Senior Thesis Standards and Requirements 2013
Shaun Foster

Goals and Requirements

Develop a capstone 3D Digital design project that expands upon your skill sets. Requirements:

- ***Choose an Appropriate topic:*** You must have done previous projects in the area which you are doing your thesis.
- ***Carefully read*** the specific requirements for the project description sheet that is closest to the one you are doing
- Original
- Creative
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Highly polished
- Have technical excellence: Meet or exceed expected industry quality standards
- Improve your self management, planning (producer) skills
- You ***must*** submit your project for awards / recognition
- Document and log the entire process
- You must participate at the end of the second quarter in a Senior Thesis show, you will also contribute to an online thesis show web page.

Limitations:

- You will need to pitch your project to your thesis class. Your project scope should be do-able within the time allowed.
- You must build on previous successful skills and projects
- Limit most of R&D to pre-production (first 5 weeks)
- Remember the 80-20 rule of production
- **Quality** is more important than Quantity

Reverse Engineer Your Future:

Consider how your thesis will work towards the future work you wish to do. Find job descriptions from websites like:

- CG Society Jobs
- AWN
- Creative Heads
- SIGGRAPH Jobs

Find recent hire portfolios / demo reels. I will provide a few.

Review the sheet "What studios are looking for in portfolios 2011-12"
>   To make sure you are not doing anything for your thesis project that would immediately remove you from being considered for a job.

Weekly Work Expectations:

You will be given weekly grades. Since this course is 6 credits, you should be doing over:
 18hrs of work per week for this class alone. Each week you should show a time **Blog** justifying your 18hrs.

Due: *Weekly* progress reports:

You will be required to keep an online **Blog**.   Keep the blog simple (recommended Tumblr or Blogger) Track your weekly hourly work time. As previously stated you must be doing a minimum of 18 hours / week on this project.

Weekly Post your time sheets and Work In Progress (WIP) - this will make weekly meeting efficient for critique and review.

Show your work
> Discuss your production workflow. Efficiencies are becoming very important. How can you achieve more creative, quality work in less time.

Pre-Production:

Due Week 7:

- Design Document
- Pitch Presentation

The Design Document:

- A concise statement of the project (1 page abstract)
- A full and specific description of the project
- Research: Primary and secondary research (include a bibliography)
    - What has been done
    - How will your work relate
    - References for time period (if appropriate)
    - Similar projects
    - Inspiration images and other style reference
- Design ideation, sketches, preliminary ideas/designs
- Style Sheets
- Asset and task list(s) Divide your tasks into:
    - *wants - if you are behind - this is not done on the project*
    - ***needs - critical to your thesis project***
- Blocking
- Production timeline
    - Identify project dependencies
    - Leave enough buffer time for problems, changes, and revisions

- - The last few weeks of production should consist of: Baking-up data, printouts and web deliverables *not* continued production work
- Dissemination Plan: All thesis projects must submit to 5+ external venues for review and awards.
- File Folder Organization
  - Create a Thesis Project Organized Files
  - Name your objects
  - Iterative saving of files
  - Backup!!! (have 2-3)

Pitch Presentation:

Prepare a polished presentation using standard presentation software (PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi etc)
- The presentation is legible (minimal text - ie you may not read paragraphs off your slides)
- *Rehearse* to ensure that it fits within the time limit
- Load the presentation on the computer *prior* to presentation time
- Test the presentation in the venue
- Clearly communicate your project idea
  - Why is it a good choice for you?
  - Are you qualified?
  - Are appropriate plans in place to address critical areas?
- Be prepared to defend your choices

Production:

Due Week 15:

Final: In-Production Presentation
Final Presentation of 5 weeks of production and revised production schedule

Additional thoughts on Pre-Production / Production

Constantly Zoom in and out of your work
Zoom in:
> Focus on production - daily production work
> R&D: Review advanced techniques to build into your work

Zoom Out:
> Check and update your timeline on a weekly basis. Show your instructor
>> Are you spending too much too little time on specific items?
> Check your workflow and quality standards
> Organize and label all your work

Don't expect perfection. Just weekly production!

Make sure you hit your weekly production targets.