MONASH University
Information Technology

FIT3095
Creating narrative in multimedia

Unit Guide

Semester 1, 2010

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FIT3095 Creating narrative in multimedia - Semester 1, 2010

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Introduction

Welcome to FIT3095 , Creating Narrative in Multimedia. The purpose of this unit information is to give you an overview of the unit, the content of the unit, the way the unit will be taught and the method of assessment.

Unit synopsis

This unit aims to develop the students knowledge of the concept of narrative structure, and its importance in the development of their understanding of how to create, and implement contextually appropriate narrative forms for multimedia products and systems, with a special emphasis on the game environment.
Topics will include: linear, visual and non-linear narrative, historical perspectives on the evolution of the narrative forms, and concepts such as representation, characterisation, point of view, genre, closure, the role of the user, interactivity, immersion and engagement.

Learning outcomes

At the completion of this unit students will:

- understand the concept of narrative structure and a range of techniques employed in the construction of traditional media;
- appreciate the main forms of narrative construction which might be usefully employed in a multimedia environment;
- understand the key areas of research and development in the creation of narrative structures in multimedia environments;
- appreciate the importance of narrative structure to the users experience of multimedia environments;
- appreciate ways in which narrative forms might be adapted to the contextual diversity of different media;
- appreciate narrative techniques appropriate to the multimedia environment;
- appreciate the goals of multimedia production in relation to the input of narrative structure;
- integrate and further develop skills acquired in previous studies to create multimedia for business, entertainment, education and social environments;
- analyse and identify the key elements in the narrative structure of a variety of media and technologies;
- create narrative structures appropriate to both context and user;
- evaluate the ways in which narrative structure contribute to the user experience of the multimedia product or system;
- learn from, adapt and transform narrative models from other disciplines to multimedia environments where appropriate;
- understand that they produce meaning through a language (visual, audio, written etc) and that this language manifests in multimedia representations in order to exchange meaning and to communicate;
- understand the nature of the developing trends in narrative structure within the context of an historical perspective.

Contact hours

2 hrs lectures/wk, 2 hrs laboratories/wk

Workload

For on campus students, workload commitments are:

- two-hour lecture (including review and question time)
- two-hour tutorial (or laboratory) requiring advance preparation
- a minimum of 2-3 hours of personal study per one hour of contact time in order to satisfy the reading and assignment expectations.
- You will need to allocate up to 5 hours per week in some weeks, for use of a computer, including time for newsgroups/discussion groups.

Off-campus students generally do not attend lecture and tutorial sessions, however, you should plan to spend equivalent time working through the relevant resources and participating in discussion groups each week.

Unit relationships

Prerequisites

FIT2012

Prohibitions

MMS3403

Teaching and learning method

Teaching approach

Week 1 The Role of Narrative
Introduction and Overview *(please note - there are no tutorials in week 1)*

Week 2 Storytelling Structures
Exercises and discussion will address the structure of stories in written media, films, animations and computer games. Theoretical overviews on the role of the reader/writer, variations in scene/sequel structures, and the basics of time and dialogue in narrative structures will also be overviewed

Week 3 Genres and Narrative
Exercises and discussion will cover genre and narrative structure with special reference to games, animation and cinema

Week 4 Myths, Legends and Archetypes
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering archetypal characters, classical legends and the creation of stories with the *Monomyth* template.

Week 5 Narrative and Visual Design
Tutorial exercises and discussion introducing visual narrative and the utility of visual design as a narrative device, especially when combined with text

Week 6 Sequential Images; Graphic, Sign and Symbol
Tutorial exercises and discussion introducing sequential images and the way in which elements of images, symbols and icons can organised to support the flow of a visual narrative

Week 7 Sequential Images; Frame and Text
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering comic theory as it relates to storyboarding for games and animations, with special reference to framing, composition and viewpoint

Week 8 Sonic Spaces and Moving Images
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering the interrelationship of sound and video/sequential images and the use of sound as a narrative device in computer animation and game environments

Week 9 The Architecture of Non-Linearity
Tutorial exercises and discussion will overview non-linearity (and parallel narrative structures) and the use of time, space, characterisation and perspective.

Week 10 Theories of Interactive Narrative
Tutorial exercises and discussion on combining interaction and narrative and an overview of various structures within interactive narratives such as branching/levels/nodes

Week 11 Interactive Narrative Environments
Tutorial exercises and discussion continuing the previous week's topics with reference to computer game environments

Week 12 Writing and Scripting Interactive Narrative
Tutorial exercises and discussion will overview the function of typical structures and key features in story driven games and the integration of story telling with gameplay

Week 13 Summary

Project Viewings, overview of non-linear and interactive narrative forms

Timetable information

For information on timetabling for on-campus classes please refer to MUTTS, http://mutts.monash.edu.au/MUTTS/

Tutorial allocation

On-campus students should register for tutorials/laboratories using the Allocate+ system: http://allocate.its.monash.edu.au/

Unit Schedule

Week	Date*	Topic	References/Readings	Key dates
1	01/03/10	The Role of Narrative	Week 1 Reading List	No Tutorial
2	08/03/10	Storytelling Structures	Week 2 Reading List	
3	15/03/10	Genres and Narrative	Week 3 Reading List	
4	22/03/10	Myths, Legends and Archetypes	Week 4 Reading List	
5	29/03/10	Narrative and Visual Design	Week 5 Reading List	Assessment 1 Linear Narrative Analysis and Presentation 30%
Mid semester break				
6	12/04/10	Sequencial Images; Graphic, Sign and Symbol	Week 6 Reading List	
7	19/04/10	Sequential Images; Frame and Text	Week 7 Reading List	
8	26/04/10	Sonic Spaces and Moving Images	Week 8 Reading List	Assessment 2 Visual Narrative Project and Analysis 30%
9	03/05/10	The Architecture of Non-Linearity	Week 9 Reading List	
10	10/05/10	Theories of Interactive Narrative	Week 10 Reading List	
11	17/05/10	Interactive Narrative Environments	Week 11 Reading List	
12	24/05/10	Writing and Scripting Interactive Narrative	Week 12 Reading List	
13	31/05/10	Summary		Assessment 3 Non-Linear Narrative Project - 40%

*Please note that these dates may only apply to Australian campuses of Monash University. Off-shore students need to check the dates with their unit leader.

Unit Resources

Prescribed text(s) and readings

There are no prescribed texts for this unit, though students will be expected to review several key texts during the semester. Some of these texts will be online or in pdf format, others will be titles placed on reserve at the library.

Recommended text(s) and readings

A list of recommended internet references (url's, PDF's, online articles) will be made available as required during the course of the semester. Additionaly, the following recommended texts are available from the library;

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art. Scott McCloud, Harper Collins Inc, 1993

Film Art : An Introduction David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Designing Virtual Worlds Richard A. Bartle, New Riders, 2004

On Game Design, by Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams, Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams New Riders 2003

Required software and/or hardware

No particular software titles or versions are required for this unit, though students will need to be able to create digital graphics
and link them together interactively.

It is likely that students will use a combination of software programs with which they are familiar (Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Flash) and have been introduced to in previous units. For 3D image creation, this unit will
introduce the straightforward editor Google SketchUp, which is free to download at http://sketchup.google.com/. Students are also free
to use AutoDesk Maya. All of these software titles will be installed in the computing labs

Equipment and consumables required or provided

Students studying off-campus are required to have the minimum system configuration specified by the Faculty as a condition of accepting admission, and regular Internet access. On-campus students, and those studying at supported study locations may use the facilities available in the computing labs. Information about computer use for students is available from the ITS Student Resource Guide in the Monash University Handbook. You will need to allocate up to **n** hours per week for use of a computer, including time for newsgroups/discussion groups.

Study resources

Study resources we will provide for your study are:

Assessment

Overview

Assignments: 100%

Faculty assessment policy

To pass a unit which includes an examination as part of the assessment a student must obtain:

- 40% or more in the unit's examination, and
- 40% or more in the unit's total non-examination assessment, and
- an overall unit mark of 50% or more.

If a student does not achieve 40% or more in the unit examination or the unit non-examination total assessment, and the total mark for the unit is greater than 50% then a mark of no greater than 49-N will be recorded for the unit.

To pass this unit you must:

Attempt all assessment tasks.

Obtain a total score from all assessment tasks of 50% or more.

Attend a minimum of 80% of both lectures and tutorials, unless medical certificates are provided.

Your final grade for the unit will be calculated by adding scores for all component assessment items which may be scaled.

Assessment Feedback - Raw Scores
In assessment feedback you will be allocated a raw score that will indicate your general level of performance against the criteria supplied and will be used to determine the rank order of students. You will also be given a feedback and comments that may assist you in the completion of future assignments by discussing the aspects of the assessment response that were completed to a high standard and areas that may be improved.

When raw scores for all assessment tasks are combined the total raw score may be scaled. The scaling of raw scores will not affect your rank order in relation to other students. Scaling of raw scores is intended to provide consistency of assessment outcomes across units within the degree and across courses within the university.

Assignment tasks

Assignment coversheets

Assignment coversheets are available via "Student Forms" on the Faculty website:
http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/student/forms/
You MUST submit a completed coversheet with all assignments, ensuring that the plagiarism declaration section is signed.

Assignment submission and return procedures, and assessment criteria will be specified with each assignment.

- **Assignment task 1**

Title:

Assessment 1: Archetypal Character Creation and Description: 30%

Description:

Brief: Students are to graphically prototype/create images of five archetypal characters for a fictional game. These images will be integrated into a written report of no more than 1000 words which describes each of the characters concisely and details the way in which both the characters and the game background relate to the themes of a recognisable *genre*.

Each student will give a short presentation on their concepts to the class in week 5**.**

Weighting:

30%

Due date:

Week 4

- **Assignment task 2**

Title:

Assessment 2: Visual Narrative Project and Analysis: 30%

Description:

Brief: This assignment focuses on the development of a condensed visual narrative that integrates still images and text and is at least 20 images/frames in sequence. The environment and characters, all of which are sourced/modelled/composed in 3D, should demonstrate McCloud's full range of sequential image transitions.

A short report of 750 words (two pages) will analyse and explain your use of image transitions, framing, and the rationale behind the structure of your condensed narrative.

Weighting:

30%

Due date:

Week 8

- **Assignment task 3**

Title:

Assessment 3: Game Narrative Prototype: 40%

Description:

Brief: Expanding upon the visual narrative proceddures in assignment 2 and some of the theoretical considerations in assignment 1, this assignment involves creating a graphical, interactive expression of the monomyth. Using 3D software (AutoDesk Maya or Google SketchUp) which you will render into still images or animations and link interactively, you are to construct a story in which all the steps of the monomyth are present, though not necessarily in sequence. This is a game prototype which functions as a vasty pared down version of a fully realised game.

Weighting:

40%

Due date:

Week 13

Due dates and extensions

Please make every effort to submit work by the due dates. It is your responsibility to structure your study program around assignment deadlines, family, work and other commitments. Factors such as normal work pressures, vacations, etc. are not regarded as appropriate reasons for granting extensions. Students are advised to NOT assume that granting of an extension is a matter of course.

Students requesting an extension for any assessment during semester (eg. Assignments, tests or presentations) are required to submit a Special Consideration application form (in-semester exam/assessment task), along with original copies of supporting documentation, directly to their lecturer within two working days before the assessment submission deadline. Lecturers will provide specific outcomes directly to students via email within 2 working days. The lecturer reserves the right to refuse late applications.

A copy of the email or other written communication of an extension must be attached to the assignment submission.

Refer to the Faculty Special consideration webpage or further details and to access application forms: http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/student/equity/special-consideration.html

Late assignment

Assignments received after the due date will be subject to a penalty of a 10% reduction in marks for each day (including weekends) the assignment is late. Assignments will not normally be accepted if handed in more than 2 weeks after the due date.

This policy is strict because comments or guidance will be given on assignments as they are returned, and sample solutions may also be published and distributed, after assignment marking or with the returned assignment.

Return dates

Students can expect assignments to be returned within two weeks of the submission date or after receipt, whichever is later.

Appendix

Please visit the following URL: http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/units/appendix.html for further information about:

- Continuous improvement
- Unit evaluations
- Communication, participation and feedback
- Library access
- Monash University Studies Online (MUSO)
- Plagiarism, cheating and collusion
- Register of counselling about plagiarism
- Non-discriminatory language
- Students with disability
- End of semester special consideration / deferred exams