

Modern Computer Games

COMP 521

McGill University, Fall 2017

Course Details

Time: Tuesday, Thursday, 14:35–15:55

Place: Rutherford Physics 118

Instructor: Professor Clark Verbrugge

Office: McConnell Eng. Bldg., Room 230

Office hours: Wednesdays 10:30-12:00, Fridays 10:00–11:30, or by appointment.

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Email, Website

McGill’s MyCourses will be used for course announcements, to manage assignments and for online discussions. Students are expected to monitor their McGill email account for course-related news and information. The external course website is: <http://www.sable.mcgill.ca/~clump/comp521>

Pre-requisites

- COMP 251 (Algorithms and Data Structures)
- MATH 223 (Linear Algebra)
- COMP 303 (Programming Techniques) *or* COMP 361 (Systems Development Project)
- Ability to program.

Note: students registering without the pre-requisites may find the course removed from their transcript by their Faculty. Please consult the instructor if you do not have all the pre-requisites.

Textbook

There is *no* required text for this course. Notes you take during lectures will be your primary resource. The following supplemental texts are useful references for some of the core concepts.

- Ian Millington. “Artificial Intelligence for Computer Games.” 2nd edition.
- Christer Ericson. “Real-time collision detection.”

Description

This course will introduce students to the core concepts and algorithms in modern computer game design. It covers a wide spectrum of game aspects, focusing on components essential to or common in popular computer game styles. Concepts are backed up by non-trivial programming tasks that allow students to gain practical experience in particular components of game implementation.

Note that computer graphics will not be covered in detail, and 3D graphics will not be covered at all. A limited knowledge of basic graphics methods and techniques will be presumed.

Evaluation

4 Assignments: 60%

Exam: 40%

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Assignment and Exam Policy: Assignments must be submitted on time. Late assignments will only be accepted in highly-exceptional circumstances and only with **written** permission of the instructor. No assignment submissions will be accepted after marked assignments have been returned, or after solutions have been discussed in class.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/> for more information).

More specifically, **work submitted for this course must represent your own efforts.** Copying assignments or tests, or allowing others to copy your work, will not be tolerated.

Course Content

This page shows an approximate lecture plan. Note that lecture topics may shift dates.

Sept 5, 7

- Introduction to games.
- Game genres.
- Fun.
- Player demographics and social requirements.

Sept (7), 12

- Storytelling and narratives.
- Narrative modelling and analysis.

Sept 14, 19

- Abstract terrains.
- Realistic terrains.

Sept 21, 26, 28

- Game physics.
- Collision detection. [Ericson]
- Collision resolution. [Ericson]

Oct 3, 5, 10, 12

- Pathfinding.
- Basic geometry.
- Roadmaps and navigation meshes

Oct 17, 19, 24

- More geometry.
- Visibility.

Oct 26, 31, Nov 2, 7

- Game AI. [Millington]
- Opponents. [Millington]
- NPCs.

Nov (7), 9, 14

- Procedural content generation.
- Game balance, player modelling and adaptation.

Nov 16, 21, 23

- Multiplayer games.
- Consistency, dead-reckoning, timing.
- Massively multiplayer games: persistence, scalability.

Nov 28

- Cheating.

Nov 30

- TBD, catch-up.