

# CA3: have fun and play!

6700630 / creative application, semester 2, 6 ects

*Æliens*

## course description – ca3: have fun and play!

The course description(s) are taken from the accreditation report Creative Technology (version 2.0).

**content(s)** The course is meant as an integrative project, which combines the various elements introduced in the first year of creative technology, where students experience the need for planning and project-management. Topics include:

- application of creative technology elements
- explore combination smart technology & new media
- development interactive game play
- write business & communication plan
- reflection on societal context of media & smart system deployment

Although acquisition of the actual theme of the project must be done by senior staff, students will be expected to take an active part in the selection of theme(s) and target(s), and developing the final application(s) or product(s).

The project is meant to function in a local festival, preferably in cooperation with organisations such as:

- [www.creativefabriek.nl/](http://www.creativefabriek.nl/)
- [www.planetart.nl](http://www.planetart.nl)

**prerequisite(s):** CA1&2, CS1&2, NM1&2, ST1&2, MA1&2, DE1&2

**goal(s) & attainment target(s)** The integrative nature of the CA3 project will contribute to more firmly establishing skills, and deepening students' knowledge of smart systems and interactive media applications. The course aims at providing

- awareness of business models and the societal context of projects
- familiarity with requirements analysis, planning, concept-development and project-management
- fluency in problem-finding and ways of generating ideas
- full literacy in applying learned skills to tackle problems in system development

Students are expected to be well-motivated, and will be stimulated in problem-finding and the exploration of creative solutions.

**place in curriculum:** Integrative course for end of first year.

**application area & motivating example(s)** Each year a preparatory investigation must be done, preferably by a group consisting of staff members and students, in close contact with potential industrial or societal partners, to select one or more potential theme(s) and topic(s) that may serve as a challenging target.

**teaching method(s)** The structure of CA3 project will be determined by the students themselves. The role of the staff will primarily be to safeguard the project from (beginners) mistakes, and to encourage critical reflections on decisions and potential consequences. To avoid potential misunderstandings, this is not total freedom, but rather a strictly supervised approach, where established standards of project-management will not serve as a prescription, but rather to give feedback and control initiatives originally formulated and proposed by (groups of) students.

Feedback will be given in workshop sessions, and by assessing the products as made available online. Peer reviews will not only be used for feedback, but will also form part of the procedure of assessment and grading. Grading takes place by assessing the work in a presentation session, where students present and discuss their work and contributions to the group project..

**special facilities** Contacts with potential industrial or societal partners must be established, which may require additional technical support.

## course outline(s) – ca3: have fun and play!

In this part a more detailed discussion will be provided of **topics**, **learning goals**, **materials** used, and the actual **structure of the course**, as well as a sketch of the **assignments** given. Also **references** to relevant literature is provided, including **online resources**. At the end, **advice for students** following the course will be given, as well as **hints for the instructor(s)**.

### course topic(s)

As a **creative application**, which takes place at the end of the first year, the *have fun and play!* course has, strictly speaking, no actual course topics, but is rather defined as a collection of high level requirements for the student(s) to achieve:

- application of *creative technology* elements
- explore combination *smart technology & new media*
- development interactive game play
- write business & communication plan
- reflection on societal context of media & smart system deployment

A major principle here is **self-organization** and **learning by challenge**, that is finding suitable challenges for achieving the goals set.

### learning target(s)

In terms of skills, competences, etcetera, the learning goals of this course can be indicated as follows:

- skill(s) – multi-platform technical development
- knowledge – interaction & game play
- theory – smart technology, media & communication
- experience(s) – large scale application with (societal) impact
- attitude – acquisition, problem-finding, self-organization, creative solutions

Perhaps not present in the list in a sufficiently explicit way is that the application must be resistant to **public exposure**, and that the student must develop a sense of **aesthetic responsibility** as well as a sufficient degree of **artistic autonomy**.

### lesson material(s)

The material that will actually be relevant during the course, will to a large extent depend on the actual topics chosen and the **context of application**, for example a regional festival, or a contribution to **interactive theatre** production(s).

- canonical example(s) – art(s) / quote(s)
- (online) reference material(s) – visual design / game development
- challenging target(s) – multimedia theatre / VJ! / festival(s)

Very likely, the notion of **urban space(s)** will play a role, one way or another, where urban space must be understood as any space outside the private space of the home where interaction between people is one of the denominated functions of that space, be it a meeting room in a health-care institution, a market place for regional goods, or the dance floor in a late night disco. The challenge here, obviously, is to develop applications that conform with the **primary function(s)** of such spaces, using technology that is available, affordable and sufficiently robust to be deployed in such a context.

### course structure

Despite the self-organizing nature of the course, a sequence of sessions is needed to guarantee continuity of work, and to avoid the risk that the *creative application* diverges into one of the many pitfalls that haunt such projects.

session(s)

1. introduction topic(s) & challenge(s)
2. exploration of platform & production requirements

3. planning – concept & application development
4. establishment of business plan
5. contract negotiation & realization
6. basic media and communication theory
7. business and societal context of the creative application(s)
8. delivery and presentation of final application(s)

Dependent on the size of the group, additional mechanisms of **monitoring progress** may be needed, including logs, periodic accounts, and regular feedback or possibly even **shout-out sessions**.

### assignment(s)

With the actual format depending on the application context, we can indicate as a minimal set of deliverables and presentations the items collected in the list below:

assignment(s)

- concept pitch presentation(s)
- planning - approach, realization, deployment
- report(s) – application development and installation
- evaluation(s) – summary of experience(s) and deployment result(s)

To guarantee that progress can be monitored and that results can be evaluated, the group(s) must **maintain a website** with all relevant information available in a sufficiently accessible way.

### reference(s)

Apart from some general information about for example **agile method(s)**, we have included some references to our own work, not as a reference in the sense of a standard to be adhered, but rather to **share experience(s)**, and indicate a possible format for **writing a report** or even paper to be published at some suitable venue.

1. method(s) – [www.agilemanifesto.org/principles.html](http://www.agilemanifesto.org/principles.html)
2. resource(s) – game design patterns / team work
3. Eliëns A. and Vyas D., Panorama – explorations in the aesthetics of social awareness, In Proc. GAME-ON 07, Nov 20-22, University of Bologna, Marco Rocchetti (ed.), p. 71-75, EUROSIS-ETI Publication, ISBN 9789077381373
4. Eliëns A., van de Watering M., Huurdeman H., Bhikharie S.V., Lemmers H., Vellinga P., Clima Futura @ VU – communicating (unconvenient) science, In Proc. GAME-ON 07, Nov 20-22, University of Bologna, Marco Rocchetti (ed.), pp. 125-129, EUROSIS-ETI Publication, ISBN 9789077381373
5. A. Eliëns, topical media & game development – [media.eliens.net](http://media.eliens.net)

A wealth of material and references can be found at my **topical media & game development** site, including tutorials and examples.

### online resource(s)

As online resources, we suffice with a brief list of links to online manifestations or descriptions of art. The student is encouraged to bypass this list and google his/her way around, searching information and inspiration(s).

- (my)mondriaan – [www.cjny.com/mydata](http://www.cjny.com/mydata)
- charm(s) – [www.dgc-cga.org/about](http://www.dgc-cga.org/about) ;Li digital – [www.digt-paint.nl/digital\\_view](http://www.digt-paint.nl/digital_view)
- demo(s) – [pilgrimage.scene.org/demoscene.html](http://pilgrimage.scene.org/demoscene.html) – (wikipedia)
- net – [www.jodi.org](http://www.jodi.org)
- emergent – [www.sandberg.nl](http://www.sandberg.nl)
- science – [computational-aesthetics.org](http://computational-aesthetics.org)

The given resources, and those found with search, should also be looked at from the **perspective of design**, that is as one of the possible ways to present information on the web. Use your knowledge and experience to decide on a proper format for presenting the information about your own project(s) on the web.

### advice for the student(s)

With the course taking place at the end of your first year, in which you no doubt have earned a lot, this is an excellent opportunity to exercise your skill(s) and gain further experience in **collaboration**. To be able to work in a group and **communicate** is, as you should know, one of the essential characteristics of your future **professional scenario(s)**. Make no mistake though, you should also be able to take **individual responsibility** and even have a degree of **artistic independence**, which sometimes may even be mistaken as arrogance. Anyway, do not be bothered by that, but set your own **learning goals**, and one way or another find proper **balance** with the **interests of the group**.

### hint(s) for the instructor(s)

A course such as *have fun and play!* requires an attentive, yet flexible attitude of the instructor(s). It also does require the involvement of external partners, that essentially co-determine the targets that should be achieved during the project, and that will ultimately judge to what extent the students' achievement(s) fit within the **application context**.

The role of the instructor(s) from Creative Technology, preferably a small team, is to keep an eye on progress and to motivate the students to pursue their goals and keep a high level of aspiration, regardless of whether the external client is easily satisfied or not. After all, the students' results determine the face of Creative Technology for the outside world, where **acceptance** is an undeniable criterion for the success of any attempt at **public exposure**.