

SGD120 Interactive Narrative: Fundamentals

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2025 Semester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

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 usc.edu.au 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

This course introduces you to both the theory and practice of narrative writing for interactive media. Theoretically, the course covers a wide range of digital storytelling platforms to explore how interactive narrative has evolved from literary history through early experiments in hypertext writing, through to the complex interactive storylines of video games and electronic books. In practice, the course explores and applies foundational aspects of narrative writing for interactive media, culminating in your individual projects.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

| ACTIVITY | HOURS | BEGINNING WEEK | FREQUENCY |
|--|-------|----------------|-----------|
| BLENDED LEARNING | | | |
| Lecture – 1 hour online lecture content for 12 weeks (or equivalent). | 1hr | Week 1 | 12 times |
| Laboratory 1 – On campus laboratory for 12 weeks (or equivalent). | 2hrs | Week 2 | 12 times |
| ONLINE | | | |
| Online – 3 hours online content for 12 weeks (or equivalent). | 3hrs | Week 1 | 12 times |

1.3. Course Topics

- History of Interactive Narrative
- Narrative Experience
- Making Interactive Narratives in Twine
- Narratology & Ludology
- Story Structure
- Character Types
- Dialogue
- World Building
- Diverse Perspectives
- Branching Narrative
- Emerging Narrative
- Diversity & Representation

2. What level is this course?

100 Level (Introductory)

Engaging with discipline knowledge and skills at foundational level, broad application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts and with support. Limited or no prerequisites. Normally, associated with the first full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

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 | Demonstrate knowledge of a range of basic narrative elements used in interactive narrative writing. | Creative and critical thinker |
| 2 | Adapt and apply learning principles to an interactive narrative piece. | Creative and critical thinker Empowered |
| 3 | Be empowered to develop original ideas and produce creative artefacts in alignment with industry standards. | Creative and critical thinker Empowered |
| 4 | Demonstrate creativity in evaluating the effectiveness of interactive narrative pieces on agency and emotional engagement | Creative and critical thinker Empowered |

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC 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

SGD204

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

Nil

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

In week 3 of this course, a draft of Task 1 will be peer reviewed in the workshop.

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 | Report | Individual | 20% | 1000 words | Week 5 | Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check |
| All | 2 | Plan | Individual | 30% | 1500 words | Week 8 | Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check |
| All | 3 | Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece | Individual | 50% | 2500 words | Week 12 | Online Submission |

All - Assessment Task 1: Critical reflection

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| GOAL: | This task requires you to demonstrate critical thinking in relation to interactive narrative exemplars studied/discussed in course content, and to explore the implications of this thinking when applied to your own creative processes. The outcome of this task should demonstrate the relationship between critical reading and creative practice. | | |
| PRODUCT: | Report | | |
| FORMAT: | Select at least one aspect of digital storytelling practice and discuss its application within one of the interactive narratives studied/discussed in course content. In your discussion you must refer to at least two scholarly texts (theoretical and/or practice-based texts, such as journal articles and books) and critically reflect on how the selected aspect of digital storytelling practice has been applied successfully (or otherwise) within the interactive narrative chosen. You must then discuss how the selected interactive narrative aspect will be effectively applied (your ideas, intentions and influences) in the development of your own project treatment this semester. | | |
| CRITERIA: | No. | | Learning Outcome assessed |
| | 1 | Appropriate content and style for a scholarly audience, including the accurate use of interactive narrative terminology. | 1 |
| | 2 | Establishment and development of a clear and relevant demonstration of narrative topic within a game. | 3 |
| | 3 | A clear understanding of the narrative topic they have chosen, including narrative theory. | 1 |
| | 4 | Reflection on how the use of the narrative topic within the chosen game informs their own practice as interactive narrative writers / game designers. | 2 |
| | 5 | An argument that substantiates with textual references from one (1) game and at least two (2) scholarly texts with proper citations. | 4 |
| GENERIC SKILLS: | Communication, Information literacy | | |

All - Assessment Task 2: Concept document

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| GOAL: | Conceptualize an interactive narrative piece and express the ideas through a professional concept document. This task provides the basis for evaluating your current strengths and the areas requiring further development in your creative writing knowledge and skills. | | |
| PRODUCT: | Plan | | |
| FORMAT: | This is an individual written assessment task. Online submission to Blackboard. Audience is industry professionals. | | |
| CRITERIA: | No. | | Learning Outcome assessed |
| | 1 | Appropriately structured document which addresses all components and has spelling, grammar, and presentation suitable for a business audience. | 1 |
| | 2 | Use of a premise which is well-researched and has the capacity to transform the audience, substantiated with 2 scholarly, business or non-profit references regarding the topic. | 2 3 |
| | 3 | Well-defined story and character arcs, with clear paths toward multiple endings. | 1 |
| | 4 | Interactivity, premise and story combined into a single, cohesive experience. | 1 3 |
| | 5 | Original contribution to knowledge, storytelling and/or gameplay which is both innovative and resonant. | 4 |
| GENERIC SKILLS: | Communication, Information literacy | | |

All - Assessment Task 3: Interactive Narrative Project

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| GOAL: | Create a playable, working artefact that showcases project planning ability, creative writing and organization skills. The outcome of this task should demonstrate the relationship between theory and practice, show clear project planning skills and showcase creative expression. | | |
| PRODUCT: | Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece | | |
| FORMAT: | <p>This is an individual interactive / written assessment task. Submission via zipped files in Blackboard. Audience is industry professionals. Your interactive narrative project must contain, at minimum:</p> <p>An organised, cohesive “serious game” plot and theme that resonate throughout the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three locations. • Ten interactive moments (moving, touching, finding, clue discovery, etc). If you choose to create a conversation-heavy game, the interactive moments can be clues in conversation that are found by talking to various characters. Meaningless conversation doesn't count as an interactive moment. • Four branching decisions that move the story in different directions. • Two possible endings, but no more than four. • One conversation with dialogue (assuming you used objects for the interactive moments above). • Credits page with sources: graphics credits, research sources, etc. • In any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TWINE - ADRIFT Interactive Fiction Toolkit - Quest - ChoiceScript - Ren'Py (NOTE: Use of Ren'Py requires at least one background graphic with the story because of the specifications of the engine.) • The critical path transcript (in docx or pdf format) that details the optimal path to the win scenario. | | |
| CRITERIA: | No. | | Learning Outcome assessed |
| | 1 | Interactive experience that addresses all components and has spelling, grammar, and presentation that contributes positively to game play | 1 |
| | 2 | Serious Games premise which is transformative, well-researched and presented in such a way that players can understand how choice-based actions impact the subject matter. Two scholarly, business or non-profit references are included on the credits | 1 2 3 4 |
| | 3 | Well-defined and emotive story and character arcs, with choices that move toward differing arcs, leading to different endings | 1 2 3 |
| | 4 | Interactivity, premise and story are combined into a single, cohesive experience | 1 2 3 |
| | 5 | Original contribution to knowledge, storytelling and/or gameplay which is both innovative and resonant and showcases creativity in character and premise while respecting subject matter | 1 2 3 4 |
| GENERIC SKILLS: | Communication, Applying technologies | | |

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. 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 Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

| REQUIRED? | AUTHOR | YEAR | TITLE | EDITION | PUBLISHER |
|-----------|-----------------|------|---|---------|--------------|
| Required | Jeff Vandermeer | 2013 | Wonderbook: The Illustrated Guide to Creating Imaginative Fiction | | Abrams Image |

8.2. Specific requirements

It is suggested that students have a USB drive for the course, as the software we use is portable, and this allows for them to work on their projects in any location of their choice.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Risk assessments have been performed for all studio and laboratory classes and a low level of health and safety risk exists. Some risk concerns may include equipment, instruments, and tools; as well as manual handling items within the laboratory. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the 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 Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

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

To request an extension you must contact your course coordinator to negotiate an outcome.

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

- 5% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the first day (e.g. a task worth 10 marks would attract a 0.5 mark penalty)
- 10% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the second day (e.g. a task worth 10 marks would attract a 1 mark penalty)
- 20% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day (e.g. a task worth 10 marks would attract a 2 mark penalty)
- 40% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day (e.g. a task worth 10 marks would attract a 4 mark penalty)
- 60% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fifth day (e.g. a task worth 10 marks would attract a 6 mark penalty)
- 80% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the sixth day (e.g. a task worth 10 marks would attract a 8 mark penalty)
- 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.

At the course coordinator's discretion and in consultation with the student, assessment tasks submitted after the fourth day may be marked but will receive a maximum mark of 50% of the assessment task's value. Minimal feedback will be given.

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. 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.

10.6. 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.

10.7. 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.

10.8. 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
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

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

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au