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## Digital Media Capstone Course Moves Ideas To Reality

A Digital Media capstone course now being taught at LSU is transforming ideas to reality. The capstone course as well as similar new courses in the digital media minor program are all part of the AVATAR (Arts, Visualization, Advanced Technologies and Research) Initiative. The digital media minor offers two tracks for students: an undergraduate minor in art through the College of Art & Design, and an undergraduate minor in technology through the College of Engineering.

In preparation for developing the digital media curriculum, the AVATAR committee met with industry leaders from computer animation, motion graphics, and video games to discuss an industry perspective on digital media education. Uniformly, these leaders asserted that students would be best prepared for work in the digital media industries if they had experience working in collaborative teams, developing a project from start to finish, and an understanding of both the artistic and technical sides of digital media. Based on this information, the capstone course was developed by Jesse Allison, assistant professor of experimental music & digital media, LSU School of Music and Center for Computation & Technology; and Gabriel DeSouza, instructor, LSU Division of Electrical & Computer Engineering.

"The capstone course expects students to use their accumulated knowledge of digital media applications within their own discipline as well as their understanding of all aspects of digital media to jointly and collaboratively solve the technical and artistic challenges of their final project," said Allison. "This unique course satisfies both academic objectives as determined by the AVATAR committee and requirements articulated by industry."

Taught as LSU Art 4059 and EE 4859, the Digital Media Capstone Course provides a culminating experience for interdisciplinary teams of undergraduate students pursuing the digital media minor. The multidisciplinary teams select a project that is substantial in scope and devise solutions to the task in a structured, organized way, resulting in a completed prototype of their product or digital media application.

"The goal of the course is to have students identify project challenges and issues, analyze project goals, decompose complex tasks into manageable components, and apply previous knowledge towards a technical and creative solution," said Allison. "The students will also learn how to manage time and other resource requirements in a group setting, communicate project material via formal written documentation and oral presentation, and use modern design tools, components, and techniques. The last objective of the class is to produce a final product, complete for a proposed purpose, well-documented and packaged."

For more information on LSU's digital media curriculum, visit: [avatar.lsu.edu](http://avatar.lsu.edu). AVATAR's home is within the Cultural Computing Focus Area of LSU's Center for Computation & Technology.

**Publish Date:**  
12-06-2012

