make them better.”
- GDC Official YouTube Playlists — organized by discipline by Bryant Francis, Free archived talks from the foremost industry conference.

Documentaries:
- Thank You For Playing — Follows the development of That Dragon Cancer, an indie game made by Ryan Green and his family about his son’s battle with cancer.
- **Double Fine Adventure!** — The story behind the development of Double Fine’s Kickstarter-backed titles, *Broken Age*.

- **GameLoading: Rise of the Indies** — A documentary about the Indie Game development scene from 2015.

- **NoClip documentaries** — “Our mission is to tell authentic stories about video games, the people who make them, and those who play them.”

For actors interested in voiceover:

- **https://iwanttobeavoiceactor.com/* — A comprehensive web guide, created, updated, and fine-tuned by legendary voice actor Dee Bradley Baker. If you’re feeling lost and unsure what information on voiceover to trust - and there’s a lot out there - start here.

- **Queer Vox list of resources** — Queer Vox Academy is a workshop, event series and Discord founded by prolific voice actor JP Karliak. Sarah Elmaleh is “Vice Principal” and teaches the game voiceover section of the workshop. This list is a starter kit for communities, teachers, equipment tips, and more.

**Game Engines**

Finding a game engine you like is an important step in starting to make games. Engines provide a workspace to combine all of a game’s elements (visuals, audio, design) and weave them together through code. There are many options, from the industry standards to tools that don’t require you to write a single line of code. Here are a few examples:

- **Industry Standards:** These engines are some of the most commonly used at both the AAA and the Indie levels (as well as for a range of experimental and non-game uses.) They often market themselves through their substantial feature sets and enterprise scalability, but they also have licensing plans for smaller teams and solo developers. These are full-fledged programs that require a significant amount of time to learn their ins-and-outs. In exchange for your time investment, these tools offer many built-in solutions for implementing complex game infrastructures (things like physics, UI, visual FX, post-processing, etc.) Larger studios will often ask for or require fluency in these tools.
○ **Unity** — A C#-based engine used for game development and interactive art. With a massive feature set, plethora of online tutorials, and active creator community, Unity can handle almost any game idea you may have. To download Unity Personal, check out [this link](#). For some examples of games made in Unity, check out [this showcase page](#) and [this Wikipedia list](#).

○ **Unreal** — A visual-scripting based engine used for game development and 3D rendering. Unreal also provides native support for Python, but its node-based scripting tool (Blueprint) is its primary development pipeline. It includes almost any feature you could need for professional-level development, and has been used for many AAA releases over the years. To download Unreal, check out [this link](#). To see games that have been made using Unreal Engine, check out [this Wikipedia List](#).

- **Alternate/Lightweight Engines:** As games have grown as a medium, so has the array of available creation tools. Communities have built new engines tailored to their needs, polishing their most-used features and removing under-used ones. This allows them to be slightly more lightweight, meaning they demand less computational power to run and create games. Many of these engines lack the deep feature set of the industry standards. While they take less time to learn in comparison, some of that time will be spent implementing fundamental structural elements like physics or UI.

○ **Godot** — An open-source game engine with 2D and 3D workflows. Its node-based architecture is different from industry standard engines, but its thorough documentation and active development community make it approachable and easy to learn. For programming, Godot supports GDScript (a custom, Python-like language), C#, and Visual Scripting. To see some of the projects made in Godot, check out [their showcase page](#).

○ **Gamemaker Studio** — A longstanding option for 2D game development. Has a custom, C-based scripting language in addition to a comprehensive drag-and-drop programming system. Comes with built in physics, animation, and lighting tools and has development support for all platforms. See some big titles that used the engine at [their showcase page](#).

○ **Defold** — An open-source, Lua-based game engine with 2D and 3D workflows. Has a strong feature set and can export titles to almost any platform. You can view some titles made with Defold at [their showcase page](#).
- **LOVE2D** — A Lua-based, 2D-only open-source engine. This engine has no visual editor, opting to work entirely through scripting. If your brain works in code and/or you’re very familiar with Lua, this may be a comfortable engine for you. You can see some example games on their homepage (linked above) and find tutorials on their wiki.

- **Coding Light Tools**: These tools provide a smoother entry point into making games for people who are less comfortable with or interested in programming. They offer visual scripting tools instead of (or in addition to) standard programming languages. If you want to make games but don’t feel confident in your programming skills, these tools may be for you.

  - **Stencyl** — A drag-and-drop-based game engine based off of the Scratch block programming method. While it has a slightly slimmer features list compared to some other engines, it can still be very useful for creating 2D games. You can see some games made in Stencyl at their showcase page.

  - **ink** — An interactive fiction scripting language with a standalone editor and Unity integration. The standalone editor has a fast workflow to create and export interactive stories, while the Unity integration allows you (with some extra legwork) to use the ink language to drive a full game. Some examples of games made using ink in tandem with a game engine include *Heaven’s Vault* and *80 Days*.

- **Non-Standard/Minimal Coding Tools**: Some modern engines require minimal programming or none at all. While they lack the features of larger engines, they offer easy, fast workflows. Whether you are code-averse, or you just want to quickly realize an idea, these tools may be up your alley.

  - **Bitsy** — A pixel-art, tile-based engine. It generally works for a top-down perspective, but has been used for a variety of interesting small experiences. Check out the Bitsy tag on itch.io to see how folks have used the engine.

  - **Twine** — An interactive fiction engine. A highly accessible way to make text-based experiences with branching choice trees. It can also integrate images, video, and sound. Check out the Twine tag on itch.io to see some recent titles using Twine.
○ **Dreams** (PS4/PS5) and **Game Builder Garage** (Nintendo Switch) — Two games that are themselves game development tools. They give players the ability to design their own games and assets using visual scripting or premade pieces of game logic. Players must own either game to play your projects, but both titles are easy and fun ways to start creating games.

○ **Roblox** — An online games platform that allows users to make games and play others’ creations. The Roblox game editor resembles a simplified version of Unity, providing a wide number of features and tools for the user while keeping the interface more approachable. It also has many core features (movement, collision, physics, terrain generation, etc.) pre-implemented and easily accessible, making it easy to get a 3D virtual environment up and running fast.
Game Jam Resources

If you’re ready to try your hand at making games, game jams can be an energizing and social way to dig in. They can force you to try new tools and finish projects, while time and theme constraints expand your artistic vocabulary. Here are a handful of noteworthy game jams, plus some calendars that compile upcoming online events:

- **Global Game Jam**  — An annual, weekend-long, semi-virtual game jam that pulls in developers from across the globe.

- **Ludum Dare**  — A biannual, weekend-long, virtual game jam that allows you to make a game solo or with a team.

- **GMTK Game Jam**  — A game jam run by the Game Maker’s Toolkit YouTube channel. Pulls in a large number of participants and has featured many interesting themes.

- **Indie Game Jams Calendar**  — An enormous calendar featuring online and physical jams from all over the world.

- **Itch.io’s Game Jam Calendar**  — A catalog of game jams hosted by itch.io. Lists a wide range of upcoming events, from larger events like the GMTK jam, to smaller ones for niche prompts or tools.
Games Industry News/Criticism Resources

Games industry news and discourse both move at a rapid (and cyclical) pace that many working game developers don’t necessarily follow. However, tapping into the “Conversation” can be useful or even inspiring. It can help you track AAA and indie design trends, discover compelling new titles and technologies, and sharpen your own critical lens. If you look in the right places, you can even get a mostly free education in game development and analysis. Here are a handful of websites and publications that cover games industry news and criticism:

News/Trade/Critique Outlets

News

● **Waypoint** — Vice’s games coverage section. Provides a mix of game reviews, esports news, and coverage on games-related cultural events. Also has a good podcast with games industry commentary and game reviews.

● **Kotaku** — Covers a wide-range of game-related topics: industry news, game reviews, opinion pieces on games culture, developer/publisher interviews, and more.

● **Fanbyte** — Hosts various pop culture content, including games, TV, film, and wrestling. In addition to news coverage, Fanbyte offers guides for and reviews of recent releases. The site also hosts multiple podcasts on gaming news and culture.

● **Polygon** — A subset of Vox media dedicated to games and internet culture. Publishes game reviews for many AAA and indie releases, in addition to covering major culture stories and the occasional opinion piece.

● **IGN** — A mainstream review and news outlet for the games industry, largely but not exclusively focused on AAA releases.

Trade

● **Gamesindustry.biz** — A trade outlet focused on trends within the business and practice of developing and publishing games. Dives more into the specifics of releasing and making games than sites like Kotaku and Fanbyte, making it an effective resource for learning more about game development at a commercial scale.

● **Game Developer (formerly Gamasutra)** — Another trade outlet that digs into how games are made. Alongside business coverage, Game Developer runs articles
about the design process from all corners of gamedev (art, sound, level design, narrative design, etc.). Developers will also write editorials about their process and experience working on specific titles. If you’re interested in the creative process of making games, this is worth your attention.

- **No Proscenium** & **Everything Immersive** — Industry-forefront roundup and critique of immersive and interactive experiences, including immersive theater. Also has an active Discord community.

**Games Critique**

- **Critical Distance** — A website dedicated to gathering “all the good writing on games” in one place, archiving critique and analysis of games. With monthly digests of articles and video essays about all sorts of games, to curated writings on recent major releases, Critical Distance points readers towards creators, critics, and analysts from a range of backgrounds to expand how we talk about games.

- **Shut Up and Sit Down** — A site focused on board game content. With in-depth reviews, play demos, and livestreams of various board games, Shut Up and Sit Down can feed all your board game curiosities.

- **Unwinnable** — A magazine that covers games, movies, TV, and comics. The authors write a mix of analysis, critique, and opinion pieces, often discussing less-covered games and with interesting lenses of analysis.

- **Kill Screen** — Former print magazine, event organizer and consulting outfit, now runs a series of profiles on diverse and interdisciplinary creators working in and at the edges of games. Sign up for Playlist mailing list for game recommendations; follow the profiles for creative manifestations of academic study into unique, intersectional careers and jobs.

- **Bullet Points** - A monthly, digital publication that looks at how games position themselves within the wider cultural context. Pulls in authors from all over games criticism for long-form articles, in addition to running a podcast.

**Podcasts**

These podcasts range from deep dives into individual creator’s styles to humorous coverage of the latest titles. Many of the journalism outlets above also have excellent companion podcasts. We’ve included some general design podcasts as well, to help expand your design vocabulary:
- **Eggplant: The Secret Life of Games** — Eggplant is a show of “candid conversations with game creators that dive deep into the art, craft, and process of making games.” With Nick Suttner (Panic, ex-Playstation), Andy Nealen (*Osmos*, USC), Zach Gage (*Spelltower, Card of Darkness*) and Doug Wilson (*Johann Sebastian Joust, Mutazione*).

- **Script Lock** — Game writers Max and Nick Folkman (Insomniac Games) interview other game writers about how they approach storytelling.

- **Triple Click** — A chat-focused show where Kirk Hamilton, Maddy Myers, and Jason Schreier (former coworkers at Kotaku) talk about games.

- **The Besties** — Griffin and Justin McElroy, along with Chris Plante and Russ Frushtick of Polygon, rank and review games together.

- **MinnMax Show** — Former Game Informer employees talk about games and the games industry.

- **Designer Notes** — A show hosted by Soren Johnson (*Sid Meyer’s Civilization III* and *IV*) that interviews designers about why they make games and how they approach their craft.

- **Humans Who Make Games** — Comedian and TV host Adam Conover interviews various designers and game creators about their experience making games.

- **Ludology** — An analytical show about the design of board games hosted by Emma Larkins (*...and then we died, Abandon All Artichokes*) and Gil Hova (*Prolix, Bad Medicine.*)


- **The Habibis** — Fawzi Mesmar (EA DICE), Osama Dorias (WB Games), and Rami Ismail (formerly of Vlambeer) talk about games, their game design experience, and living as Arab individuals all over the world while drinking Arab tea.
• **99% Invisible** — Not specifically games related, but talks about design in everyday life, which is 100% relevant to the art of game development. Hosted by Roman Mars.

Twitter

Social media is a constant stream of information about (and criticism of) the games industry. Studios and publishers hype their work, individual devs share stories and personal work, and journalists highlight industry trends and major events. Twitter specifically is a very active platform for games industry folks. We already listed a few notable Twitter threads in the Breaking In section, but if you’re looking for some more people to follow, Sarah Elmaleh’s Games & Interaction Twitter List (warning: added to frequently but infrequently trimmed!) has over 1,500 indie and AAA developers, actors, journalists, critics, academics, event organizers, curators, and more. We recommend giving it a skim and selectively following folks who seem interesting, or whose work you admire.
Events

If you’re looking to network with industry professionals and/or put your finger on the community pulse, there are many conferences and trade shows worth attending. The past few years have also seen a rise in virtual games conferences and community gatherings, ranging from livestreamed events to themed Discord servers. Here’s a list of some of the larger and more well-known events (bearing in mind both that COVID has vastly disrupted the schedule, and that many unmentioned cities across the globe have scenes and events that can be exciting and useful):

**US**

- **Game Developers Conference** (SF, for now) — An extremely large trade conference centered around lectures and panels on the most current practices of game development, with a hidden emphasis on parties, pitches, and deals. Arguably the most important trade and networking/deal-making event of the year.

- **IndieCade** (LA, NYC, Paris) — A festival and conference focused on the indie game development scene, discussing the artistry and practices of indie developers worldwide, and building dev communities.

- **Fantastic Arcade** (ATX) — As described on their site, “Fantastic Arcade is a celebration of indie and cult video games, hosted by The Alamo Drafthouse and curated by Juegos Rancheros”. Its laid-back, accessible vibe is cherished by a devoted cohort of exceptional devs.

- **E3** (LA) — A trade expo that brings major game developers, publishers, and hardware manufacturers together to showcase upcoming titles and products. Formerly focused on selling games to the press and to big-box buyers, but also open to the public as of the last few years.

- **Tribeca Film Festival (Interactive)** (NYC) — While primarily focused on film, the Tribeca Film Festival’s interactive arts portion showcases a variety of games/interactive visual media.

- **PAX** (Boston, Seattle, ATX, Melbourne) — A multi-site games convention focused on games culture and fandom. A public-facing event where devs interact with fans, press interact with devs, and fans get to play new games.
  - Also has **Indie Megabooth**! A large, curated floor section at PAX conferences showing off a collection of indie developers.
• **XOXO** (Portland) — A conference that brings together artists and creators from across the internet to share their work, including game critics and game developers.

• **DICE** — A conference of interactive media hosted by the [Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences](https://www.aias.org), with the self-described goal of “bringing together the top video game designers and developers from around the world and business leaders from all major publishers to discuss the state of the industry, its trends and the future.”

• **SXSW** — SXSW showcases many different kinds of media, including film, music, and interactive experiences.

• **Game Devs of Color Expo** — As they describe on their website, “The Game Devs of Color Expo is a space meant to enlighten and unite, and is open to people of all genders, races, abilities, sexual orientations, and religions.”

• **East Coast Game Conference** — Described on their site as the “largest conference for game developers on the East Coast.” Draws in many narrative design / game writing professionals. Maintains a nice, intimate atmosphere despite its AAA focus.

**International**

• **BitSummit** — Japan’s leading indie game developers conference.

• **Gamescom** — Major (as in huge) European games industry conference, centered around game releases and the business of game development.

• **Reboot Develop Red/Blue** — A game developer and game industry conference in both Canada (Reboot Develop Red) and Europe (Reboot Develop Blue). Known for choosing vacation destination locales with fun excursions and comfortable scheduling - maybe the only conference you’ll come back from restored rather than drained.

• **A MAZE** — A Berlin-based conference and art label for games and interactive media. They’ve hosted pop-up conferences all over the world, including Hong Kong, Croatia, Romania, Palestine, Cuba, South Africa, and Kenya.

• **Melbourne International Games Week** — As described on their site, “Asia Pacific’s largest digital games celebration – featuring online conferences, events and activities for the games industry, games enthusiasts, general public and
educators.”

- **Global Game Jam** — An annual, weekend-long, semi-virtual game jam that pulls in developers from all over the world.

**Virtual**

- **Wholesome Games** — An online movement/organization/conference that showcases cozy and compassionate indie titles. Actively shares twitter threads of games and their developers as well as YouTube and Tiktok videos.

- **LudoNarraCon** — A popular virtual conference hosted on Steam that showcases narrative games and interesting new approaches to interactive storytelling.

**Communities & Organizations**

Game development can be lonely and isolating at times, whether you’re crunching away on a siloed team, a solo dev handling everything on your own, or just trying to break into the industry. If you’re looking for kindred spirits, these groups can provide physical or virtual shared spaces and communal support. Again, this is a short list of well-established groups, but many cities have supportive local development workspaces or meetups for you to uncover:

- **Glitch City (LA)** — An LA-based collective of independent game creators and artists working on separate projects.

- **Indies Workshop (Seattle)** — A coworking office space for game developers, based in Seattle, Washington.

- **Seattle Indies (Seattle)** — A community of Seattle-based, indie game developers. Hosts social events, game jams, and more.

- **Games Industry Gathering (virtual)** — A virtual networking space for game developers, with weekly networking events and a Discord server. (See also offshoots Black in Gaming Industry Gathering and Key Creators Industry Gathering, for LGBTQ+ folks.)

- **Gay Gaming Professionals (virtual)** — An organization dedicated to creating a community space for LGBTQ+ game development talent.
● **Pixelles Montreal (Montreal)** — An organization dedicated to empowering women making games and helping change the games industry for the better.

● **Queer Vox Academy (for queer voice actors)** — Queer Vox is a not-for-profit training academy and community for LGBTQ+ voiceover actors with an active Discord.

● **POC in Play** — An organization dedicated to raising visibility of POC developers and creators in the games industry, as well as running programs to increase representation of POC developers.

● **Babycastles** — A punk-y, influential, NYC-based online non-profit that streams classes and panels while showcasing diverse voices and creators in the game design space.

● **NYU Game Center** — A game incubator within the NYU games program that funds indie developers and runs events, including a prestigious, high-quality lecture series.

● **Different Games** — A grassroots-collective and conference organizer focused on supporting diverse game developers.

### Labor Organizations/Movements

If you’re interested in the advocacy work transforming the games industry into a healthier and more diverse environment, check out what these organizations are up to:

● **Game Workers of Southern California** — Horizontal organization connecting various advocacy groups to progress worker’s rights within the game development industry.

● **Code-CWA** — As described on their website: “The Campaign to Organize Digital Employees (CODE-CWA) is a network of worker-organizers and their staff working every single day to build the voice and power necessary to ensure the future of the tech, game, and digital industries in the United States and Canada.”

● **Games and Online Harassment Hotline** — An anonymous, text-based support hotline for game developers and players to find support for harassment and/or mental health issues.
• **AnyKey** — A non-profit dedicated to increasing diversity in the competitive gaming/esports space.
Funding/Publishing Resources

Making a game is half the battle – getting it out there for people to find and play it is the other 75%. 125% aside, the marketing and distribution of a game is critical to a title’s commercial success in an increasingly hyper-saturated market.

Self-publishing on itch.io or paying to distribute on platforms like Steam is a great way to grow a portfolio and perhaps an audience, while partnering with the right publisher can help your projects reach a wider player base. A publisher is a company that provides funding and commercial support for developers, which may include setting up marketing campaigns and helping with production or post-production. Unfortunately, for an indie developer, landing a publisher can be one of the most emotionally challenging and materially uncertain parts of game development. There are many, many more games being made and pitched than will secure a publishing deal.

Below are some of the bigger names in indie game publishing. You may come across many smaller and likely more accessible publishers in your research. Pay attention to who publishes the games you enjoy playing, or the game trailers and demos that catch your eye at events. If you’re thinking about approaching a publisher, do your research before you connect; knowing the types of projects they take on will help you assess how your game would fit into their catalog, and how to present it to its best advantage. Don’t forget to find out all the materials and information they’ll expect to see so you can be sure to provide those!

Publishers

- **Annapurna Interactive** — Publisher of various indie games, including *Journey, Gone Home, Kentucky Route Zero, The Unfinished Swan*, and *The Pathless*.

- **Raw Fury** — Works with teams across scope and genre. Some of their published titles include *Uurnog: Unlimited, Dandara, Bad North*, and *The Signifier*.

- **Devolver Digital** — A boutique game label that works with indie development teams around the world. Some of their published titles include *Gods Will Be Watching, Downwell, Enter the Gungeon, GRIS*, and *My Friend Pedro*.

Indie Funds

- **Kowloon Nights** — A fund for independent developers worldwide. Some of their funded titles include *A Place for the Unwilling, Spiritfarer, The Red Lantern*, and *Godfall*.
• **Wings Fund** — A fund focused on supporting women and marginalized-gender-identity developers. Some of their funded titles include *Illuminaria, Kabaret, The Fermi Paradox,* and *Button City.*

• **Indie Fund** — As described on their site, “Indie Fund is a funding source for independent game projects, run by a collective of experienced game makers looking to encourage the next wave of game developers.” Some of their funded titles include *Dear Esther, Antichamber, Donut County, That Dragon Cancer,* and *Hyper Light Drifter.* (Note: has been quiet of late, hard to tell how actively they are considering projects at this time.)

**Vendor Networks**
- **The Halp Network** — A network of creative service talents (sound design, voice acting, writers, singers, etc.) who work with AAA and indie developers alike. Their work has been heard in *Cyberpunk 2077, Age of Empires III, Hyrule Warriors: Age of Calamity,* and *Final Fantasy: XIV.*

**PR Firms**
- **Pop Agenda** — A boutique agency that provides assistance with production, marketing, and brand management.
Reference Course Clusters

These lists are suggestions for curating a self-directed, games-focused learning program. The course catalog at Wesleyan is always evolving, and even at the time of writing, there are many classes not listed here that will broaden your artistic and/or cultural understanding.

Regardless of your discipline, if you can supplement your studies with classes from the Design Core Cluster, they will build up a grasp of how to apply design principles to interactive experiences.

Additionally, as of this document’s writing, the IDEAS program is a rapidly growing space dedicated to interdisciplinary thought and collaboration. Their course list could be an interesting place to look for additional design-related courses.

Design Core Cluster

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILM324-01</td>
<td>Visual Storytelling: The History and Art of Hollywood’s Master Storytellers</td>
<td>Most digital games rely on some form of visual storytelling - becoming fluent in film language allows you to benefit from decades of refinement in this discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM331-01</td>
<td>Video Games as/and the Moving Image: Art, Aesthetics, and Design</td>
<td>Similar to the previous listing, but a more explicitly games-focused class. Includes design exercises and prototyping, to examine how design, narrative, and artistic style interact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM250-01</td>
<td>Computational Media: Videogame Development</td>
<td>Currently the only course where you develop a video game. Practice working with a team, build out your portfolio, and apply your games-specific skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST190-01</td>
<td>Digital Foundations</td>
<td>Introductory digital art course covering 2D and 3D design. Learn more about how digital assets are produced. Could substitute for another introductory digital art class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA360-01</td>
<td>Media for Performance</td>
<td>Explores how technology is incorporated into live theater, including VR/AR, projections, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA185-01</td>
<td>Text and the Visual Imagination</td>
<td>Course focused on developing production design skills to support performance, with an emphasis on ecologically sustainable production practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL290-01</td>
<td>Place, Character, and Design: Techniques in Writing Nonfiction and Fiction</td>
<td>Writing class focused on sculpting character and place identity. Learn to build worlds through written narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTH230-01</td>
<td>Anthropology of Cities</td>
<td>Also great for world and environment design: learn how cities grow through both conscious design and organic social forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON101-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Economics</td>
<td>Either 101 or 110. Economics offers a rich systems-thinking lens helpful for designing complex game mechanics (and game economies.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON110-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Economic Theory</td>
<td>Either 101 or 110. See above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP112-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Programming</td>
<td>Any of the intro Comp Sci Classes. Games are a digital medium; knowing basic programming helps you implement game ideas and communicate with engineers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP115-01</td>
<td>How to Design Programs</td>
<td>Any of the intro Comp Sci Classes. See above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC105-01</td>
<td>Foundations of Contemporary Psychology</td>
<td>Understanding interaction means understanding people. Get a handle on the fundamental drives and tactics that inform how players will engage with your...</td>
</tr>
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</table>
work, and expand the human engines in your design.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSYC220-01</td>
<td>Cognitive Psychology</td>
<td>Same as above: goes deeper into the underlying cognitive mechanisms that drive behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC222-01</td>
<td>Sensation and Perception</td>
<td>Knowing how our brains process stimuli will enhance and expand how you attract, retain, and influence player attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC260-01</td>
<td>Social Psychology</td>
<td>See above Psych105 listing, but with a social focus particularly useful both for worldbuilding and multiplayer design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEA170-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Mechanical Design and Engineering</td>
<td>Practice working iteratively, sharpening your work and making it more functionally sound based on experimental results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC311-01</td>
<td>Children’s Learning from Media</td>
<td>Making a game that attracts and sustains children’s attention might just be design hard mode. Learn how kids learn and engage.</td>
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</table>

**Computer Science Cluster**

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<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMP211-01</td>
<td>Computer Science I</td>
<td>Writing solid and efficient code is essential for creating functional games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST190-01</td>
<td>Digital Art</td>
<td>Learn to create digital art; useful both for those intending to become digital artists and perhaps those who will need to implement it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST285-01</td>
<td>Generative Art, Computational Media, and Creative Coding</td>
<td>Similar to above, but with an additional layer of computationally generating art.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Studies in Computer-based Modelling and Digital Fabrication
Another digital art class with a focus on 3D modeling. Can inform your workflow for 3D titles.

### Algorithms and Complexity
Algorithmic processing is a core factor of how games are built and how they run. Practice writing lightweight code for repetitive, complex expressions.

### Computer Networks
Ambitious multiplayer titles require sophisticated network solutions. Learn how computers talk to each other.

### Computer Structure and Organization
The contours of computer construction shape how software can be expressed.

### Design of Programming Languages
Learning the fundamental design of languages will make switching tools easier.

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### Art Cluster

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<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARST131-01</td>
<td>Drawing I</td>
<td>Introductory art class. Particularly useful for the essential art of concepting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST235-01</td>
<td>Architecture I</td>
<td>Learn to create realistic buildings for your world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST243-01</td>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>User interface and user experience design - not to be underestimated as sources of pleasure or friction in a game experience - rely on clear, effective graphic design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST245-01</td>
<td>Sculpture I</td>
<td>Helpful for 3D modelling. Learn to conceptualize and create 3D shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST336-01</td>
<td>Architecture II</td>
<td>See ARST235 listing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST340-01</td>
<td>Painting II: The Shifting Landscapes of the Mind, Nature, and History</td>
<td>Expanding on the fundamentals of ARST131 with exploration of color, perspective, texture, and personal style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Code</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST285-01</td>
<td>Generative Art, Computational Media, and Creative Coding</td>
<td>Digital art course focusing on computationally generated pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARST233-01</td>
<td>Studies in Computer-based Modelling and Digital Fabrication</td>
<td>Another digital art class with a focus on 3D modeling. Can inform your workflow for 3D titles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA305-01</td>
<td>Lighting Design for the Theater</td>
<td>Lighting is an essential tool in environmental storytelling and attracting a player’s attention (and movement) through space. Learn how to use light in 3D spaces to various effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA383-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Costume Design for Performance</td>
<td>Hands-on experience with practical costume design will translate to functionally persuasive, character-authentic, and story-suggestive design for your digital denizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA434-01</td>
<td>Applied Scenography: From Idea to the Stage</td>
<td>Learn to create physically coherent, story-serving 3D spaces.</td>
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### Writing Cluster

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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FILM307-01</td>
<td>The Language of Popular Cinema</td>
<td>Digital games share the principles of screen language with film. Learn from the lessons of film history as an interaction between evolving technology and business with artistic expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM454-01</td>
<td>Screenwriting</td>
<td>Sharpen your dialogue-writing skills, and embrace the interplay between unspoken and spoken narrative delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM336-01</td>
<td>Silent Storytelling</td>
<td>Learn how early pioneers filled every view with evocative narrative information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>CCIV249-01</td>
<td>Classics Beyond Whiteness</td>
<td>Redefine and recontextualize the classics and classical society beyond an uninterrogated construct of whiteness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL310-01</td>
<td>More-Than-Human-Worlds: Theories, Fictions, Languages</td>
<td>Explore more novel, comprehensive self-organization models in your worlds by learning about non-human societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL269-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Playwriting</td>
<td>Similar to FILM454. Learn to write persuasive dialogue while creating meaningful story space for other narrative and interactive elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL296-01</td>
<td>Techniques of Fiction</td>
<td>Add to your narrative toolset beyond mainstream story structures and styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL336-01</td>
<td>Intermediate Poetry Workshop</td>
<td>Games at their best are a series of memorable moments. Learn to make an impact through evocative text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL339-01</td>
<td>Intermediate Fiction Workshop</td>
<td>See ENGL296.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL304-01</td>
<td>Lyric Poetry and Music: The Color and Politics of Cry, Sound, and Voice</td>
<td>Studying poetry in the context of myth, music, and various cultures will give you more storytelling tools, particularly in establishing persuasive in-game societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL384-01</td>
<td>Special Topic: Between Forms: Intermedia Arts Workshop</td>
<td>An explicitly interdisciplinary course for poets and artists - practice applying your expressive discipline to different mediums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL399-01</td>
<td>Advanced Playwriting: Long Form</td>
<td>See ENGL269.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL338-01</td>
<td>Serial Sensations</td>
<td>Learn to write in and make the most of episodic storytelling structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL342-01</td>
<td>Advanced Fiction Workshop</td>
<td>See ENGL296.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILM450-01</td>
<td>Sight and Sound Workshop</td>
<td>Technical training in screen storytelling - build your visual narrative chops while practicing an interdisciplinary, collaborative, solution-based work process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM451-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Digital Filmmaking</td>
<td>See FILM450.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM430-01</td>
<td>Documentary Production</td>
<td>See FILM450.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM448-01</td>
<td>Directing Actors for the Camera</td>
<td>Knowing how actors think and work and learning to collaborate with them productively are essential to capturing engaging performances (and will give you an edge over many, MANY game teams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL384-01</td>
<td>Special Topic: Between Forms: Intermedia Arts Workshop</td>
<td>An explicitly interdisciplinary course for poets and artists - practice applying your expressive discipline to different mediums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA281-01</td>
<td>Introduction to Directing</td>
<td>See FILM448.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEA381-01</td>
<td>Directing II</td>
<td>See FILM448.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFAM361-01</td>
<td>The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination</td>
<td>Understanding the mechanisms of discrimination can help you interrogate it in your work, both in expression and production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC365-01</td>
<td>Seminar on Emotion</td>
<td>From in-game characters to players to teammates, understanding emotion is fundamental to creating art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC200-01</td>
<td>Statistics: An Activity-Based Approach</td>
<td>Understanding how to run user testing will allow you to work with and interpret QA. Stats is core to that process.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>PSYC318-01</td>
<td>Culture and Subjectivity</td>
<td>A course that interrogates subjectivity as a force both subject and in resistance to dominant cultural forces. Relevant to developing a robust understanding and manipulation of player agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC341-01</td>
<td>Psychology of Human Memory</td>
<td>Your work may rely on the player (or even your fellow devs) retaining and synthesizing information into action. Learn the mechanisms of memory to optimize that process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank You for Reading!

We hope this guide has provided useful context for the games industry and entry points for investigation and creation.

If you’re still intrigued, don’t stop here! There’s an abundance of online resources for learning about and making games, as well as finding mentors, peers, and jobs. Think of it like a travel guide: major landmarks and time-tested principles may persist, while many roads and restaurants may close. As the industry changes, events, communities, and tools (such as those listed here) adapt or fall out of relevance, while entirely new ones rise to prominence.

If you do decide to carve a career path into the games industry, good luck and best wishes! We hope these tools help you find your footing.

And even if you decide the industry as we know it isn’t for you, but games and interaction excite and inspire you in your practice, we can’t wait to see what ideas, stories, and worlds you create.

Dylan Shumway, '20 and Sarah Elmaleh '07

Last Edited: September, 2021