



English 5810: The Aesthetics of Violence in Games and Literature (Special Topics)
Spring Semester 2025

Course Description

This course examines the role of violence in art and narrative. (Units: 3.0. This course can be allowed to count for the “Advanced Video Games/Digital Humanities Requirement” for the English B.S.)

Course Outcomes and Objectives

In this course students will:

1. Study art that engages seriously with questions of violence, from Homer to Shakespeare to *The Last of Us*.
2. Learn to analyze violence as both a moral issue and an element of aesthetic form.
3. Gain experience analyzing video games from a critical and formalist lens.
4. Gain experience analyzing video games in relation to other art forms, particularly literature.

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

- Active Reading/Playing, Attendance, and Participation: 30%
- Close Reading Paper (5 pages): 20%
- Personal Reflection Paper (5 pages): 20%
- Final Paper (10 pages): 30%

Grading Scale

The course is graded on the A-F scale using the standard American metrics.

University Policies

This course adheres to all mandatory syllabus policies for the University of Utah, including those regarding the ADA Act, Safety at the U, Addressing Sexual Misconduct, and Academic Misconduct, which can be viewed here: <https://cte.utah.edu/instructor-education/syllabus/institutional-policies.php>

Preliminary Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Discussion</u>	<u>Due</u>
Week 1:	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> (excerpt)	
Week 2:	William Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	
Week 3:	Chad Stahelski, <i>John Wick</i>	
Week 4:	Dennaton Games, <i>Hotline Miami</i>	
Week 5:	Orson Welles, <i>Touch of Evil</i> (excerpt) IO Interactive, <i>Hitman: World of Assassination</i>	
Week 6:	Franz Kafka, "In the Penal Colony"	Close Reading Paper
Week 7:	Sarah Kane, <i>Blasted</i>	
Week 8:	Naughty Dog, <i>The Last of Us: Part I</i> (excerpt)	
Week 9:	Spring Break	
Week 10:	Roberto Bolano, <i>2666</i> Naughty Dog, <i>The Last of Us Part II</i>	
Week 11:	Roberto Bolano, <i>2666</i> Naughty Dog, <i>The Last of Us Part II</i>	Personal Reflection
Week 12:	Roberto Bolano, <i>2666</i> Naughty Dog, <i>The Last of Us Part II</i>	
Week 13:	Roberto Bolano, <i>2666</i> Naughty Dog, <i>The Last of Us Part II</i>	
Week 14:	Roberto Bolano, <i>2666</i> Naughty Dog, <i>The Last of Us Part II</i>	Final Paper Proposal
Week 15:	Roberto Bolano, <i>2666</i> Naughty Dog, <i>The Last of Us Part II</i>	
Week 16:	Final Paper Presentations	
Finals Week:	N/A	Final Paper