



UCLA GAME LAB SUMMER INSTITUTE

(Session B.1 - IN-PERSON RESIDENTIAL) July 20 - August 2, 2025

The UCLA Game Lab is an internationally renowned, creative research center that approaches game development and design as a discipline that combines technology and the arts.

Founded in 2009 by artist and game designer Edo Stern, a professor in the Department of Design Media Arts, the lab is sponsored by the School of the Arts and Architecture and the School of Theater, Film, and Television.

The lab's mission is to foster the production of various game forms and game-related research along three areas of focus:

- Game aesthetics - the experimentation with the look, sound, language and tactility of games
- Game context - development of games that involve the body, interface, physical space and/or performance in new ways
- Game genres - examination of the history and discourse of gaming and the development of game forms that explore new subject matter for games and push the boundaries of the medium

In the Game Lab's Summer Institute Program, students will have the opportunity to develop the fundamental skills required to create games and game art that express a personal and subjective approach to game making.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program schedule

Residential hall check-in, Sunday, July 20

Classes, Monday, July 21 – Friday, August 1

Residential hall check-out, Saturday, August 2

During this two-week/four-course program, students will take two courses during week one (July 21-25), and two courses during week 2 (July 28-August 1). Students will be expected to attend two class sessions every day (one for each course that week).

THE COURSES

Game design

This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of game design, such as creating playable characters, designing conflicts and choices, and giving players compelling motivations and goals. Students will work to create their own tabletop game with a focus on game systems, game flow, creativity, and aesthetics. It is the goal of this course for students not only to produce an original game, but also to develop an understanding of how game design really works, and to explore the potential of games for creative expression.

Character animation

Videogames give us characters to control, and this course provides an introduction on how to create playable characters through modeling and animation. Students will develop a 2D character or avatar, which they will learn how to bring to life through stylized visualization and movement. This emphasis allows students to learn various aspects of modeling and animation as applied through After Effects, a state-of-the-art modeling and animation application.

World building

Videogames rely on world building to give game environments narrative potential and playful motivation. In this course, students will put the concept of world building into practice by creating a game environment in the Unity game engine (a leading development platform for creating indie/professional games). Students will use multiple environmental elements, such as buildings, plants, terrain, and lighting to create a navigable game world.

Game programming

Videogames use computer programming or code to express movement and collision, provide spaces for interaction, and capture player input. This course introduces students to the fundamentals of game-related coding while developing a playable videogame. Using a creative graphics programming toolkit for creating games, students will build a videogame, playtest the results, and make refinements as part of an iterative design process (a common approach to game design in indie and professional game development).

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

(All times PDT)

Sunday, July 20

Time TBD – Residential hall check-in

Week 1 - Monday, July 21

9 a.m.-12 p.m. – Welcome and orientation (EDA space, Broad Art Center)

12-1 p.m. – Lunch break

1-5 p.m. – Game play and discussion: what makes a game really good?

Week 1 - Tuesday, July 22 – Friday, July 25

9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – Class 1 of 4

12:30 p.m.- 2 p.m. – Lunch break

2-5:30 p.m. – Class 2 of 4

Week 2 - Monday, July 28 – Thursday, July 31

9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – Class 3 of 4

12:30 p.m.-2 p.m. – Lunch break

2-5:30 p.m. – Class 4 of 4

Week 2 - Friday, August 1

9 a.m.-11 a.m. – Course evaluations and setup for game exhibition

11 a.m.-12 p.m. – Lunch break

12 p.m.-2 p.m. – Exhibition, EDA space at Broad Art Center

Saturday, August 2

Time TBD – Residential hall check-out

After the Summer Institute

- Students will be able to download all work saved to their account during the Summer Institute for ongoing personal development or for portfolio use.
- Completed student work from each of the four courses will be exhibited online as a virtual gallery for students and parents to enjoy!

Course syllabi and Welcome Packet

Students will receive complete syllabi with daily schedules and project goals as part of their welcome and orientation packet in person on the first day of the program.

Faculty and Staff

All faculty and teaching assistants are practicing game design artists and educators affiliated with the UCLA Game Lab, with extensive experience and expertise in their respective course subjects. Each course will be led by a faculty instructor and teaching assistant, with additional staff to provide support.

Program location

Orientation and exhibition (first and last days of the program) will take place in the Experimental Digital Arts space (EDA for short), first floor of Broad Art Center.

All classes will be held in the following two locations:

Computer Lab – Luskin School of Public Affairs - Room 1015A

Broad Art Center – Classrooms - Room 3252, 4230, 4240, 4250

Final exhibition

Friday, August 1 at 12 p.m., EDA, [Broad Art Center](#)

At the conclusion of the Game Lab Summer Institute, we would invite parents to attend a final exhibition of the students' work. The showcase will be held in the EDA space in the Broad Art Center at 12:00 p.m. on August 1, the last day of the program. The EDA is located on the 1st floor in the 8-story wing of the Broad Art Center. The gallery entrance is just north of Richard Serra's T.E.U.C.L.A. sculpture located in Broad Art Center's plaza.

Exhibition Parking

For parking, the closest spaces to the Broad Art Center are found in the north end of [Parking Structure 3](#). Please note the arrow on the map to locate the northern entrance to the structure; this is the only entrance accessible to visitors on a non-permit/pay-by-space basis. Daily permits are sold based on available spaces at [Parking and Information booths](#) located throughout campus and at [Parking Pay Stations](#). Motorcycles and motor scooters do not require parking permits, but may park only in designated areas.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Suggested items to bring

- Sweater, sweatshirt or light jacket as it may get cool in some of the classrooms.
- Lunch money as lunch is not provided. Participants may purchase lunch at any of the eating establishments on campus.

Leave at home

- Expensive jewelry or irreplaceable items.
- Objects generally not appropriate for a school setting.

While the Game Lab Summer Institute provides all necessary tools and materials—including computer stations—for the program, you may bring a laptop, tablet or mobile device if you wish. We particularly encourage you to bring a mobile phone if you have one—but again, this is not required. To help you keep track of your own devices, we strongly recommend that you document any serial numbers, as these can prove ownership in the event a device becomes lost and recovered. Please be sure to keep track of all your belongings.

Commitment to diversity and inclusivity

UCLA Game Lab Summer Institute is committed to the values of diversity and to fostering an environment of inclusivity for all students and staff, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, age, political affiliation, or religion. We expect students and staff to respect these values and to help ensure that the Summer Institute is a safe and supportive environment for everyone.

Contacts

Questions, please contact:

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We are looking forward to seeing you!