



COURSE OUTLINE

SGD202 Video Game Analysis

Course Coordinator: Justin Carter (jcarter3@usc.edu.au) **School:** School of Business and Creative Industries

2021 | Semester 2

USC Sunshine Coast

ON CAMPUS

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus.

Please go to the USC website for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

Videogames are complex systems of representation. As cultural artefacts, videogames function as media texts serving to represent and produce cultural phenomena. This course examines the form and function of video game texts and considers the impact of their cultural, historical and industrial contexts. The course develops a comprehensive understanding of video game aesthetics and how these combine with narrative to create meaning. You will engage with and apply technical terminology, theoretical concepts, and academic work on game design and production, acquiring the skills needed to critically analyse games as texts.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
ON CAMPUS			
Laboratory 1 – In-class laboratory	2hrs	Week 2	12 times
Lecture – 1 hour online lecture content for 12 weeks (or equivalent).	1hr	Week 1	12 times
ONLINE 1			
Laboratory 1 – Interactive zoom laboratory	2hrs	Week 2	12 times
Lecture – 1 hour online lecture content for 12 weeks (or equivalent).	1hr	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

- Video game criticism
- The developers post mortem
- Poetics of video game design
- Analysis 1: Context
- Analysis 2: Game Overview
- Analysis 3: Formal Elements
- Postmortem 2

2. What level is this course?

200 Level (Developing)

Building on and expanding the scope of introductory knowledge and skills, developing breadth or depth and applying knowledge and skills in a new context. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally, undertaken in the second or third full-time year of an undergraduate programs.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Research and describe the theoretical and analytical frameworks that apply to games.	Empowered
2 Assess and describe the social values that games reflect and propagate.	Ethical Sustainability-focussed
3 Analyse and critique digital games based on theoretical and reflective frameworks.	Creative and critical thinker
4 Organise analysis in clear, concise, and accurate written forms.	Empowered

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [USC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Besides the concepts discussed in CMN105, there is no assumed prior knowledge although having had some experience playing video games will be beneficial for students.

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Task 1 is designed to give students time to practice analytical investigations into video games through theoretical vantage points. Feedback will be given in workshops leading up to the first assessment task submission, which will provide formative feedback in week 3 for subsequent submissions.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Journal	Individual	30%	3 journal entries 400 words each	Refer to Format	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Report	Individual	25%	1000 words	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Report	Individual	45%	2000 words	Week 13	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Observational Journal

GOAL:	This assessment is designed to give you the opportunity to examine the videogame medium and test your understanding of theoretical concepts and analytical approaches through an observational analysis of a set videogame.																			
PRODUCT:	Journal																			
FORMAT:	<p>Submit: Week 3, 5 & 7. Academic Format: You will submit three clear journal entries based on your observations of the set videogame.</p> <p>There will be three journal entries (400 words each) which will be constructed around a four-pronged model that examines representations of environment/culture/identity/ethics. The journal entries will focus on a specific elements of the game design (representation, game concept, playability, and the narrative progression). A template of the journal format can be found on Blackboard under 'Learning Materials'.</p>																			
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Organisation of ideas in a clear and concise form. Follows journal format.</td> <td>1 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Recognition and discussion of social values that games reflect and propagate, whether negative or positive representations.</td> <td>2 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Analysis of the functionality of the set video game.</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Analysis of the social issues raised through the gameplay and narrative.</td> <td>3 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Reflection of how these representations expose social issues.</td> <td>2 3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Organisation of ideas in a clear and concise form. Follows journal format.	1 4	2	Recognition and discussion of social values that games reflect and propagate, whether negative or positive representations.	2 3	3	Analysis of the functionality of the set video game.	3	4	Analysis of the social issues raised through the gameplay and narrative.	3 4	5	Reflection of how these representations expose social issues.	2 3	
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All - Assessment Task 2: Short Analytical Report

GOAL:	This task is designed to give you the opportunity (through guided instruction) to develop, synthesise and apply your understanding of videogame analysis through the use of a specific theoretical framework.	
PRODUCT:	Report	
FORMAT:	<p>Academic Format: You will write a fully referenced analytical report (1,000 words) on a specific representation within the set videogame. You will apply a specific theoretical theory to your videogame analysis.</p> <p>Analytical reports offer both information and analysis.</p> <p>Avoid describing what the game is about</p> <p>Your report should consider:</p> <p>Purpose Statement (Begin with 'To analyse the representation of _____')</p> <p>The areas of Information (gameplay, functionality, narrative)</p> <p>The organisation of ideas</p> <p>Supporting your ideas with reliable and current Information</p> <p>Analysing your data (from your observational journal and gameplay)</p> <p>Applying a relevant theoretical framework</p> <p>Articulating a sophisticated analysis of the set videogame</p> <p>Cite a minimum of two academic sources in Harvard referencing style</p>	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Recognition and discussion of social values that games reflect and propagate, whether negative or positive representations. 2 4
	2	Conduct literature-based research. Locating and applying relevant and current criticism and/or theory. 1 3
	3	Application of theoretical framework to analyse representation of class, gender, identity, race, power, agency, or other social issues that are evident in the set videogame. 1 2
	4	Organise ideas in a clear and concise form. 4

All - Assessment Task 3: Major Analytical Report

GOAL:	This task is designed for you to independently analyse and critique a videogame based on theoretical frameworks, as well as analyse gameplay experiences and the overall narrative of the game.	
PRODUCT:	Report	
FORMAT:	<p>Academic Format: You will write a fully referenced analytical report (2,000 words) based on your analysis of one of the videogame options. Using your knowledge obtained in the completion of tasks 1 and 2, you will apply a specific theoretical theory to your independent videogame analysis.</p> <p>Analytical reports offer both information and analysis.</p> <p>Avoid describing what the game is about</p> <p>Your report should consider:</p> <p>Purpose Statement (Begin with 'To analyse the representation of _____').</p> <p>The areas of Information (gameplay, functionality, narrative).</p> <p>The organisation of ideas.</p> <p>Supporting your ideas with reliable and current information.</p> <p>Analysing your data (from your observational journal).</p> <p>Applying a relevant theoretical framework.</p> <p>Articulating a sophisticated analysis of the set videogame.</p> <p>Cite a minimum of four academic sources in Harvard referencing style.</p>	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Recognition and discussion of social values that games reflect and propagate, whether negative or positive representations. 2 4
	2	Conduct literary research. Locating and applying relevant and current criticism and/or theory. 3 4
	3	Application of theoretical framework to analyse representations of class, gender, identity, race, power, agency, or other social issues that are evident in the set videogame. 1 2
	4	Professional presentation of ideas and analysis 4

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Directed study hours may vary by location. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Blackboard site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

You will be expected to play and review digital games in your own time. It is expected that you will be able to access gaming equipment as required.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Blackboard, are electronically checked through SafeAssign. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work that SafeAssign has access to.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%

The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submission of assessment tasks may be penalised at the following maximum rate:

- 5% (of the assessment task's identified value) per day for the first two days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- 10% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day - 20% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day and subsequent days up to and including seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- A result of zero is awarded for an assessment task submitted after seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task. Weekdays and weekends are included in the calculation of days late. To request an extension you must contact your course coordinator to negotiate an outcome.

10.4. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.6. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.7. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Administration of Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Academic Misconduct
- Students with a Disability

Visit the USC website: <http://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.8. General Enquiries

In person:

- **USC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **USC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **USC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **USC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **USC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **USC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au