Introduction & Overview

Artificial Intelligence for
Interactive Media and Games

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What does the "X" stand for?

"Experimental" !!

- The first time this course is being taught
- We plan to make it a regular offering
- You are the "guinea pigs"
  - there *will* be problems
  - I want your feedback (continual and at end)
  - no one will be "screwed" by my mistakes

What this course is *not*

- It is not about artificial intelligence
  - "real" AI practitioners would find everything we are going to talk about very boring
    - take CS 4341 if you want to learn about AI
  - in games, pretty much *everything* except graphics (sound) and networking is called the "AI"
    - even game physics often lumped into "AI"
    - game AI mostly about controlling non-player characters
    - but sometimes operates more broadly, e.g.,
      - > civilization games
      - > interactive story generation

Academic AI vs. Game AI

(From Buckland Introduction)

- Academic (Research) AI
  - "strong": tries to mimic human thought processes
    - branch of cognitive science
    - e.g., modeling memory, learning, emotion
  - "weak": focuses on solving real-world problems
    - e.g., computer vision not same as human vision
    - more optimal solution is usually more desirable
- Game AI
  - much more stringent time/memory resource limitations (though increasing)
  - *bad* if "too smart", i.e., player must be able to have fun and win

The Illusion of Intelligence *(From Buckland Introduction)*

"If the player believes the agent he's playing against is intelligent, then it is intelligent."

- Lots of "cheap tricks" which have nothing to do with academic AI, e.g.,
  - simply increasing number of hits to kill
  - adding player-responsive utterances/actions, such as "Who's there?" or head tracking
- Illusion is also easy to destroy, e.g.,
  - running into walls, stuck in corners
  - seeing through walls (and other kinds of "cheating")

Game AI and the Illusion of Intelligence

Conclusion:

The use of AI in games (like many other aspects) requires a careful balancing, which ultimately needs to be verified by play testing.

What this course is *not*

- It is not about using game engines
  - you did plenty of that in IMGD 3000/4000
  - you are going to do "hard core" C++ programming
    - directly on top of standard system libraries
- It is not about fancy graphics
  - focus on the game AI programming techniques
  - text-only game
  - two simple 2D top-down games
    - programmed directly on top of window system

What this course is *not*

- It is not a chance to expand your game portfolio
  - that's what your MQP is for
  - you won't have the stress of doing homework programming assignments and trying to develop a final game project at the same time
- It is not another chance to practice your group skills
  - you've had a lot of those already
  - group skills are very important, but not a replacement for really excellent individual programming skills

The Goals of this Course

1. To develop deep, practical knowledge of current AI game programming techniques
   - concrete algorithms and data structures you can use in your first development job
   - applying best software engineering practices
2. To make you aware of future trends in applying AI to game programming

This is a senior-level course and I will expect a high level of participation and effort!

How are we going to achieve these goals?

1. Deep, practical knowledge
   - read and discuss lots of good AI code
     - Buckland's "industrial strength" source code
     - you will probably end up keeping this code to cut & paste into future projects
     - you will be expected to read a portion of Buckland's code before each class and will be called on in class to discuss what you have read
   - write and explain lots of your own AI code
     - programming assignments (of varying sizes) will be due almost every Weds and Sun night
     - you will be called on in class to explain some of your code

Text Books

- ***Required:*** *(dog-eared, highlighted)*
  Mat Buckland, Programming Game AI by Example, Wordware, 2005.
- *On reserve at the library for reference:*
  Ian Millington, Artificial Intelligence for Games, Morgan Kaufmann, 2006.

How are we going to achieve these goals?

1. Deep, practical knowledge (cont'd)
   - execute and critique lots of AI code
     - we're going to have two "tournaments" in which your AI code competes against Buckland's and your classmates' code (for bonus grade points!)
     - design discussions before each tournament regarding how to improve on Buckland's code
     - *post mortem* after each tournament to figure out what distinguished winners and losers

How are we going to achieve these goals?

2. Future AI awareness
   - six lectures on future AI topics, e.g.,
     - report on AI in Interactive Digital Entertainment conference, Oct. '08
     - believable characters
     - machine learning for games
     - interactive story generation
   - evolving AI middleware
     - each student will be assigned an "AI engine" to research
     - and will give a 5 minute presentation in class (near end of term)

Week	Day	Book	Lecture	Homework
1	Tue, Oct 28		Intro/Overview/Admin	
	Wed, Oct 29			1 - Hello West World [3%]
	Thu, Oct 30	Chapter 2	State Machines	
	Fri, Oct 31	Chapter 2	Event Messages	
	Sun, Nov 2			2 - Bar Fly [5%]
2	Mon, Nov 3	Chapter 4	Simple Soccer Anatomy	
	Tue, Nov 4	Chapter 4	Simple Soccer Anatomy	
	Wed, Nov 5			3 - Tank States [5%]
	Thu, Nov 6	Chapter 4	Simple Soccer Anatomy	
	Fri, Nov 7		**Futures:** AIIDE Conference Report	
	Sun, Nov 9			4 - My Team [3%]
3	Mon, Nov 10		**Discussion:** Soccer Team Improvements	
	Tue, Nov 11	Chapter 6	LUA Scripting	
	Wed, Nov 12			5 - Team Design [3%]
	Thu, Nov 13	Chapter 6	LUA Scripting	
	Fri, Nov 14		**Futures:** TBD	
	Sun, Nov 16			6 - Scripting [5%]
4	Mon, Nov 17	Chapter 7	Raven Anatomy	
	Tue, Nov 18	Chapter 7	Raven Anatomy	
	Wed, Nov 19			7 - Tournament Team [10%]
	Thu, Nov 20	Chapter 7	Raven Anatomy	
	Fri, Nov 21		**Soccer Tournament** (IMGD Lab)	
	Sun, Nov 23			8 - Add Weapon [3%]

5	Mon, Nov 24		**Futures:** TBD	
	Tue, Nov 25		**Futures:** TBD	
	Wed, Nov 26		*Thanksgiving Break*	
6	Mon, Dec 1	Chapter 9	Goal-Driven Behavior	
	Tues, Dec 2	Chapter 9	Goal-Driven Behavior	
	Weds, Dec 3			9 - Damaged Bot [5%]
	Thu, Dec 4	Chapter 9	Goal-Driven Behavior	
	Fri, Dec 5		**Discussion:** Raven Bot Improvements	
	Sun, Dec 7			10 - Bot Design [3%]
7	Mon,Dec 8	Chapter 10	Fuzzy Logic	
	Tue, Dec 9	Chapter 10	Fuzzy Logic	
	Wed, Dec 10			11 - Game Brains [5%]
	Thu, Dec 11		**Presentations:** Game Brains	
	Fri, Dec 12		**Futures:** Interactive Story Generation / Course Eval	
	Sun, Dec 14			12 - Tournament Bot [10%]
8	Mon, Dec 15		**Futures:** TBD	
	Tue, Dec 16		**Raven Tournament** (IMGD Lab)	
	Thu, Dec 18		**Final Exam** [30%]	

Book Chapters Not Covered in Class

Ch 1 A Math and Physics Primer
- should already be well known to tech students

Ch 3 ... Autonomously Moving Game Agents
- steering behaviors (including "flocking")
- already covered in IMGD 3000/4000

Ch 5 The Secret Life of Graphs
- basic graph data structures and algorithms
- covered in basic computer science courses

Ch 8 Practical Path Planning
- navigation meshes, etc.
- already covered in IMGD 3000/4000

You are responsible for this material as it is used in the code of other chapters !

Grading

- Programming homework **55 %**
  - 5 small @ 3 pts
  - 4 medium @ 5 pts
  - 2 large @ 10 pts
  - ***late penalty:*** *1 day = 1 pt, 2 day = 2 pts, >2 day = no credit*
- Class preparation/participation **10 %**
  - everyone will be called on at least once per class
  - you need to read chapter *before* class to be prepared
- Presentation (Game Brains) **5 %**
- Final exam **30 %**
- Plus tournament bonus points

Logistics

- Teaching assistant - T.J. Loughlin (tjloughl)
  - TA office hours (FL Sub-Basement): TBD *now*
- My office hours (FL B25b): Mon 2-3pm, Thu 3-4pm
- Home page http://www.cs.wpi.edu/~rich/courses/imgd400x
- Homework submission
  - via https://turnin.cs.wpi.edi:8088
  - due midnight of due date (site doesn't close, but submission time logged)

Communication

- my.WPI forum for general and homework questions
  - recommend subscribe option for both threads
  - post questions here (vs. email to me) unless confidential
  - TJ and I will read at least once per day, but do not expect answers (from TJ or me) at 11:30pm on due date!
- Email list: imgd400x-all
  - only for urgent announcements

Academic Honesty

- You are encouraged to talk about programming assignments with classmates, even to help each other debug code. However, cutting and pasting someone else's code or emailing your code to someone else crosses the line.
- Cheating is a serious offense, punishable by an automatic NR for the course.
- Institute policy on academic honesty will be followed in all cases.

First Homework due Weds. midnight!

1. Read Chapter 2 in preparation for Thurs/Fri classes
2. Download source code from course home page
   - compile and run it in Visual Studio 8 (2005)
   - VS 8 available free at WPI
   - code has been tested and will be supported in this development environment only
   - see details on course home page (click on first homework in syllabus table)

Questions?