

Michael Merriam

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Learning Experience ▪ Instructional Designer

Offering career experience in conceptualization, immersive design, innovation & instruction

Innovative and creative professional with career background encompassing learning experience, instructional design, and teaching across various sectors. Proven success providing end-to-end project and design leadership for diverse initiatives, with an emphasis on immersive games, technology and design courses, and print/media publications. Recognized for strengths in developing innovative concepts, creating comprehensive design plans, and establishing strategies to meet project goals. Versatile and driven leader skilled in building and directing top performing project teams, coordinating external resources, and managing deliverables that align with client specifications and budgetary guidelines.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Learning Principles ▪ Design Planning ▪ Instructional Design ▪ Project Management ▪ Learning Content Creation
Team Leadership & Development ▪ Design Specifications ▪ Cross-Functional Collaboration ▪ Curriculum Development
People Leadership ▪ Narrative & Storytelling ▪ Course Design ▪ Multimedia Experiences ▪ Stakeholder Engagement

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Unity ▪ Unreal ▪ Twine ▪ Learning Management Software (LMS)

Professional Experience

PARTLY WICKED

2015 to Present

Design Consultant

Contracted by escape room companies located throughout the Orlando and Las Vegas regions to design and execute strategies for enhancing the customer experience. Work closely with clients to identify their needs and establish plans for improving escape room designs, narratives, and scenery.

- Coordinate end-to-end projects in collaboration with clients and other stakeholders, including budgets, deliverables, designs, and regulatory requirements. Screen and onboard technical and creative resources to support the project.
- Build and maintain relationships with developers, designers, Fire Marshals, and municipal agencies to ensure all designs align with both infrastructure and regulatory guidelines.
- Consult with clients to bring their ideas to life, working with them on puzzle design and production, as well as creating appropriate scenery and narratives that support cultural demands and customer expectations.

FULL SAIL UNIVERSITY

2018 to 2022

Instructor/Course Director

Provided instruction for both undergraduate and graduate students in a variety of courses, including Art of Visual Storytelling, Character Creation & Development, Science Fiction & Fantasy Literature, Children's Entertainment, Writing for Games, and Script Analysis & Criticism. Designed and delivered course materials that aligned with curriculum requirements.

- Led the complete ground-up overhaul of the Script Analysis & Criticism course, introducing new course content and strategies to support student success.

- Restructured the Writing for Games course, introducing a new immersive game experience for students.
- Designed and delivered Gamification professional development/training course for fellow instructors.

AULINTA

2017 to 2020

Designer

Hired to oversee the design and development of a virtual theme park, handling all game design and art exhibition tasks. Worked closely with cross-functional teams to understand the concept, create the project plan, and bring the idea to reality.

- Championed the design of the transmedia game, Time Atlas, including curating the exhibit located in Santa Cruz, CA.
- Awarded the Beyond the World prize for innovation in interactive art.
- Recruited back to design the park's virtual visitor's center in January 2023.

LOOKING GLASS MAGAZINE

2008 to 2011

Editor in Chief

Oversaw daily activities of the editorial process, including building, developing, and leading a team of ~18 individuals. Created and managed editorial calendar, coordinated outreach and growth strategy, developed new story ideas, and designed verbal and visual content. Recruited and hired creative staff, including writers, game designers, and artists.

- Led the end-to-end design of several games for print media, including developing the concept, managing deliverables, and monitoring content to ensure alignment with overall vision.

TIME OUT: ISTANBUL**2007 to 2008****Editor in Chief**

Managed the editorial process for this events and leisure publication. Oversaw story development and planning, idea creation, narrative design, and team leadership. Built and led a team of ~40+ resources responsible for the full editorial process.

- Traveled extensively 20+ days monthly throughout various regional areas, including the Middle East, to gather information and report on key topics/stories.

Additional Experience

Independent Designer, Writer & Consultant**2002 to Present**

Served as designer, writer, or consultant for numerous projects and contracts. Leveraged expertise to support client goals, providing project management, design leadership, and creative direction.

- Writer for Radio Theater Project, Adaptations of Public Domain Literature; adapted scripts for national radio syndication.
- Writer for various print and new media outlets, including the New Yorker, Time Out Istanbul, PmC Magazine, Financial Times, World Literature Today, and LA Review of Books.
- Anthologized *City x City* (Faber and Faber), which was named to the Publisher's Weekly list of 15 Best Books of 2015.

Education & Professional Development

Master of Arts, Medieval & Renaissance Studies

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, New York, NY

Bachelor of Arts, Archaeology/English & Comparative Literature (*Summa cum Laude*)

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, New York, NY