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Summer School 2022



Where have you come from and what do you teach?

I'm from the *Computer Science and Software Engineering* department in the *School of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences* at *Auckland University of Technology (AUT)*. I'm the Course Leader and sole lecturer for three courses, *COMP710 Game Programming*, *COMP500 Programming Concepts and Techniques*, and *ENSE501 Programming for Engineering Applications*. This year is coming up to my tenth year teaching these courses at AUT.

COMP710 Game Programming is a third-year course which teaches contemporary programming techniques for game development, where students learn to create video games. Over the semester they design and develop games both individually and in teams, and they also curate a portfolio that showcases their work. This course is often taken by students in their final semester, many of the students want to get into the game development industry, but some also simply want to do a fun elective course and learn about what goes into the development of a video game.

At the other end of the scale, I also teaching the large first year *COMP500 Programming Concepts and Techniques* and *ENSE501 Programming for Engineering Applications* courses. These are introductory programming courses catering to around 600 students each year who are generally enrolled in our Bachelor of Computer and Information Sciences, Bachelor of Engineering Technology, Bachelor of Mathematical Sciences or Bachelor of Science programmes.

What interested you in the Erskine Programme/Why did you want to come to UC?

The *School of Product Design (SoPD)* offers the *Applied Immersive Game Design (AIGD)* major in its Bachelor of Product Design, and the academic team created a new course, *PROD225 Special Topic: Game Development in Unreal and C++*, which proposed to introduce students to C++ programming for game development, alongside Epic Games' Unreal Engine, a contemporary game engine used in industry. The initial offering of the course was planned for summer school, and the academics with AIGD asked if I was interested in helping create and deliver the course. Being a graduate of UC and being very keen to help with the creation of more New Zealand game development-related courses, I was excited by the idea of visiting UC again, getting to work with the team in the SoPD and to develop and teach the new course over summer school to students who were keen to learn about C++ and its application in game development.

What have you been doing at UC?

I have been preparing course resources, lesson plans, lectures, and lab materials for PROD225, and teaching the course alongside the SoPD team. Getting to teach face-to-face on campus in both the lecture and lab settings has been very refreshing after our recent online teaching due to the global pandemic. I've also been able to see the future directions of the game development-related courses at UC, as well as the plans for the Digital Screen Campus, and provide input into the new programme offerings – these innovations certainly provide interesting educational opportunities for future UC students looking to work in the growing domestic industry. And I've also been doing some preparation for 2022 at AUT – I'll be straight back into teaching the large first year courses for the start of semester 1 when I return to Auckland.



What have you most enjoyed about your time here at UC/Christchurch?

Firstly, I've enjoyed getting to meet all the staff within the School of Product Design and getting to work with the AIGD team – everyone has been very welcoming and super friendly. It's been fun to be on campus, helping create the PROD225 course for its first offering, getting to teach face-to-face and interacting with interested and motivated summer school students – and to see the innovations with the upcoming Digital Screen Campus development and the Bachelor of Digital Screen with Honours initiative. The environment within the school has been great, with an office space, well-resourced studio spaces for students to use, and the seamless technical support that ensured everything was set up and running from day one of arriving – this made it easy to develop and deliver the new course, while also doing some remote work for AUT.

I also enjoyed getting to spend time in Christchurch again, with the great summer weather, and getting to see the significant changes on campus and in the city since I was last at UC in the early 2000s. Getting to visit the University of Canterbury Club on a Friday evening was fun, and I even visited Quail Island one weekend. Overall, the whole experience has been very enjoyable, and I'd love to do it all again – thanks again to UC and the School of Product Design for inviting me and being so welcoming – and thanks to the students who took the summer school offering of PROD225, it was great to see your growth, and the games you created, throughout the course.

