

SER 494 and 594 Game Programming and Design Syllabus

Contact Information

Instructor: Tyler Baron
Office: ASU Poly Campus - PER 230X
Email: tjbaron@asu.edu
Primary Communication Method: Course Slack Channel
Office Hours: TBA

Course Objectives

Course Description

Develop and create 3D games using C# in the Unity game engine. Analyze and compare common game software patterns, while understanding and applying game design best practices.

Course Overview

In this course we will use the Unity game engine to design and develop multiple small game projects. Those will be individual, while there will also be a larger group game project. These will give students the opportunity to practice programming and scripting within an engine, without needing to build a full graphics or physics pipeline. There will also be discussion and small assignments around video game design, and use of serious games.

Pre/Co-requisites

For 494 - SER 334 with a C or better
For 594 - None

Student Learning Outcomes

This course maps to the following Programs outcomes: ABET-3, ABET-5, ABET-7, and SER-1

Student completing this course will be able to:

1. Design and build game logic components within an existing game engine environment (ABET-7, SER-1)
2. Discuss game design principles with others and analyze and provide feedback on arguments made by other students (ABET-3)
3. Work on a small team to deliver a larger game project (ABET-5, SER-1)
4. Present their individual and group work to others and incorporate feedback (ABET-3, ABET-5)

Grading Policies

Assessment Type	Weight
Labs (Individual Games)	30%
Assignments (Individual Non-Game Work)	30%
Group Project	40%

Final Grades:

- A+: $\geq 97\%$
- A: $\geq 90\%$
- B+: $\geq 87\%$
- B: $\geq 80\%$
- C+: $\geq 77\%$
- C: $\geq 70\%$
- D: $\geq 60\%$
- E: $< 60\%$

Note: You will notice that there are no minus scores. There is also no D+.

Absence & Make-Up Policies

If you anticipate not being able to attend any face to face courses due to travel restrictions or personal health concerns, you are expected to contact your professor at the beginning of the semester or as soon as your situation changes to notify them of this fact.

Notify the instructor BEFORE an assignment is due if at all possible if an urgent situation arises and the assignment will not be submitted on time. Published assignment due dates (Arizona Mountain Standard time) are firm. You can contact your instructor (early in the semester) for accommodation on the following:

- excused absences related to religious observances/practices that are in accord with ACD 304–04, “Accommodation for Religious Practices”
- excused absences related to university sanctioned events/activities that are in accord with ACD 304–02, “Missed Classes Due to University-Sanctioned Activities”
- excused absences related to missed class due to military line-of-duty activities that are in accord with ACD 304–11, “Missed Class Due to Military Line-of-Duty Activities,” and SSM 201–18, “Accommodating Active Duty Military”

Alternative arrangements will generally be made for any examinations and other graded in-class work affected by such absences.

Required and Recommended Texts

There are no required texts for this course.

If you are looking for more information, particularly on building an engine yourself, I’d recommend Game Engine Architecture by Jason Gregory.

Course Schedule

This is a tentative list of what you can expect each week:

Week #	Lecture Content
1	Introduction to Course and Course Policies
2	Introduction to Unity Editor and Unity Scripting
3	GameObjects and Transforms
4	Introduction to Game Design
5	Game Engine Software Patterns and (a little) 3D Math for Games
6	User Interfaces and HUD Design
7	Start Group Projects - Discussing Requirements and Pitching
8	File and Scene Management

9	Lighting and Collision Detection
10	Inventory Management
11	Non-Player Characters and Combat
12	Uses of Sound and Terrain Management
13	Further Game Design Discussion
14	Serious Games - Medical and Educational Applications
15	Serious Game Continued - More Educational Uses and Project Wrap Up
16	Group Project Presentations

Classroom Behavior

- Cell phones and pagers turned off during class to avoid causing distractions. The use of recording devices is not permitted during class. Any violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student in this class will be reported to the ASU Police Department and the Office of the Dean of Students.
- Students are expected to participate in the educational process and not be a disruptive element with regard to the learning of others. Safety, self-discipline and respect for others are necessary elements in the educational processes employed in this course. All students should be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct, which can be found at <http://www.asu.edu/studentlife/judicial/>.
- Ample time will be provided to complete homework assignments. The assignments should be turned in by the specified deadline. Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. The only legitimate reasons are business or university related travel or illness for more than half the assignment period with appropriate documentation.
- It is the student's responsibility to keep a backup of all your assignments and projects.
- Feedback on assignments will be provided within 2 weeks of submission. Students have the right to appeal a grade in writing. Submit your typed appeal with the graded item, stating the reason for your appeal. All appeals must be turned in no later than one week after the material has been returned in class.
- Any students who need special needs or accommodations in this course are encouraged to communicate these as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements for these accommodations.

Communication

Communicating with the Instructor outside class:

This course uses Slack Channel for general questions about the course. Prior to posting a question, please check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts. If you do not find an answer, post your question in the relevant channel on Slack. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Email questions of a personal nature to your instructor or assigned TA. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

Slack is the primary way to communicate with the instructor outside of class.

Email and Internet:

ASU email is an [official means of communication](#) among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon an email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

Canvas Messaging:

Do **NOT** use the messaging system built into Canvas as a way to contact the instructor. It is a much harder system to track messages and responses on. Messages sent in this way **WILL BE IGNORED!** Always use Slack or email instead.

Course Time Commitment:

This three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. Please expect to spend around 9 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course.

Late or Missed Assignments:

Notify the instructor BEFORE an assignment is due if at all possible if an urgent situation arises and the assignment will not be submitted on time. Published assignment due dates (Arizona Mountain Standard time) are firm. Please follow the appropriate University policies to request an accommodation for religious practices or to accommodate a missed assignment due to University-sanctioned activities.

Submitting Assignments:

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, **MUST** be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.

Drop and Add Dates/Withdrawals:

This course adheres to a predetermined schedule and may be part of a sequenced program, therefore, there is a limited timeline to drop or add the course. Consult with your advisor and notify your instructor to add or drop this course. If you are considering withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: Withdrawal from Classes, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, and a Grade of Incomplete.

Grade Appeals:

Grade disputes must first be addressed by discussing the situation with the instructor. See the Classroom behavior section for appealing to the instructor. If the dispute is not resolved with the instructor, the student may appeal to the department chair per the University Policy for Student Appeal Procedures on Grades.

Student Conduct:

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior.

Appropriate online behavior (also known as netiquette) is defined by the instructor and includes keeping course discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board posts may be deleted by the instructor.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts incident reports from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Integrity and Copyright Laws

Students in this class must adhere to ASU's academic integrity policy, which can be found at <https://provost.asu.edu/academic-integrity/policy>). Students are responsible for reviewing this policy and understanding each of the areas in which academic dishonesty can occur. In addition, all engineering students are expected to adhere to both the ASU Academic Integrity Honor Code and the Fulton Schools of Engineering Honor Code. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the Fulton Schools of Engineering Academic Integrity Office (AIO). The AIO maintains record of all violations and has access to academic integrity violations committed in all other ASU college/schools.

Specific academic integrity rules for this class are: The Student Academic Integrity Policy of Arizona State University requires each student to act with honesty and integrity and to respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. There are a number of actions that constitute a violation of the policy. These actions in this course include, but are not limited to:

1. practicing any form of academic deceit;
2. referring to materials or sources or employing devices (e.g., audio recorders, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, or commercial research services) not specifically authorized by the instructor for use during tests, quizzes, homework, and class activities;
3. acting as a substitute for another person in any academic evaluation or using a substitute in any academic evaluation;
4. possessing, buying, selling, or otherwise obtaining or using, without appropriate authorization, a copy of any materials intended to be used for academic evaluation in advance of its administration;
5. depending on the aid of others to the extent that the work is not representative of the student's abilities, knowing or having good reason to believe that this aid is not authorized by the instructor;
6. providing inappropriate aid to another person, knowing or having good reason to believe the aid is not authorized by the instructor;
7. submitting the ideas or work of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources (i.e., engaging in plagiarism);
8. permitting one's own ideas or work to be submitted by another person without the instructor's authorization; or attempting to influence or change any academic evaluation or record for reasons having no relevance to class achievement.
9. turning in work/code done by someone else or another pair/group
10. copying work/code done by someone else or another pair/group
11. writing code together with someone else or with another pair/group (unless expressly allowed by the instructor)

A common question in programming courses is the use of code that is googled or found on popular sites such as StackOverflow. Items 5 and 7 pertain to this situation. Most programmers use reference examples, found in print or online. This is fine as a practice but is not acceptable in situations where you are using code to proxy your understanding of the coding concepts applied in that assessment (i.e. lab or in-class activity). First, if you are uncertain if it is allowable or not, verify directly with the instructor before submitting the assignment. Second, if it is allowable, you are still required to a) adhere to all originating author's constraints on the use and licensing of the code, and b) provide proper attribution (full URL to the code snippet or bibliographic reference to a print item). Failure to do so constitutes a violation of this Academic Integrity Policy.

Students may be allowed to work in small teams on lab and in-class assessments. You are to work with your partners and only your partners as directed by the instructor; receiving

assistance from anyone else other than your partners, the graders, teaching assistants, approved tutors or the instructor is considered a violation of this Academic Integrity Policy.

Further, on any paired/group assessments you remain individually responsible for the entire solution you must understand it fully, and there will be no differentiated grades awarded between the individuals in the pair/group. From an ethics standpoint, you have a professional responsibility to your partner to give your best effort on each programming assignment. Failure to do so will be considered an ethics violation.

The penalty for an Academic Integrity Violation (cheating) on an in-class assessment or lab will be a reduction of a course letter grade for the first offense, and failure of the course for a second offense. The penalty for an Academic Integrity Violation (cheating) on an exam is immediate failure of the course. The penalty for an ethics violation will be a zero for the in-class assessment or lab. All violations will be referred to the Dean's Office of the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering.

Students should not release (to GitHub, friends, etc.) any of their completed assignments, in order to ensure that they do not cause an AIP violation during a future semester. If a student in a later class submits your work, you and they will be held accountable.

Copyright

All course content and materials, including lectures (Zoom recorded lectures included), are copyrighted materials and students may not share outside the class, upload to online websites not approved by the instructor, sell, or distribute course content or notes taken during the conduct of the course (see ACD 304–06, “Commercial Note Taking Services” and ABOR Policy 5-308 F.14 for more information).

You may not post any course material (including but not limited to slides, exercises, and assignments), even excerpts, to an external site without the instructor's written permission. If this occurs, you may be penalized for Academic Dishonesty or IP infringement.

You must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.

Policy against threatening behavior, per the Student Services Manual, [SSM 104–02](#)

Students, faculty, staff, and other individuals do not have an unqualified right of access to university grounds, property, or services. Interfering with the peaceful conduct of university related business or activities or remaining on campus grounds after a request to leave may be

considered a crime. All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on- or off-campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students.

Disability Accommodations

Suitable accommodations will be made for students having disabilities. Students needing accommodations must register with the ASU Disabilities Resource Center and provide documentation of that registration to the instructor. Students should communicate the need for an accommodation in sufficient time for it to be properly arranged. See ACD 304-08 Classroom and Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.

Harassment and Sexual Discrimination

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at

<https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

Mandated sexual harassment reporter:

As an employee of the University I am considered a mandated reporter and therefore obligated to report any information regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination that I am informed of or have a reasonable basis to believe occurred.

ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Syllabus Disclaimer

Notice: Any information in this syllabus (other than grading and absence policies) may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice.

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Please remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.