



**English 2090: Video Game Storytelling**  
Spring Semester 2025

**Course Description**

An introduction to the narrative potential (and problems) of the video game medium, with a focus on formal analysis. Questions to be considered include: what is the relationship between narrative form and game form? How does the video game medium transform traditional categories of literary narrative, such as character or setting? Can video games express characterological emotions or thoughts? What kinds of plots best lend themselves to games? How do space and time function in video game worlds? (Units: 3.0. Fulfills Humanities Exploration Gen Ed requirement.)

**Course Outcomes and Objectives**

In this course students will:

1. Gain experience analyzing video games from a critical and formalist lens.
2. Gain experience analyzing video games in relation to other art forms, particularly literature.
3. Learn basic categories and methods of narrative theory.
4. Practice writing critically and persuasively about video games.

**Course Requirements**

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

- Active Reading/Playing, Attendance, and Participation: 20%
- Canvas Discussion Posts: 20%
- Response Papers (500 words): 40%
- Take-Home Final Exam Essay (1500 words): 20%

**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**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topic/Discussion</u></b>	<b><u>Due</u></b>
<b>Week 1:</b>	Course Introduction and Syllabus/Schedule Review	N/A
<b>Week 2:</b>	Form vs. Content	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 3:</b>	Space, Setting, Environment	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 4:</b>	Time, Death, Repetition	Canvas Discussion Posts Response Paper (1/29)
<b>Week 5:</b>	Storytelling through Objects	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 6:</b>	Strange Worlds	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 7:</b>	Theatrical Narrative	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 8:</b>	Theatrical Narrative	Response Paper (2/24)
<b>Week 9:</b>	Spring Break	N/A
<b>Week 10:</b>	Detection	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 11:</b>	Detection/Violence	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 12:</b>	Choice and Reflexivity	Canvas Discussion Posts Response Paper (3/26)
<b>Week 13:</b>	Choice and Reflexivity	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 14:</b>	Cinematic Narrative	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 15:</b>	Fantasy and the Sublime	Canvas Discussion Posts
<b>Week 16:</b>	Conclusions	N/A
<b>Finals Week:</b>	Take-Home Essay Exam	Given 4/23, Due 4/28