# Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Department of English Studies</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2023/2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Digital Literature and Video Games</td>
<td>ECTS</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Study Programme
- **Undergraduate programme**

## Level of study programme
- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Integrated
- Postgraduate

## Type of study programme
- Single major
- Double major
- University
- Professional
- Specialized

## Year of study
- ☒ 1
- ☒ 2
- ☒ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5

## Semester
- ☐ Winter
- ☒ Summer
- ☐ I
- ☒ II
- ☒ III
- ☒ IV
- ☐ V
- ☒ VI
- ☒ VII
- ☒ VIII
- ☐ IX
- ☐ X

## Status of the course
- ☒ Compulsory
- ☒ Elective
- ☐ Elective course offered to students from other departments

## Teaching Competencies
- ☐ YES
- ☒ NO

## Workload
- 30 L
- 15 S
- E

## Internet sources for e-learning
- ☒ YES
- ☐ NO

## Location and time of instruction
- Wednesdays 10–11; Language(s) in which the course is taught
- English

## Course start date
- 29.2.2024.

## Course end date
- 6.6.2024.

## Enrolment requirements
- Students should be enrolled in 4th or 6th semester

## Course coordinator
- Zlatko Bukač, PhD, Assistant Professor

## E-mail
- zbukac@unizd.hr

## Consultation hours
- Fridays 11–12

## Course instructor
- E-mail

## Consultation hours
- Assistant/Associate

## E-mail
- Consultation hours

## Assistant/Associate
- E-mail

## Consultation hours

## Mode of teaching
- Lectures
- Seminars and workshops
- Exercises
- E-learning
- Field work
- Individual assignments
- Multimedia and network
- Laboratory
- Mentoring
- Other

## Learning outcomes
- Recognize and describe relevant concepts and ideas
- Connect different approaches, perceptions, and knowledge through an interdisciplinary approach
The diversity of media and the advancement of technology, which have enabled new spaces for expression, have led to the production of new forms of texts that are receiving increasing attention in academic communities. New forms of media (virtual reality, HTML, video games, mobile applications) produce new types of texts, opening up space for new narrative modes within the field that Grant Bollmer refers to as "digital cultures" (26). These texts, which are the main focus of this course, fall under digital literature, as well as video games. Although there are various names for products that indirectly arise from the influence and development of technology, whether we call them (computer) video games, electronic literature, digital literature, or, for example, interactive fiction, they all imply an entry into the sphere of reflecting on the roles of stories. Video games today, more than ever before, bring a combination of textual, visual, and auditory storytelling that affects the overall gaming experience, which is no longer seen merely as entertainment and pastime. Story is now considered an element by which the overall quality of the game is evaluated. On the other hand, the role of the humanities, including literature, in technologically determined forms of consuming cultural artifacts necessarily becomes one of the focuses of philology and cultural studies worldwide. For example, digital literature (also known as electronic literature) emerged as a term used to denote various literary aspects that require digital, computerized methods for production and consumption. If we accept such a term, we can say that digital literature has been present for over fifty years, and today it exists in various forms of experimental installations, performances, hypertext, and even video games. John Wills positions video games as "part of a broader process of literature, film, and performance" (16), which is why in various studies, playing video games, as well as the video game itself, are also referred to as "interactive storytelling" (Cavazza and Young 379), "ambient action game" (Huberts and Zimmermann 31), or "interactive drama" (Dow et al. 1475).

However, video games still require participation in storytelling because the narrative coexists with the player, their actions, and often their decisions (Thabet 4). Amy M. Green refers to this form as "digital storytelling" (18), asserting that video games demand specific ways of engagement and time investment from players for the story to even take shape and make sense (17). The course will thoroughly examine and present such ideas, encouraging further reflection within the context of knowledge acquired in other undergraduate English studies (and related fields). The course provides an overview of introductory theoretical frameworks and analytical tools related to digital literature and video games, focusing on the growing scientific field of game studies. Through learning basic concepts related to game studies, students will become familiar with contemporary theories related to stories, narratives, and storytelling that undoubtedly reshape literary forms. Students will acquaint themselves with the phenomenon of video games, genre determinants, and
aspects of game development, understanding the potential and cultural implications that today's forms of video games bring and have brought throughout history, as well as the development, potential, and current forms of digital literature.

The course consists of lectures and seminars. Within the seminars, students will, in the first part of the course, read and discuss professional, scientific, and theoretical texts related to digital literature and video games. As part of the analysis of assigned texts, they will write reviews focusing on new, independently raised questions and topics related to specific issues that will be further elaborated during seminar discussions. In the second part of the course, students will engage in playing and interpreting selected titles from the field of digital literature and video games, putting theoretical aspects into practice. Finally, they will write an essay containing their personal experiences of "interpreting" such texts and an independent analysis of selected themes.

### Course content

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lectures:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introductory Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Literature, Digital Literature, and Ergodic Literature</td>
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<td>3. Reading and Analyzing Digital Narratives</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. History and Basic Characteristics of Video Games</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Genres, Fundamentals of Narrative Design, Ludology, and Narratology</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Digital Cultures</td>
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<td>7. Ambient Literature</td>
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<td>8. Final Fantasy VII and Fan Folklore</td>
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<td>9. Gamification of Life and Gamification of Horror</td>
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<td>10. Gender, Race, and Video Games</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Postmodernism in Hideo Kojima's Works</td>
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<td>12. Ruinization and Urbanity in Digital Literature and Video Games</td>
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<td>13. Nostalgia in Video Games</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Statehood Day – Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Video Game Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Course Recapitulation</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Seminars:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introductory Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Reading and Analyzing Digital Narratives</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 3. Discussion on N. Katherine Hayles' Text - "Electronic Literature: What is it?"
| 4. Kate Pullinger: Breathe – Post-Reading Discussion |
| 5. Discussion on Grant Bollmer’s Text - "What Are Digital Cultures?"
| 6. Discussion on Scott Rettberg’s Text - "Genres of Electronic Literature"
| 7. Playing Ifigenia                            |
| 8. Discussion on Bukač, Zlatko; Katić, Mario's Text - "A Legend From Before You Were Born": Final Fantasy VII, Folklore, and Popular Culture |
| 9. Feminist Frequency Viewing                  |
| 10. Discussion on Grant Bollmer's Text - "Culture and Technique" |
| 11. Playing Dear Esther                        |
| 12. Playing The Braid                          |
| 13. Statehood Day – Holiday                    |
| 14. Research Preparation                       |
| 15. Course Recapitulation                      |

### Required reading

- Scott Rettberg (2019) – Electronic Literature
- Grant Bollmer (2018) Theorizing Digital Cultures. SAGE.
## Additional Reading

- *The Last of Us, 2013, Naughty Dog, Sony Interactive Entertainment.*
- *The Last of Us Part II, 2020, Naughty Dog, Sony Interactive Entertainment.*
- *Death Stranding, 2019, Kojima Productions, Sony Interactive Entertainment.*
- *Final Fantasy VII, 1997, Square, Square Enix.*
- *Final Fantasy VII Remake, 2020, Square Enix, Square Enix.*
- *Quiroga, Stefan Aguirre. 2022. White Mythic Space: Racism, the First World War, and *Battlefield 1*. De Gruyter Oldenbourg.*

## Internet Sources

- [https://www.goodgame.hr/](https://www.goodgame.hr/), Ambient literature project - [https://research.ambientlit.com/](https://research.ambientlit.com/), [https://www.youtube.com/@feministfrequency](https://www.youtube.com/@feministfrequency);
- [http://ifigenija.nmz.hr/](http://ifigenija.nmz.hr/)
- Walkthroughs: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9h4yYnstkA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9h4yYnstkA) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_p9wLMNOeM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_p9wLMNOeM)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlGdbziSwEY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuG87lRK1uo

### Assessment criteria of learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Only test/homework</th>
<th>Test/homework and final exam</th>
<th>☒ Final oral exam</th>
<th>☐ Final written exam and oral exam</th>
<th>☐ Practical work and final exam</th>
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### Calculation of final grade

- Seminar activities: 20%
- Seminar paper: 30%
- Final oral exam: 50%

### Grading scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;60</td>
<td>% Failure  (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>60–70</td>
<td>% Satisfactory (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70–80</td>
<td>% Good (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80–90</td>
<td>% Very good (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90–100</td>
<td>% Excellent (5)</td>
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### Course evaluation procedures

- ☒ Student evaluations conducted by the University
- ☐ Student evaluations conducted by the Department
- ☐ Internal evaluation of teaching
- ☒ Department meetings discussing quality of teaching and results of student evaluations
- ☐ Other

### Note /Other

In accordance with Art. 6 of the Code of Ethics of the Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education, “the student is expected to fulfil his/her obligations honestly and ethically, to pursue academic excellence, to be civilized, respectful and free from prejudice.”

According to Art. 14 of the University of Zadar’s Code of Ethics, students are expected to “fulfil their responsibilities responsibly and conscientiously. […] Students are obligated to safeguard the reputation and dignity of all members of the university community and the University of Zadar as a whole, to promote moral and academic values and principles. […]”

Any act constituting a violation of academic honesty is ethically prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- various forms of fraud such as the use or possession of books, notes, data, electronic gadgets or other aids during examinations, except when permitted;
- various forms of forgery such as the use or possession of unauthorised materials during the exam; impersonation and attendance at exams on behalf of other students; fraudulent study documents; forgery of signatures and grades; falsifying exam results.”

All forms of unethical behaviour will result in a negative grade in the course without the possibility of compensation or repair. In case of serious violations the Rulebook on Disciplinary Responsibility of Students at the University of Zadar will be applied.

In electronic communications only messages coming from known addresses with a first and a last name, and which are written in the Croatian standard and appropriate academic style, will be responded to.

This course uses the Merlin system for e-learning, so students are required to have an AAI account. *delete if necessary*