

Course Unit	Games Analysis and Critics	Field of study	Game Design
Bachelor in	Game Design	School	School of Public Management, Communication and Tourism
Academic Year	2023/2024	Year of study	3
Type	Semestral	Semester	1
Level	1-3	ECTS credits	6.0
Code	8309-801-3101-00-23		
Workload (hours)	162	Contact hours	T - TP 60 PL - TC - S - E - OT - O -

T - Lectures; TP - Lectures and problem-solving; PL - Problem-solving, project or laboratory; TC - Fieldwork; S - Seminar; E - Placement; OT - Tutorial; O - Other

Name(s) of lecturer(s) Barbara Costa Vilas Boas Barroso, Raquel Cristina Sousa Pires, Rita Carolina Morais da Costa

Learning outcomes and competences

At the end of the course unit the learner is expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate skills of analysis of digital games at the stages of design and post-mortem;
2. Understand the impact of digital games in social and cultural contexts at the audience reception level;
3. Understand the impact of digital games in social and cultural contexts at the production level;
4. Know and analyze the paradigmatic cases of digital games;
5. Apply multidisciplinary theoretical concepts to the practice of case studies.

Prerequisites

Before the course unit the learner is expected to be able to:
Not applicable

Course contents

The concepts of analysis and criticism. Digital games as a generator of culture. Digital games as a field of scientific knowledge. The great debates around digital games. Critical and analytical thinking during and after design and development. Case studies.

Course contents (extended version)

1. The concepts of analysis and criticism.
2. Digital games as a generating element of culture:
 - a brief history of digital games from a cultural perspective
 - the assertion of digital games in the scientific community;
 - the problems of citations, references, franchises and plagiarism in digital games;
 - digital games in transmedia universes.
3. Digital games as a field of scientific knowledge:
 - Game Studies;
 - Game Culture vs. Game Design;
 - games vs. gamification;
 - intersections and interdisciplinarity;
 - gaming research vs. research through games.
4. Critical and analytical thinking during design and development:
 - critical thinking vs. analytical thinking vs. creative thinking;
 - self-reflection and peer feedback.
5. Project postmortem:
 - key performance indicators;
 - problems encountered and their resolution;
 - critical success factors;
 - weaknesses;
 - impacts on the result;
 - report of the reflection carried out.
6. The big debates around digital games:
 - casual vs. hardcore;
 - realism vs. abstraction;
 - mainstream vs. indie;
 - gender;
 - education;
 - violence / toxicity. .
7. Case studies.

Recommended reading

1. Anable, A. (2018). Playing with Feelings: Video Games and Affect Paperback. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [ISBN: 978-1517900250]
2. Chang, A. (2019). Playing Nature: Ecology in Video Games. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [ISBN: 978-1517906320]
3. Fernández-Vara, C. (2019). Introduction to Game Analysis (2nd ed.). Routledge. [ISBN: 978-0815351849]
4. Isbister, K. (2017). How Games Move Us: Emotion by Design. MIT Press. [ISBN: 978-0262534451]
5. Juul, J. (2012). A Casual Revolution. Reinventing videogames and their players. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. [ISBN: 9780262258968]

Teaching and learning methods

Lecture method using various digital games enabling the construction of knowledge. Interrogative method, systematically questioning students in order to develop critical capacity. Active method, in which students must take the initiative to resolve the proposed work to consolidate knowledge; project-based learning.

Assessment methods

- Continuous Evaluation (internal and mobility): - (Regular, Student Worker) (Final, Supplementary, Special)
- Practical Work - 15% (Case studies analysis [mod 2].)
- Projects - 30% (Game design and development project between curricular units of the semester (includes postmortem).)
- Projects - 10% (Project developed during the Interdisciplinary Week.)
- Practical Work - 30% (Written scientific text [mod1].)
- Practical Work - 15% (Participation and attendance in class [mod1/mod2].)

Language of instruction

Portuguese, with additional English support for foreign students.

Electronic validation

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07-02-2024	07-02-2024	07-02-2024	14-02-2024