



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Information Systems

Syllabus

Game producer perspectives on game development

Course Code:	ISAD01
Course Title:	Game producer perspectives on game development <i>Spelutveckling ur spelproducentens perspektiv</i>
Credits:	30
Degree Level:	Master's level
Progressive Specialisation:	Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements (A1N)

Major Field of Study:
IKA (Information Systems)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2025-01-15, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2025 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

A Degree of Bachelor, a Degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts, or a vocational diploma of at least 180 ECTS credits, or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

Module 1: The phenomenon of game development (7.5 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. explain game production as a multidisciplinary activity,
2. describe the differences between software development and game development,
3. explain the ecosystem around game development,
4. give an account of basic business models, and
5. describe the development of the game industry over time.

Module 2: Agile game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. give an account of game development from a lifecycle perspective for games,
2. identify and describe challenges in the different phases of game development projects, and
3. reflect upon agile system development in a game development context.

Module 3: Leadership in game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. critically discuss the concept of leadership in game development,
2. give an account of the differences and similarities between the roles of lead, producer, and manager,
3. discuss crucial differences between leading employees in game studios in good times and hard times,
4. critically examine, give an account of, and reflect upon how the motivations and behaviours of individuals influence the work environment and creativity in a game development studio, and
5. suggest and justify relevant tools and working methods for effective multidisciplinary game development teams.

Module 4: Scaling of agile game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. give an account of general problems related to scaling of agile project environments,
2. critically discuss approaches to scaling, and
3. reflect on the role of the game producer in long-term game management.

Content

The course consists of four modules.

Module 1: The phenomenon of game development (7.5 ECTS cr)

The first module is focused on the special conditions that apply to the production of digital games. These include the tight feedback loops between game design, visual and acoustic design, and programming that characterise game production. They also include aspects of launch and maintenance, as these differ from other software development. The module treats the ecosystems around game development, basic business models (selling games, in-game purchases, 'long tail', advergaming, and 'aligning technology'), storytelling in computer games, and the development of the game industry over time.

Module 2: Agile game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

In this module, the objectives of agile project forms in game production are explained in relation to problems within game development. Case studies are based on development environments in small studios, medium-sized studios, and large studios, as well as mobile game development. The different phases of game development are also covered: concept, pre-production, production, post-production, and Scrum for game developers. Special attention is given to processes and development environments for quality and visualisation of the product backlog.

Module 3: Leadership in game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

This module treats the concepts of leadership, transformative leadership, and destructive leadership, as well as differences related to leading a group, leading groups, and group identities, such as the differences between a group within one's own studio and a group in a subcontractor studio with its own brand. The module also covers the similarities and differences between leadership roles, especially lead, producer, and manager. The module also addresses theories and models regarding the motivations, behaviours, and development of individuals and groups, particularly concerning feedback for organisations, groups, and individuals. Leading employees with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD) is highlighted.

Module 4: Scaling of agile game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

This module addresses general problems associated with the scaling of agile-oriented organisations for software development. Different approaches to scaling and the need to move between long-term and short-term planning are discussed. Organisational forms for long-term game management are examined in relation to the game producer's role in the game studio.

Instruction is in the form of lectures, guest lectures by professionals in each module, case seminars, literature seminars, and targeted interviews with professionals. The course is multidisciplinary and includes theories from information systems, especially system development, as well as business administration, psychology, and working life science.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Module 1: The phenomenon of game development (7.5 ECTS cr)

Assessment is based on individual written take-home exams and written hand-in assignments completed in groups and discussed in seminars.

Module 2: Agile game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

Assessment is based on individual written take-home exams and written hand-in assignments completed in groups and discussed in seminars.

Module 3: Leadership in game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

Assessment is based on individual written take-home exams and written hand-in assignments completed in groups and discussed in seminars.

Module 4: Scaling of agile game development projects (7.5 ECTS cr)

Assessment is based on individual written take-home exams and written hand-in assignments completed in groups and discussed in seminars.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to Targeted Study Support due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to give such students an adapted examination or to examine them in a different manner.

Grades

One of the grades Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course. For a grade of Distinction (VG), students have to receive a grade of Distinction (VG) for at least three out of four modules.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

Course Certificate

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

Additional information

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor and Master levels at Karlstad University

stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.