

# Course Syllabus – Spring 2025

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## Course Information

### Course Prefix, Number, Section

ATCM, 4367, 001

### Course Title

Level Design II

### Term

Spring 2026

### Meeting Time

Thurs. 4:00pm-6:45pm

### Meeting Location

ATC 3.910

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## Professor Contact Information

<i>Professor</i>	Randall Villegas
<i>Email Address</i>	rvv150130@utdallas.edu
<i>Office Location</i>	3.905
<i>Office Hours</i>	Monday 5:45-6:45pm

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## Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

### Course Pre-Requisites

ANGM 3367 with a grade of C or better or equivalent

### Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage.

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## Course Description

This course is an advanced exploration into the concepts, tools and techniques used in Level Design in a team based setting. You will work with both 2D and 3D applications to design and implement playable game levels to completion. Projects will be completed using the Unreal Game Engine, Git, Trello, Adobe Photoshop, PureRef and (Optionally) Autodesk Maya or Blender.

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## Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

By the end of the course, you should be proficiently able to:

- Establish an advanced understanding of the principles of Level Design and develop maps that manipulate player psychology

- Practice techniques for developing fun, cohesive map designs from pre-production to a polished, decorated map that includes visuals and audio elements
- Create several playable, bug-free maps for a level design portfolio
- Work in a collaborative setting to build a project with team members
- Utilize source control
- Analyze and critique maps from peer developers to further develop level design concept understanding
- Develop a practical understanding of the specific computers and software used in the course.

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### Required Textbooks and Materials

- Epic Launcher and Unreal HUB 5.6.x(School Computer Version)
  - Unreal is free, so feel free to download and test the software on your PC, create a new project
- Adobe Photoshop \*
  - Free alternatives like Photopea.com are acceptable: <https://www.photopea.com/>
  - System Requirements: <https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/system-requirements.html>
- PureRef
  - Free image managing software
- GitHub Desktop
  - Free version control
  - Required to work on projects together.
- OBS Studio or equivalent software \*
  - free for Windows and MacOS
  - <https://obsproject.com/>
- Adobe Media Encoder or Handbrake, or equivalent \*
  - For encoding large videos to smaller sizes for uploading and viewing
  - (free) Handbrake for Windows or MacOS: <https://handbrake.fr/>
  - Adobe Media Encoder: <https://www.adobe.com/products/media-encoder.html>
- External Storage
  - 128 gb 12\$ [Amazon Basics Drive](#)
  - Required for course will be used for grades
  - **Required every class day.**
- Sketchbook/Notebook
  - Some kind of **unlined** notebook for note taking and sketching.
  - 10\$ [Strathmore Rec](#)
  - Required for course will be used for grades

- Required every class day

\* You are free to use other image editing/editing software. You must be comfortable with figuring out the proper processes in your modeling package based on the foundational knowledge provided in the course. Class examples will be presented in the listed packages.

## Suggested Course Materials

Game Makers Toolkit – Level Design

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLc38fcMfcV\\_t6cVUpPXYnooVe1r\\_C0\\_4f](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLc38fcMfcV_t6cVUpPXYnooVe1r_C0_4f)

The Level Design Book

<https://book.leveldesignbook.com/studies/sp>

Peter Field – Spatial Communication in Level Design

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKeUZVikPV8>

## Assignments & Academic Calendar

*Subject to change at Instructor's discretion. All changes will be provided to the class in writing.*

#	DATE	TOPIC/LECTURE	ASSIGNMENT
1	1/22	Elearning - 01 - Course intro Lecture - Course Intro Level Team Assignment Workshop Modeling Tools Primer Assign - Homework 01 - Team Level Study  <b>Trello Account Creation</b>	<b>Software Check</b> - Install all Software  <b>Trello Account Creation</b>  <b>Homework 01 - Level Study 01</b> Turn-in: 1/30  <b>External Storage and Sketchbook</b> Bring to class, every class.
2	1/29	Elearning - 02 - Tension Building Lecture - Tension Building Assign - Project 01A - Sandbox Workshop Project 01 Project 02 Team Brainstorming Examples - Project 02	<b>Project 01A - Sandbox - No Turn in, bring to class for Professor check in 9/10</b>

#	DATE	TOPIC/LECTURE	ASSIGNMENT
3	2/5	ELearning - 03 - Level Architecture Lecture - Level Architecture Professor Team Project Review Assign - Project 01B- PreproLayout	<b>Project 01B - Prepro Elearning Turn-in</b> Due: 2/13 Bring Sketches to Class pinup
4	2/12	ELearning - 04 - Environmental Storytelling Lecture - Environmental Storytelling Pinup Day Assign - Project 01C - Blockout	<b>Project 01C - Papermap and Massing -</b> No turn in Bring to Class for Playtest
5	2/19	ELearning - 05 - Holistic Level Creation Lecture - Holistic Level Creation Short Playtest Day Assign - Project 01D - Whitebox	<b>Project 01D - Blockout Elearning Turn-in</b> Due: 02/27
6	2/26	ELearning - 06 - Blockout Playtest Playtest Day	<b>Project 01E - Decoration</b> (Use as work day)
7	3/5	ELearning - 07 - Portfolio Basics and Work Day Workshop - Portfolio Basics Professor Team Project Review Work time Assign - Project 01F - Portfolio Examples - Project 01	<b>Project 01F - Portfolio- Elearning Turn-in</b> Due 3/13 (End of Day, before Midnight)
8	3/12	ELearning - 08 - Portfolio Showcase Portfolio Showcase and Playtest	Take a Break!
9	3/19	Spring Break	
10	3/26	ELearning - 09 - FPS Combat Level Design Lecture - Combat Design Workshop Modeling Tools Primer Assign - Homework 01 - Team Level Study  <b>Trello Account Creation</b>	<b>Homework 01 - Level Study 01</b> Turn-in: 4/3

#	DATE	TOPIC/LECTURE	ASSIGNMENT
11	4/2	Elearning - 10 - Assign - Project 02A - Sandbox Workshop Project 02 Project 02 Team Brainstorming  Examples - Project 02	<b>Project 02A - Sandbox- No Turnin</b>
12	4/9	ELearning - 11 - Affordance and Learning Lecture - Affordance and Learning Workshop - Sightlines and Multiplayer exercises. Professor Team Project Review Assign - Project 02B - Prepto	<b>Project 02B - Prepro(No Turnin) Bring Progress to next class for Playtesting</b>
13	4/16	ELearning - 12 - P02 Playtest A <b>Pinup Day</b>  Assign - Project 02C - Blockout	<b>Project 02C - Papermap and Missing - Elearning Turn-in</b> Due: 4/24
14	4/23	ELearning - 13 - Audio Immersion Lecture - Audio Immersion <b>Short Playtest Day</b> Professor Team Project Review Assign - Project 02D - Whitebox	<b>Project 02D - Blockout Turn In</b> 4/31 Bring Progress to class 11/21 for Playtesting
15	4/30	ELearning - 14 - Audio Immersion Lecture - Audio Immersion <b>Playtest Day</b> Assign - Project 02F - Portfolio	<b>Project 02F - Final - Elearning Turn-in</b> Due: 5/08 <u>No Late Work</u> Bring Portfolio to 5/07 for Playtesting
16	5/7	ELearning - 13 - Portfolio Showcase <b>Portfolio Showcase</b>	Relax for the holidays!

## Grading Policy

You must demonstrate satisfactory achievement of course objectives through fulfillment of course assignments and by contributing to class discussions and critiques. Course assignments will require you to use software and equipment available at the ATEC computer labs. **Final grades will not be rounded up or down.**

**There are two types of assignments, Team and Individual. Team assignments will be turned in as a group for submission and each member**

**will receive the same grade. Individual will be turned in by individual teammembers and receive an individual grade.**

Assignment Weighting:

2.5% Homework 01 – Team Level Study(Team)

2.5% Homework 02 – Team Level Study(Team)

5% Project 01B – PrePro(Team)

2.5 Project 01B – Pinup Day

5% Project 01C – Papermap and Massing(Team)

2.5% Project 01C – Short Playtest(Individual)

10% Project 01D – Blockout(Individual)

2.5% Project 01D - Playest B(Individual)

15% Project 01F – Portfolio Showcase(Individual)

5% Mid Semester Evaluation

5% Project 02B – PrePro(Team)

2.5% Project 02B – Pinup Day

5% Project 02C - Papermap and Massing(Team)

2.5% Project 02C - Short Playtest(Individual)

10% Project 02D – Blockout(Individual)

2.5% Project 02E – Blockout Playtest(Individual)

15% Project 02F – Portfolio Showcase(Individual)

5% End Semester Evaluation

**100% Total**

Letter Evaluation Thresholds

97 = A+      94 = A      90 = A-

87 = B+      84 = B      80 = B-

77 = C+      74 = C      70 = C-

67 = D+      64 = D      60 = D-

59.99 or less = F

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**Course & Instructor Policies**

**Class Participation**

Regular class participation is expected. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to

comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

### **Playtesting Days**

On Playtesting days, students are required to be present with playable project files (or build) for other students to play. If you are absent or do not have files for playtesting, you will not receive credit.

### **Assignment Documents**

Assignments and all other electronic documents related to the course will be distributed through eLearning. Each week you should receive any relevant course materials and/or homework assignments through that week's Class folder on the eLearning home page.

### **Assignment Turn-in**

Assignments will be turned in through eLearning using links that require you to upload files. Turn-in instructions will be covered during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of the course, but generally you should find the appropriate Assignment Submission link and upload the files indicated in the Homework document.

### **Late Work**

Homework Assignments must be turned in the day noted on the syllabus or they will be considered late. Homework Assignments will not be accepted for normal credit if they are turned in late.

- All Late assignments will receive a flat ten points off, or single letter grade deduction for 3 days and then turn ins will be closed. Unless otherwise discussed with me, there are no exceptions to this rule.
- **Do not email me letting me know** you are turning in a Late assignment. If there are extrenuous circumstance please reach out to me and we can come to a solution together. I cannot help you after the due date.

### **Class Recordings**

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

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## **University Resources**

### **Comet Creed**

*This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:*

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

### **Academic Support Resources**

The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students.

Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

### **UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures**

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the catalog sections regarding the [credit/no credit](#) or [pass/fail](#) grading option and withdrawal from class.

### **Distance Learning Student Resources**

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student AccessAbility, and many others. Please see the [eLearning Current Students](#) webpage for more information.

### **Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties**

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online [eLearning Help Desk](#). The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

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***The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***