Generic course outline for Video Game Music (Topics in Popular Music, Special Studies, generic musicology or Arts and Letters course)
Suitable for all students, including non-music majors

Course Mission Statement: Introduction to the study of video game music, including: its historical development and major composers, unique stylistic characteristics, and influence in today's culture.

Course goals:
By the completion of this course, successful students will be able to:
1. Discover how the historical development of video game music was influenced by technological innovations and diverse musics.
2. Recognize the stylistic characteristics of prominent video game composers.
3. Develop the vocabulary and approaches needed in the analysis of video game music.
4. Explore the interactions between video game music, society, and culture.

Suggested topic list, Semester format (13 weeks)
1 week = 3 contact hours

History of Video Game music:

Includes a survey of the history of video game music, including descriptions of technology and technological advancements, console specifications, and some of the composers and characteristics of sound for each generation.

By the end of the section, students should be able to:
1. Identify several composers and games
2. Identify possible historic period (console generation) of piece of music upon hearing
3. Understand the influence of technology on game sound.

  Week one: Introduction and early history through 16-bit era
  Week two: History through first generation 64-bit
  Week three: Late history, including the XBOX,PS2, GameCube, and early next generation
  Week four: Recent history through the present

Theoretical concepts:

Includes an introduction of some of the terminology that can be used to describe interactive media specifically, as well as some of the techniques that are used in interactive music. Also covered is the function of music and sound in video games.

By the end of the section, students should be able to:
1. Classify a piece of music using specific terminology covered in class
2. Analyze a piece of music in terms of its use of theme, characterisation, and storytelling
3. Understand the role of sound effects in environment creation

  Week five: Terms and discussion of music for interactive media
  Week six: Mid-term exam
  Week seven: Harmony, melody, and form in video game music
  Week eight: Characterization and storytelling in video game music
  Week nine: Drama and narrative in video game music
  Week ten: Sound effects and immersion in video games

Video Game Music and Culture:
This section focuses on the effects of world music on games and the effects game music has had on society and various cultures as a whole.

By the end of the section, students should be able to:
1. Understand the social structures within video game music and cultural concernts
2. Understand the ways in which game music had social and cultural impact
3. Understand how video game music has generally been received and why this is important

   Week eleven: Social issues in video game music
   Week twelve: Reception of video game music, social culture
   Week thirteen: Wrap-up, conclusion, future of video game music

Course Assessment:
Grading scheme:
Participation 10%
Assignments 45% (three assignments, 15% each)
Midterm exam 20%
Final Project 25%

Participation
Participation means showing up to class in a friendly and focused mood and contributing to the learning experience of yourself as well as your classmates. This means joining in constructive conversation and being prepared with the information you are expected to have learned. Emailing me your thoughts on subjects we are covering in class also counts towards your participation grade. While attendance is not mandatory for the class, if you are not present, you cannot participate.

Homework
This course consists of three assignments, which contain written, creative, and exploratory exercises. These assignments will allow you to deepen your understanding of the material we are covering in class, whilst also exploring on your own some of the more creative concepts. These assignments will also be used to guide you towards your final project.

Midterm exam
There is one exam in the course, and this will cover only those topics that are covered prior to the exam. This exam will consist of three sections: listening identification, short answer questions, and a short written response.

Final project
Students have two options regarding the final project:
1) Term paper on a piece of video game music, entire game soundtrack, or other topic pertaining to video game music
2) Creative project which explores concepts discussed in class, such as a piece of music in a specific historical style, a piece of software, or other creative project that somehow relates to course material

Final projects will be proposed to the instructor after the midterm exam and must be approved. Students will also receive detailed instructions regarding the requirements.