University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Cultural and Historical Game Studies, PG_00215471						
Field of study	Historical Games and Digital Heritage						
Date of commencement of studies	October 2027		Academic year of realisation of subject		2027/2028		
Education level	Master's studies		Subject group		Obligatory subject group in the field of study Subject group related to scientific research in the field of study		
Mode of study	full-time studies		Mode of delivery		at the university		
Year of study	1		Language of instruction		English		
Semester of study	1		ECTS credits		6.0		
Learning profile	academic		Assessment form		credit		
Conducting unit							
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor		dr Ewelina Gdaniec				
	Teachers						
Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40
	E-learning hours included: 0.0						
Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan		Participation in consultation hours		Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	40		40.0		70.0	150
Subject objectives	The objective of this course is to deepen the understanding of concepts within historical and cultural game studies, as well as the relationships between game content, mechanics, and technology, and how these interact with player agency and the production of knowledge about the past. The course fosters an understanding of the legal, ethical, and social contexts surrounding the use of history and heritage; it develops skills in substantiating one's arguments, communicating in a specialized professional context in English, and critically evaluating one's own interpretations.						

Learning outcomes

Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
[GHDCMU2_W02] Presents, in detail, concepts from historical and cultural game studies concerning the relationship between game content, mechanics, and technology, and the player's agency and cultural context in the production of knowledge about the past.	Critically interprets how game mechanics, narrative, player agency and cultural assumptions construct historical meanings, using appropriate historical and cultural game studies concepts.	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion [SW5] implementation of a problem task
[GHDCMU2_W05] Discusses the legal, ethical, and social considerations surrounding the use of history and heritage in research and creative work, covering topics such as copyright, the provenance of resources, conflicts over memory, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence.	Identifies legal, ethical and social challenges in the representation of history and culture in media, including in their own projects, and proposes revisions based on feedback and reliable evidence.	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion [SW5] implementation of a problem task
[GHDCMU2_U06] Presents and provides a substantive rationale for a position regarding complex historical and design-related issues, tailoring the communication to the target audience—whether specialists or a more diverse group of recipients.	Provides a reasoned justification for choices about how to interpret historical events and design historical games, adapting the argument to specialist and non-specialist audiences.	[SU5] implementation of a problem task [SU8] observation of student's independent or team work
[GHDCMU2_U07] Uses English in oral and written academic and professional communication at a level of at least B2+ (CEFR), incorporating specialized terminology related to history, game studies, and digital heritage.	Presents and defends historically grounded interpretations and recommendations in English at B2+ level, adapting communication to academic and professional audiences and engaging constructively with competing viewpoints.	[SU5] implementation of a problem task [SU8] observation of student's independent or team work
[GHDCMU2_K01] Critically examines conclusions, interpretations, and assessments in light of authoritative sources, feedback, and the inherent limitations of own knowledge, while also incorporating expert opinions in cases that fall outside their own areas of expertise.	Critically evaluates contested cultural representations in historical games, identifying stereotypes, appropriation, source limitations and situations requiring external expertise.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SK5] implementation of a problem task

Subject contents

Who decides which history becomes playable, and whose perspective it represents? The boundaries between evidence, speculation, and creative interpretation; the epistemological status of games in relation to historiography. The translation of archival research and scholarly findings into interactive narratives and mechanics. The historian within a development team: negotiating interpretations, responsibilities, and production constraints. Research-based design as a form of experimenting with models of the past and producing knowledge. Causality, agency, power, and social change as historiographical theses embedded within digital and analog game systems. The ethics of representing difficult heritage, silences, and marginalized groups; social history and the history of everyday life; feminist, postcolonial, and decolonial perspectives; and the rights of Indigenous communities. Games as vessels for memory, nostalgia, national myths, and disputes over the past. Players, fandoms, and modders as co-creators of history.

Prerequisites and co-requisites

Assessment methods and criteria

Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
Historical Game Audit	51.0%	30.0%
Historical Consultancy Challenge	51.0%	40.0%
The Expert Hearing	51.0%	30.0%

Recommended reading	Basic literature	Wright, E., Donald, I. and Webber, N. (eds) (2026) Writing Game Histories. Bloomsbury Publishing. Mochocki, M. and Gdaniec, E. (eds) (2027) The Living Handbook of Historical Game Studies. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Cook, K., Houghton, R. and Kempshall, C. (eds) (2027) The Routledge Companion to Video Games and History. Routledge. Mäyrä, F. and Koskimaa, R. (eds) (2027) Cultural Game Studies: Critical Approaches. Routledge. Loban, R. (2024) Embedding culture into video games and game design: The palm, the Dogai and the tombstone. CRC Press.
	Supplementary literature	Keogh, B., Butt, M.-A. and Carter, M. (2026) Game studies: A critical introduction to the field. Polity. Digital Culture & Society (2025) Digital Games through Muddled Pasts and Modded Histories, 11(1).
	eResources addresses	
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	How do games reproduce or challenge colonial perspectives? Conduct a cultural representation audit and formulate recommendations for historically informed, decolonial design.	
Work placement	Not applicable	

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