

INDS B.S.: Game Soundtrack Design

Evan McRae

MENTORS

- Greg Kalember, Professor of the Practice, Music Technology
- Mark Olano, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Assistant Professor, Computer Science and Electrical Engineering
- Steven McAlpine, Individualized Study

MY INDS DEGREE

I am designing an INDS degree in game soundtrack design. The Game Audio Network Guild defines game audio as “the art and craft of creating and producing audio for interactive media,” including “music, sound design, [and] dialogue” (“Mission & History” 2023). In particular, I wish to compose and produce soundtracks for games, a notable form of interactive media. Additionally, game design is defined by the Entertainment Software Association as the creation of “dynamic interactive experiences that challenge the boundaries of storytelling, competition, and social interaction” (Santucci 2024). I am specifically interested in how dynamic soundtracks and audio/game engine technologies may be used to achieve game design goals and produce compelling gameplay.

I intend to integrate the fields of computer science, game design, and music in my degree. Through computer science (particularly, graphical programming) and game design coursework, I will hone crucial skills in engaging with creative problem-solving challenges and implementing design goals, which will prepare me to create dynamic, interactive, and compelling gameplay. In addition, by taking classes focused on music composition, culture, and production, I will become a more versatile and technically proficient electronic musician, capable of scoring music for various media (chiefly including games). The synergy of these disciplines will uniquely enable me to design interactive soundtracks for games and integrate them into live gameplay.

POST-GRADUATION PLANS

After graduation, I plan to find work at a local game studio (such as Firaxis Games, Oxide Games, or Bit Reactor) as a gameplay engineer and/or technical sound designer. Having been advised by several current industry members, I recognize that the programming skills I have honed through my Computer Science degree will most likely help me more for hiring sake all told. However, I believe that my soundtrack design experience (as developed entirely through my INDS degree) will make me a stronger and more versatile candidate with a wider array of job opportunities in the game industry.



COURSES

- **Computer Science:** Hone the technological and creative problem-solving skills necessary to engage with game design challenges and implement design goals.
(CMCS 435, 437, 438, 499, INDS 430)
- **Music:** Engage in music composition, culture, and production coursework to become a more expressive, versatile, and technically proficient musician for games
(MUSC 230, 311, 336, 427, 428)
- **Individualized Study:** Gain a multidisciplinary perspective
(INDS 330H, 335, 430, 480, 490H)