**Course outline: Games Design and Development**

The MA in Games Design and Development is a specialisation within the broader MA in Film and Television.

Games Design and Development is an integrated two-year MA programme offering deep learning and skills development in both Games Design and Development for future games innovators. It includes detailed coverage of Games Art and Animation, Design and Mechanics, Coding and Software Development, and Games Production and Business. It also explores Cultural and Contextual Theories more broadly for effective game critique and analysis. The programme aligns closely with the School's other offerings, and there are exciting opportunities for dialogue and exchange between them.

The programme structure follows a steady, logical progression. Specifically: Year one covers technology and tools, skills development, and professional practices. Together, these form the professional foundation needed for students to develop mastery and fulfil their creative potential. In the second year, students become independent learners and skilful collaborators, applying their technical and creative know-how to create a portfolio masterpiece game.

**Year One**

The first year modules focus on specific project briefs which together enable the student to undertake a logical progression of knowledge, skills and understanding in key elements of game design and development, and in emergent areas of innovation in the field. The module projects are supported by lectures, classes and workshops on pertinent topics, and these are complimented by relevant contextual and critical studies. All students undertake a dissertation.

Games is a multi-disciplinary endeavour, and students need to acquire knowledge from a number of core disciplines. These include **Design**, **Producing**, **Art and Animation Asset Creation**, **Programming and Technology** and **Cultural/Contextual Theory**. While these are not explicitly taught units or modules in themselves, elements from these disciplines run through course projects.

In Year One, students follow a structured, sequential pathway of practical modules.

**1. Hello World: Build a Playable Game Environment**

Using Maya, Unity and related software, students work as a group to collectively design and build a navigable 3D environment for a first-person perspective, single-player experience.

**2. Code Camp: The Fundamentals of Programming**
Code Camp is an intensive module in games programming fundamentals for creating a simple but innovative mechanics-driven game

**3. App Factory: Design and Build a Mobile Game**
Using Unity and related tools (Such as Maya and Photoshop), students work individually within the games cohort to design and implement a mechanics-focused game for a mobile device; phone or tablet.

**4. Synthespians: Create an Interactive Drama**
In Synthespians, students work individually within the games cohort to develop a short, story-driven experience featuring one or more interactive 3D characters.

**5. Moments of Consequence: Gaming and Experiences**
Using the technical knowledge and creative skills from previous modules, students work collectively in small teams within the cohort. Each team must negotiate a design and build a dramatic, interactive experience in collaboration with other departments; such as screenwriters, producers, production designers, sound designers and DFX artists where appropriate.


**Year Two**

Year Two is focused primarily on the production of the Final Major Project (FMP) (aka Graduation Project), alongside workshops and skills development. The FMP represents the culmination of student skills and knowledge applied to a single, dedicated game project, showcasing their creativity and learning. Contextual work continues with Dissertation Development Workshops running during the second year, culminating in the final dissertations before the start of the final term. Career development workshops are offered in the final term, with a combination of industry visits, career advice and CV/Portfolio development sessions.

***Final Major Project***
Each project is allocated a modest budget that may be used to buy additional technical expertise, additional art assets, voice talent, or any other element necessary to make cost-effective contributions.

***Dissertation Development***
Students continue dissertation work, undertaking an in-depth piece of research on a particular aspect of games design and development, or indeed on a tangential field within the general area of media and/or cultural studies.

***Into the Industry: Career Development***
This is a short series of seminars, tutorials and possible studio visits taking place during the year, designed to prepare students for their next career move.

MA Games Design and Development
Commencing January 2019