

REALM FORGE ACADEMY

— realmforgeacademy.com —

The World Forge Pathway

OFFICIAL PROGRAM GUIDE

Build Worlds. Not Debt.

A self-paced learning pathway that transforms creative thinkers into World Forgers — equipped to launch careers in gaming, VR, animation, film, tabletop design, publishing, and immersive media.

10

COURSES

33

PATHWAY CREDITS

Self

PACED

\$0

STUDENT DEBT

realmforgeacademy.com

© 2026 Realm Forge Academy LLC — All Rights Reserved

Program Overview

What Is the World Forge Pathway?

The World Forge Pathway is a comprehensive, self-paced educational journey designed for creative thinkers, dreamers, and builders. Over ten carefully sequenced courses, students develop the knowledge, skills, and creative portfolio needed to launch careers in video game design, virtual reality, animation, film production, tabletop gaming, publishing, and independent creative entrepreneurship.

This is not a coding bootcamp. This is not a traditional college. The World Forge Pathway focuses on what makes great creators great: theory, creativity, ethics, critical thinking, and the ability to build entire worlds from imagination. By the time you complete this pathway, you will have forged a complete realm — its lore, language, currency, cultures, visual identity, and more — and produced a professional portfolio ready to take anywhere.

Why Theory and Creativity Come First

One of the biggest mistakes aspiring creators make is jumping straight into development tools — downloading game engines, learning to code, watching tutorials — without ever fully designing the world they want to build. They burn out, lose direction, or end up with technically functional projects that have no soul. The World Forge Pathway was designed by instructional designer D.W. Denney after more than thirty years in the multimedia and creative technology industry, and it is built on a hard-won truth: the creators who succeed are the ones who know exactly what they are building before they ever touch a tool.

That is why this pathway spends its first two phases immersed in theory, creativity, ethics, critical thinking, and world-building. By the time you reach the production courses, you will not be guessing — you will be executing a fully realized vision with confidence and purpose. This structure is not an accident. It is the difference between a creator who finishes and one who does not.

Who Is This For?

- ◆ High school students looking for an alternative to traditional college
- ◆ Creative thinkers who learn better by building than by sitting in lectures
- ◆ Gamers, artists, writers, and dreamers who want to turn their passion into a profession
- ◆ Career changers who want to enter the creative technology space
- ◆ Anyone who wants an affordable, debt-free path to a meaningful creative career

AGE REQUIREMENTS

The World Forge Pathway is designed for students ages 16 and up, which is the recommended minimum given the academic and creative demands of the curriculum. Students ages 13 to 15 may enroll with verified parental or guardian consent, and with the parent's acknowledgment that the curriculum is written for older students. Realm Forge Academy does not enroll students under 13.

What Makes Realm Forge Academy Different?

	TRADITIONAL COLLEGE	REALM FORGE ACADEMY
Cost	\$20,000–\$100,000+	Affordable monthly membership
Debt	Average \$37,000+ in loans	\$0 student debt
Pace	Fixed semester schedule	100% self-paced
Focus	General education + major	Laser-focused on your craft
Outcome	Degree (may not lead to a job)	Portfolio + career-ready skills
Learning Style	Lecture halls and textbooks	Build worlds, not boredom
Creative Freedom	Follow the curriculum	Forge your own realm
Live Support	Office hours if you're lucky	Weekly live office hours with the founder

Weekly Live Office Hours

Self-paced does not mean alone. Every week, Realm Forge Academy hosts live office hours — web-based and accessible from any device, with optional VR access for students who want the immersive experience. These sessions are hosted by founder D.W. Denney and his protégés, giving students direct access to real-world industry knowledge and mentorship. Ask questions, discuss the week's lessons, and connect with fellow World Forgers in real time. Attendance is always optional, and sessions are scheduled on a published calendar so students can plan ahead.

The Pathway at a Glance

The pathway is divided into three phases. Each phase builds upon the last, taking students from foundational knowledge to creative mastery and professional-ready output. Courses unlock sequentially: each one opens when the previous course is complete.

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION · Courses 1-3

Build your knowledge base. Understand immersive technology, artificial intelligence, and digital finance — and lay the founding rules of your realm. Most programs throw students into tools on day one. We start here, because the strongest creators are the ones who understand the landscape before they try to reshape it.

COURSES: *Realm Foundations · The Creator's Mind · Economics of Realms*

PHASE 2: EXPLORATION & CREATION · Courses 4-8

Start building. Construct the architecture of your realm, engineer the deep systems and frontier technologies that give it wonder, learn to film and reveal it, establish ownership over everything you create, and design the conflicts that bring it to life.

COURSES: *Realm Architecture · Advanced Systems · Visualizing Your Realm · Digital Legacy · The Art of Conflict*

PHASE 3: MASTERY & LAUNCH · Courses 9-10

Bring it all together. Learn the development landscape well enough to lead a project and hire the right talent, then produce every deliverable you need to launch — pitch decks, trailers, brand assets, lore documents, spec packages, and a complete professional portfolio. Graduate as a Certified World Forger ready to make your vision real.

COURSES: *From Vision to Reality · The Capstone*

Course Catalog

The following pages detail each course in the World Forge Pathway — description, learning outcomes, key topics, certificate earned, and prerequisite. All courses are self-paced with instructor support available. Because each course builds directly on the one before it, the pathway is completed in sequence.

Pathway Credits are internal progress markers, not college credits. See the note at the end of this guide.

COURSE 01

Realm Foundations: Defining the Core of Your World

Foundation Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Beginner

CREDITS

3.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Your journey begins here. Explore the immersive technologies — VR, AR, MR, AI, and haptics — that are transforming how worlds are built and experienced, then use them to define the fundamental rules, tone, and reality of the world you will forge. Through guided virtual field trips, critical analysis, and hands-on exploration, you will develop a deep understanding of how virtual worlds are reshaping human interaction, creativity, commerce, and culture — and lay the bedrock your realm will stand on for the next nine courses.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Define and articulate the core concepts, history, and evolution of immersive digital worlds
- ◆ Navigate and critically evaluate virtual reality environments and platforms
- ◆ Analyze the social, economic, and cultural implications of immersive digital spaces
- ◆ Assess how VR, AR, MR, AI, and haptic technologies change what a built world can be
- ◆ Establish the founding rules, tone, and reality of the realm you will develop across the pathway

KEY TOPICS

History and evolution of immersive worlds, VR/AR/XR technology fundamentals, haptics and embodiment, digital identity and avatars, social dynamics in virtual spaces, virtual economy basics, platform analysis and comparison, guided immersive field trips, founding premises and world rules

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Realm Foundations Pioneer

PREREQUISITE: *None — this is your gateway course*

COURSE 02

The Creator's Mind: Mastering AI for Worldbuilding

AI Literacy & Creative Practice Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Beginner

CREDITS

3.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Artificial intelligence is transforming every industry on the planet — including yours. This course builds AI literacy end to end: how it works, how to use it, how to judge it, and what its ethics, societal impact, and governance actually demand of the people who wield it. Then it puts AI to work as a genuine collaborator in building your realm. You will explore real-world case studies, debate ethical dilemmas, and develop your own framework for responsible use — one that makes AI a partner in your creative practice without ever surrendering authorship of the work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Explain fundamental AI and machine learning concepts in accessible, non-technical terms
- ◆ Apply AI tools as a creative collaborator in worldbuilding while keeping authorship your own
- ◆ Evaluate the ethical implications of AI deployment across diverse contexts
- ◆ Analyze bias, fairness, transparency, and accountability in AI systems
- ◆ Develop a personal ethical framework for responsible AI use and advocacy

KEY TOPICS

Machine learning fundamentals, neural networks and deep learning concepts, generative AI and creative tooling, prompt craft and iteration, evaluating AI output critically, AI bias and fairness, privacy and surveillance, authorship and disclosure, AI governance and safety, the future of human-AI collaboration

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Creator's Mind Graduate

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 01*

COURSE 03

Economics of Realms: Building Currency, Trade & Wealth Systems

Digital Finance & Economic Design Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Beginner

CREDITS

2.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Cryptocurrency is more than Bitcoin headlines — it is a fundamental shift in how value, trust, and transactions work in a digital world. This course gives you the knowledge to understand digital currencies, evaluate them, and navigate the space with confidence and critical thinking rather than hype or fear. Then it turns that literacy into design work: you will build the currency, trade, and wealth systems that make your realm's economy believable and alive. Economies are worldbuilding. A realm whose money makes no sense is a realm that falls apart the moment a reader looks closely.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Explain the mechanics of blockchain technology and how cryptocurrencies function
- ◆ Analyze the economic principles underlying digital currencies and tokenomics
- ◆ Evaluate cryptocurrency projects critically using fundamental analysis
- ◆ Navigate digital wallets, exchanges, and basic security practices safely
- ◆ Design a currency, trade, and wealth system that holds up under scrutiny within your realm

KEY TOPICS

Blockchain mechanics, Bitcoin and Ethereum fundamentals, tokenomics, wallets and security, scams and self-protection, DeFi basics, stablecoins, the regulatory landscape, scarcity and value, trade routes and market design, currency systems for fictional worlds

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Realm Economist

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 02*

COURSE 04

Realm Architecture: Geography, Cosmology & Living Worlds

Creative World-Building Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Intermediate

CREDITS

4.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is where your realm takes shape in earnest. Master the architecture of believable worlds — physical and magical geography, cosmology, ecosystems, cultures, mythologies, and language — and assemble it all into your realm's world bible. From Tolkien's Middle-earth to the worlds of modern fantasy and anime, you will study how the masters built places that feel inhabited, then build your own with the same rigor.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Design comprehensive world-building documentation covering history, geography, and cosmology
- ◆ Construct believable political systems, economies, and social structures for fictional worlds
- ◆ Develop original languages, naming conventions, and cultural artifacts
- ◆ Create interconnected lore that supports narrative depth across multiple media formats
- ◆ Assemble a world bible that serves as the canonical reference for everything you build next

KEY TOPICS

World-building frameworks and methodologies, history and timeline creation, physical and magical geography, cosmology and mythology, ecosystems and creature design, culture and society design, language construction (conlangs), fantasy archetypes across traditions, narrative structures, world bible assembly

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Realm Architect

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 03*

COURSE 05

Advanced Systems: Designing Complex World Mechanics

Emerging Technology & Systems Design Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Intermediate

CREDITS

2.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Every memorable world runs on rules — and the ones that endure are the ones whose rules hold together under pressure. This course makes quantum computing and complex-systems thinking accessible without requiring a physics degree, then turns both into design tools. You will understand qubits, superposition, and entanglement through creative analogies and thought experiments, and learn how interdependent rules produce emergent behavior. Then you will engineer the advanced mechanics, frontier technologies, and internal logic that make your realm's “impossible” powers coherent rather than arbitrary.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Explain quantum computing principles — superposition, entanglement, and quantum gates — in accessible terms
- ◆ Compare classical and quantum computation, and evaluate realistic claims about what quantum systems can and cannot do
- ◆ Apply complex-systems thinking to model how interdependent rules produce emergent behavior
- ◆ Design a coherent internal logic for your realm's advanced technologies or magic systems, including costs, limits, and failure modes
- ◆ Assess how quantum and frontier technologies may reshape cryptography, simulation, and digital worlds

KEY TOPICS

Quantum mechanics fundamentals (accessible), qubits versus classical bits, quantum gates and algorithms, quantum cryptography and its implications, current quantum hardware and industry applications, complex and emergent systems, rule design and internal consistency, cost-and-limit frameworks for extraordinary powers, hard versus soft system design, stress-testing a system for exploits

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Systems Architect

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 04*

COURSE 06

Visualizing Your Realm: Digital Exploration & Cinematography

Applied Technology & Visual Storytelling Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Beginner to Intermediate

CREDITS

3.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Take to the skies — then bring what you learn back down into your world. This course builds genuine drone technology literacy, covering the science of flight, FAA regulations, airspace and weather, and the principles of aerial photography and cinematography. It then applies that same camera craft to digital exploration: framing, movement, scale, and the establishing shot. By the end you will be able to reveal your realm the way a filmmaker reveals a landscape — whether the camera is a real aircraft or a virtual one.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Demonstrate understanding of FAA Part 107 regulations, airspace classifications, and the Remote Pilot Certificate process
- ◆ Explain drone flight principles, flight planning considerations, and operational safety protocols
- ◆ Apply cinematography fundamentals — framing, movement, lighting, and lens choice — to aerial and virtual camera work
- ◆ Plan and execute a visual reveal of an environment, translating aerial technique to in-engine and virtual cameras
- ◆ Build a body of establishing shots and environment cinematography that presents your realm to an audience

KEY TOPICS

Drone flight physics and aerodynamics, FAA Part 107 regulatory framework, airspace classifications and weather, flight simulation and skill development, aerial photography and cinematography principles, shot composition and camera movement, establishing shots and scale, virtual cinematography and in-engine cameras, location scouting and previsualization, post-production and color workflows, commercial drone applications, Part 107 certification roadmap

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Realm Cinematographer

PREREQUISITE:

Unlocks after Course 05

COURSE 07

Digital Legacy: Ownership, Scarcity & Creator Rights in Your World

Digital Ownership & Creator Rights Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Intermediate

CREDITS

3.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

You learned the basics of blockchain through currency — now go deeper, and make it personal. This course explores blockchain's real applications beyond money: smart contracts, decentralized applications, DAOs, provenance and authenticity, digital identity, and the infrastructure behind Web3. Then it turns that understanding toward the thing that actually matters to a creator: what you own, how scarcity works, and what rights you hold over the world you have spent a pathway building. Ownership is not an afterthought. It is the difference between a body of work and a legacy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Explain how smart contracts, decentralized applications, and DAO governance models actually work
- ◆ Evaluate blockchain solutions for provenance, authenticity, digital identity, and verifiable ownership
- ◆ Analyze how scarcity is created, sustained, and undermined in both digital and in-world economies
- ◆ Apply intellectual property and creator-rights fundamentals to protect the assets, lore, and identity of your realm
- ◆ Design an ownership and legacy framework governing who may use, adapt, trade, or inherit what you create

KEY TOPICS

Smart contracts and dApp architecture, DAOs and decentralized governance, Web3 infrastructure, decentralized storage, digital identity and verifiable credentials, provenance and authenticity systems, digital scarcity and its design tradeoffs, token technology beyond the hype, copyright and licensing, creator rights for independent artists, in-world ownership and inheritance systems

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Digital Legacy Steward

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 06*

COURSE 08

The Art of Conflict: Wargaming, Strategy & Military Systems

Strategic Design & Physical Gaming Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Intermediate

CREDITS

4.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Nothing reveals a world like its conflicts. This course explores the rich tradition of physical wargaming and strategic game design — mechanics, force composition, terrain, miniature painting and presentation, campaign storytelling, and tournament organization. Then it turns conflict into a worldbuilding instrument: you will design and playtest a wargaming system set inside the realm you have been building, and in doing so crystallize its factions, its stakes, and the tensions that make its story worth telling.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Analyze game mechanics, balance systems, and strategic depth in wargaming designs
- ◆ Design original wargaming rule sets with balanced unit statistics and combat systems
- ◆ Create terrain, miniature presentation standards, and visual storytelling for tabletop play
- ◆ Develop campaign narratives that integrate with your realm's established lore and factions
- ◆ Organize and facilitate playtesting sessions, tournaments, and community gaming events

KEY TOPICS

Wargaming history and culture, game mechanics and probability, unit design and balance, military doctrine and force composition, terrain building and battlefield design, miniature painting and presentation, campaign design and narrative, faction and stakes design, tournament organization, community building, integrating digital and physical play

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Conflict Architect

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 07*

COURSE 09

From Vision to Reality: Leading Your Production Team

Strategy & Leadership Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Intermediate to Advanced

CREDITS

4.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Here is a truth that thirty years in the industry has proven again and again: the creators who succeed are rarely the ones who try to do everything themselves. They are the ones who know enough about the development landscape to lead with confidence. This course gives you technical literacy without demanding you become a developer. You will learn how modern games, VR experiences, and immersive projects are actually built — the tools, the pipelines, the roles, and the costs — and master creative briefs, talent evaluation, production timelines, and launch strategy. You will not leave expecting to build your flagship project alone. You will leave knowing exactly who to hire, what to ask for, and how to lead them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Evaluate the modern development landscape including game engines, 3D tools, and immersive platforms
- ◆ Write professional creative briefs and technical specifications that communicate vision to developers and artists
- ◆ Develop hiring strategies for sourcing, vetting, and managing freelance creative talent
- ◆ Build realistic production timelines, budgets, and project management workflows
- ◆ Design a comprehensive launch strategy for an independent creative project

KEY TOPICS

Development landscape overview, technical literacy for non-developers, anatomy of a creative brief, sourcing and evaluating freelance talent, contract basics and intellectual property protection, production pipeline management, budgeting for independent projects, crowdfunding strategy, launch planning and go-to-market fundamentals, leadership and creative direction

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified Production Leader

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 08*

COURSE 10

The Capstone: Completing Your Professional World Portfolio

Capstone Portfolio Course

PACE

Self-paced

LEVEL

Advanced

CREDITS

5.0 Pathway Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is where the forge fires burn hottest. You have spent the entire pathway designing a realm, building strategic knowledge, and learning how to lead a creative project. Now you produce the materials that bring it all to life: a professional pitch deck, a cinematic trailer, cohesive brand assets, publishable lore documents, a detailed spec package, and a complete creative portfolio — the exact deliverables you would hand to the talent you learned to hire in Course 09. This is not busywork. These are the real materials that launch real projects. You graduate as a Certified World Forger with everything you need to walk into a studio meeting, launch a crowdfunding campaign, or hand a freelancer a brief and say “build this” with total confidence.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Produce a professional pitch deck that communicates a creative vision to investors, publishers, or collaborators
- ◆ Create cinematic trailers and promotional video content using modern multimedia production tools
- ◆ Design cohesive visual branding including logos, color systems, typography, and style guides
- ◆ Write and format publishable lore documents, character guides, world bibles, and spec packages
- ◆ Assemble a comprehensive, portfolio-ready body of work demonstrating mastery across all pathway disciplines

KEY TOPICS

Pitch deck design and storytelling, video production and editing, motion graphics and trailer creation, graphic design and visual branding, technical writing and lore documentation, spec package creation for developers and artists, portfolio curation and presentation, freelance business basics, intellectual property fundamentals, crowdfunding campaign design, career pathway planning

CERTIFICATE EARNED

Certified World Forger

PREREQUISITE: *Unlocks after Course 09 — completes the pathway*

Graduation & Career Outcomes

What You Will Have When You Graduate

Upon completing all ten courses in the World Forge Pathway, you will have:

- ◆ A fully realized realm with complete lore, language, currency, cultures, political systems, and history
- ◆ A professional multimedia portfolio including pitch decks, trailers, brand assets, and written lore documents
- ◆ Detailed spec packages and creative briefs ready to hand to developers and artists
- ◆ A wargaming system designed within your realm, ready for community playtesting
- ◆ Drone and cinematography literacy, plus a body of aerial and virtual camera work that shows your realm at scale
- ◆ A working understanding of AI, blockchain, quantum computing, and the technologies reshaping creative industries
- ◆ An ownership and rights framework protecting the world you built
- ◆ The strategic knowledge to hire, manage, and lead freelance talent to build your vision
- ◆ Ten course certificates, culminating in the Certified World Forger credential — and the materials to prove it

Career Pathways

World Forge Pathway graduates are prepared for careers and creative ventures including:

- ◆ Video Game Designer / World Builder
- ◆ VR/AR Experience Designer
- ◆ Immersive Environment Creator
- ◆ Tabletop Game Designer
- ◆ Indie Game Studio Founder
- ◆ 3D Environment Artist
- ◆ Narrative Designer / Lore Writer
- ◆ Creative Director
- ◆ Drone Pilot / Aerial Cinematographer
- ◆ Multimedia Producer
- ◆ Content Creator
- ◆ Community Manager (Gaming/VR)
- ◆ Blockchain / Web3 Strategist
- ◆ Animation & Motion Graphics Artist
- ◆ Technical Writer (Gaming / Tech)
- ◆ Freelance Creative Entrepreneur

Start Your Journey

Ready to forge your future? Joining Realm Forge Academy is simple, affordable, and designed to meet you where you are.

How It Works

1. Join and begin with Course 01: Realm Foundations — your gateway into the pathway
2. Learn at your own pace — no deadlines, no semesters, no pressure
3. Progress through courses in sequence — each builds on the knowledge and skills from the last
4. Build your realm as you go — each course adds a new dimension to your creation
5. Graduate with a portfolio, a credential, and the skills to launch your career

FORGE YOUR FUTURE

Visit realmforgeacademy.com to get started

*No applications. No entrance exams. No debt.
Just you, your imagination, and the forge.*

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Realm Forge Academy is not an accredited college or university. “Pathway Credits” are internal progress markers within the World Forge Pathway — they are not college credits and do not transfer to other educational institutions. The “Certified World Forger” credential is issued by Realm Forge Academy LLC and is not a degree or professionally licensed certification. What you graduate with is what the creative industry values: a professional portfolio, real skills, and the proven ability to lead a creative project from concept to launch.

REALM FORGE ACADEMY

Sedro-Woolley, Washington · realmforgeacademy.com

© 2026 Realm Forge Academy LLC — All Rights Reserved