Beginning with the Word:
Building a Game Writing Program

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Game

Art

Programming

Audio
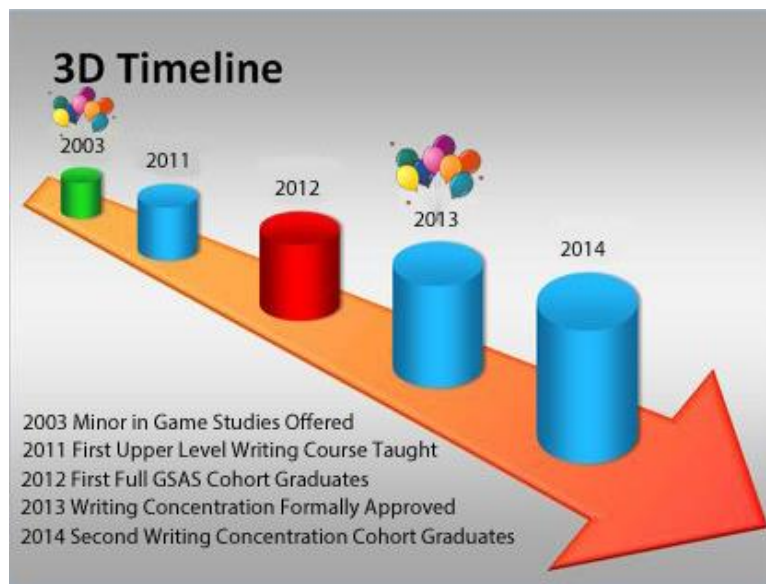
In the beginning was the word…

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Approx. 145 students in total

University of Skövde

B.Sc

Programming — 2002

Game Design

Art
2D, 3D, Animation

Sound Design
Music — 2007

Game Writing — 2012

M.Sc

2008
Serious Games

2012
Digital Narration

Approx. 500 students in total

Curriculum
Game Writing

UNIVERSITY
OF SKÖVDE
1977

Year one
- Game Analysis I
- Creative Writing
- Introduction to Game Design and Prototyping
- Game Project I
- Dramaturgy
- Digital Cultures

Year two
- Programming
- Pre-production of Storydriven Games
- Film History
- Writing for Interactable Media
- Game Analysis II
- Dialog Systems for Games
- Game Project II

Year three
- Experimental Game Narratives
- Scientific Writing
- Elective courses
  - English Writing
  - Game Narratives
  - Game Mechanics
- Final Year Degree Project

Curriculum
Game Writing

Year one
- Game Design
- Art for Interactive Media
- Math course
- Computer Science I
- Game Mechanics
- History & Culture of Games
- Introduction to Communication Theory

Year two
- Character & Story for Games
- Physics I
- Creative Writing
- Writing for Games I
- Writing for Games II
- Video Game Level Design
- COMM or LTR Elective
- Math/Science Elective

Year three
- Game Development I
- Communication Studies
- HASS Core Elective
- Free Elective
- Game Development II
- Writing Internship
- HASS Core Elective
- Math/Science Elective

Year four
- Experimental Game Design
- HASS 4000 Lvl Elective
- HASS Core Elective
- Free Elective
- GSAS Research Project
- Game Writing Core
- HASS Core Elective
- Free Elective
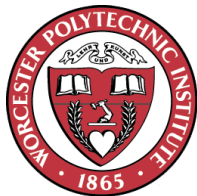
WPI Curriculum

Spring 2015: Storytelling in Interactive Media and Games
Advanced Storytelling: Quest Logic and Level Design

Fall 2016: Storytelling in Interactive Media and Games
Writing for Games I: Character
Writing for Games II: Narrative
Advanced Storytelling: Level Design

Planned: BFA in Writing for Games

Syllabi

UNIVERSITY OF SKÖVDE

Game Project I – Game Writing

Course Objectives:
- plan, organize and implement game writing in a game project,
- seek, examine, evaluate and select information relevant to the game writing work in a computer game project,
- seek relevant information, identify needs of and create material for communication about a game project for internal and external use,
- describe the relevant social and ethical aspects regarding games and game development,
- describe principles regarding communication and collaboration within a project team,
- adapt a game project to technical constraints and constraints regarding time and manpower

Format:
Project course where all disciplines work together in groups making a game in 10 weeks. Each discipline has specific course objectives.

Dialogue Systems for Games

Course Objectives:
- describe and apply basic linguistic theories and concepts relevant for the creation of dialogue systems,
- describe and compare different kinds of dialogue systems in play
- describe the basic components of a dialog system
- discuss dialogue systems importance for game design and
- create game dialogue systems in a given tool

Format:
Focusing on the technical aspects of dialogue writing for games, the students experiment and prototype different setups with dialogue systems using Twine and other tools.

Experimental Game Narratives

Course Objectives:
- identify and describe narrative in different medial forms from a historical perspective,
- compare and discuss different experimental methods for interactable narratives,
- describe and compare theories, methods, and analytical models in the creation of experimental game narratives,
- create game prototypes based on the analyses of experimental narratives and
- present and discuss the produced game prototypes and its corresponding workflow.

Format:
The students makes game based prototypes focusing on narrative and storytelling. Each prototype has a specific theme – children's culture, documentary and finally a free of choice defined by the student.
The process and related theories are discussed in seminars and the prototype is shown at a final presentation.

Syllabi

Character and Story for Games
Course Objectives:
- Provide a framework for analyzing and designing game characters.
- Improve analytic and design skills (including process skills)
- Introduce you to the practices of writers and designers who create characters and stories in the games industry
- Explore key elements of narrative in various types of games
- Develop new insights that expand your creative boundaries
- Develop critical thinking skills that can increase your abilities as a professional communicator
- Improve your presentation skills

Format
This class is designed as a multiplayer game.

Writing for Games I
Course Objectives:
- Accomplish many of the deliverables and production procedures required of writers seeking and attaining employment in the video game industry
  - Portfolio/Inquiry Letter/Resume
  - Personal Pitching
  - Development Team Structure and Dynamics
  - Verbal Presentations
  - Game Proposals
  - Document Revisions
  - Production Slide Decks
  - Concept Document
- Scene Construction and Dialogue
- Write with humor
- Write monologues and soliloquies
- Discover the additional requirements of Applied (Serious/Educational) Games
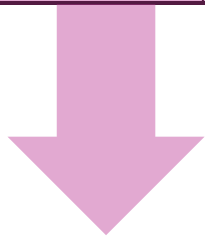
Writing for Games II
Course Objectives:
- Master the various documents associated with video game production
  - Elevator Pitch
  - Game Proposal
  - Game Concept
  - Game Design Document
- Know the differences in writing for various game platforms from AAA titles for game consoles to casual and social network games to Augmented/Alternate Reality games
- Research the variety of formats used for Game Design Documents
- Present ideas/research to teammates
- Practice Game Narrative Techniques
- Practice Game Dialogue Techniques
- Design and deliver Narrative prose and logic
- Design and deliver Dialogue and logic
- Create voice acting scripts

Diversity

| PROGRAM	TERM	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	MEN	WOMEN	% WOMEN
GW12	Fall 2012	24	18	6	25
GW13	Fall 2013	21	17	4	24
GW14	Fall 2014	24	19	5	21
GW15	Fall 2015	24	12	12	50

50% women.
Year of birth ranging from 1978 – 1996
with even distribution in between

CLASS NAME	TERM	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	MEN	WOMEN	% WOMEN
Writing for Games I	Spring 2013	4	4	0	0
Character & Story for Games	Fall 2013	22	20	2	9
Writing for Games II	Fall 2013	4	4	0	0
Writing for Games I	Spring 2014*	8	7	1	12.5
Character & Story for Games	Fall 2014	25	16	9	36
Writing for Games II	Fall 2014	3	3	0	0
Writing for Games I	Spring 2015	13	8	5	38.5
Character & Story for Games	Fall 2015	17**	10	7	41.2
Writing for Games II	Fall 2015	7**	4	3	43

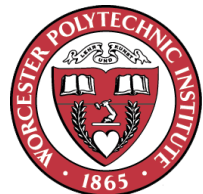*First Semester Writing Concentration was official.
**Fall registration as of June 2015
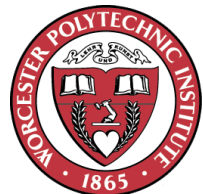
A last word: Why?

- To further the medium!
- Expand the reach of games!
- Among 406 schools offering game courses in the US, only 1 has a full track!
- Gender diversity is enhanced!
- Games are better written!

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Is your administration pro-game education?
- Do you have the faculty now? If not, what would you need?
- Does your curriculum currently have room for game writers?
- Are you looking for another path to diversity?

Thank you!

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