

SGD202

Video Game Analysis and Design

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2025 | Semester 2

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDDED
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, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

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

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 videogame texts and considers the impact of their cultural, historical, and industrial contexts. The course develops a comprehensive understanding of videogame aesthetics, and these combine with principles of game design to create meaning. You will engage and apply theoretical concepts on games, design, and production, to acquire skills needed to critically analyse and design games.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled face to face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled online workshops (Recorded).	2hrs	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, critique and design 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 [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

Not applicable

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

A fundamental understanding of video games design

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%	2 journal entries.	Refer to Format	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Report	Individual	30%	1000 words	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Report	Individual	40%	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 videogames and topics, and test your understanding of theoretical concepts and analytical approaches through an observational analysis.		
PRODUCT:	Journal		
FORMAT:	<p>Submit: Week 3 & 6. Academic Format: You will submit two journal entries based on your observations of a series of videogames and topics.</p> <p>Journal entries will focus on specific elements and readings of games and their experiences (representation, game concept, playability, and narrative).</p>		
CRITERIA:	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
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Information literacy		

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 specific theoretical frameworks.	
PRODUCT:	Report	
FORMAT:	<p>Academic Format: You will write a fully referenced analytical report. You will apply a specific theories 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose Statement. The areas of Information (gameplay, functionality, narrative). The organisation of ideas. Supporting your ideas with reliable and current Information. Analysing your data (from your observational journal and gameplay). Applying a relevant theoretical framework. Articulating a sophisticated analysis of the set videogame. Cite a minimum of two academic sources. <p>Across all our Creative Industries undergraduate programs, we are collecting data for assurance of learning purposes. This task is being used for measurement. The following program competency will be assessed: Communication.</p>	
CRITERIA:	<p>No.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Recognition and discussion of social values that games reflect and propagate, whether negative or positive representations. 2 Conduct literature-based research. Locating and applying relevant and current criticism and/or theory. 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. 4 Organise ideas in a clear and concise form. 	<p>Learning Outcome assessed</p> <p>2 4</p> <p>1 3</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>4</p>
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Information literacy	

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 and topics, as well as analyse gameplay experiences, design, and narrative of the game.	
PRODUCT:	Report	
FORMAT:	<p>Academic Format: You will write a fully referenced analytical report 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose Statement. The areas of Information (gameplay, functionality, narrative). The organisation of ideas. Supporting your ideas with reliable and current information. Analysing your data (from your observational journal). Applying a relevant theoretical framework. Articulating a sophisticated analysis of the set videogame. Cite a minimum of four academic sources. <p>Across all our Creative Industries undergraduate programs, we are collecting data for assurance of learning purposes. This task is being used for measurement. The following program competency will be assessed: Ethical and cultural understanding'.</p>	
CRITERIA:	<p>No.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Recognition and discussion of social values that games reflect and propagate, whether negative or positive representations. 2 Conduct literary research. Locating and applying relevant and current criticism and/or theory. 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. 4 Professional presentation of ideas and analysis 	Learning Outcome assessed
GENERIC SKILLS:	Organisation, Information literacy	

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
Recommended	Clara Fernández-Vara	0	Introduction to Game Analysis	2nd	n/a
Recommended	Ian Bogost	2010	Persuasive Games	1st	Mit Press

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 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

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

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

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

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](#) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](#) 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](#) 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