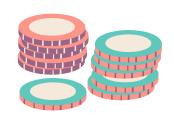


YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Elizabeth "Biz" Nijdam (biz.nijdam@ubc.ca)

Department of Central, Eastern, and Northern European Studies



Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11-12 PM in Buchanan Tower 927

Hi! My name is Dr. Elizabeth "Biz" Nijdam. I've taught at UBC since 2019. I received my PhD from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 2017, where I wrote my PhD on feminist comics and graphic narrative.



WHAT WE'LL NEED:

- 1) Canvas will be used for accessing course materials, completing assignments and coursework, and participating in class discussions. To log in to Canvas and learn more visit: https://students.canvas.ubc.ca. You can direct all technical questions to the Learning Technology Hub: It.hub@ubc.ca. All supplementary readings will be provided in PDF form on our Canvas site.
- canvas
- **2)** Unless provided via Canvas in excerpt, all readings will be available for free online.
- **3)** Digital games will be available online for free or for purchase on various platforms, including laptop and desktop computers as well as Android and iOS devices.



WHAT WE'LL LEARN



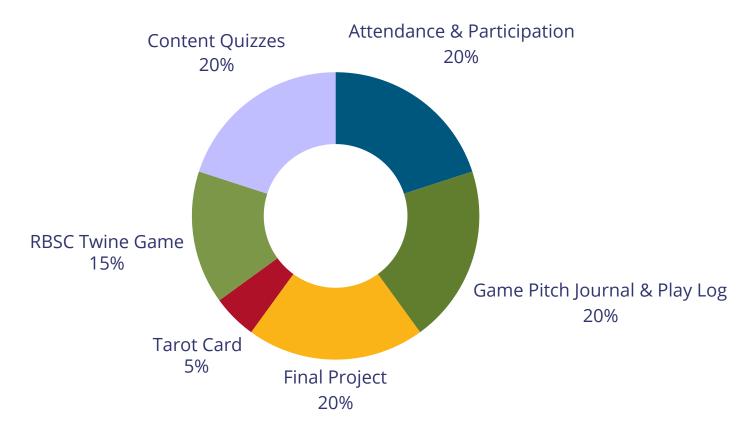
This course examines the intersections between digital and analog gaming cultures and the work of social justice. Students will explore various approaches to video games, tabletop games, and tarot including game design, game play, and fan cultures to examine how gaming cultures, on the one hand, perpetuate bias, prejudice, and problematic power dynamics and, on the other, are capable of intervening in discourses of oppression, heteronormativity, and settler colonialism. Through the production of minigames and game protypes that strive to meet the needs of self-identified social-justice goals, this course will foster students' ability to critically analyze the societal impacts, representations, narratives, and game mechanics embedded within a variety of gaming cultures.

The course is accompanied by a public lecture series that will feature local, national and international game designers and developers. This lecture series offers students the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives and methodologies while developing a network of professionals in the gaming industry.

Ultimately, this course equips students with the analytical frameworks and practical skills necessary to navigate and critically assess the complex landscape of historic and contemporary gaming cultures and their intersections with the work of social justice.

WHAT ABOUT GRADING?

This course will feature weekly course readings and lectures, short content quizzes, class discussion, group work, and a Playlog & Game Pitch Journal. Students will complete several creative projects, including a Twine game based on archival research in UBC Rare Books & Special Collections and a final project based on a Game PItch Journal Entry.



CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%)

To be successful in this course, you must be prepared for our class sessions and participate actively in all assigned course activities. Good participation will take the form of regular contributions to class discussion and the completion of "in-class" short essays assigned via Canvas as part of our weekly coursework. Creative assignments will include class time, but assignments to be completed outside/independent of our asynchronous sessions.

In accordance with UBC Policies and Regulations, students are expected to attend class regularly. Furthermore, in accordance with UBC and CENES's Course Policies, students may not miss more than 40% of the course's scheduled class sessions, regardless of whether their absences are avoidable or unavoidable. In the event that a student misses 12 or more hours of class time, they may be considered unable to meet the "learning outcomes" of the course and may therefore be excluded from final examination. Those students who are unavoidably absent from online class sessions or miss multiple class sessions and their associated "in-class" assignments must **report their absence to me immediately** or upon their return to participating in class in order to establish how they should proceed in catching up on missed material. Students may be granted a concession for their absence, in the case of an extended absence, by the Academic Advising Services of the Faculty of Arts.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (CONT.): IN-CLASS ESSAYS

Attendance and participation will be graded through Canvas "in-class" writing assignments. These assignments will be completed during class time and will take the form of short "In-Class Essays" that will engage the course material, readings, and lectures of a given class session. During our class sessions, students will take 5-7 minutes of in-class time to write 150-350 words in response to a prompt. These short essays offer students the opportunity to reflect on the course material prior to participating in other activities, such as a discussion thread, and moving on to other material.

These short In-Class Essays will not be graded for grammar, spelling, punctuation, or syntax; instead, they will be graded for completion. They thereby function as a testament to student engagement with the course material and proof of their participation in class as well as form the foundation of class discussion and project work. The use of AI technologies for this and other assignments is strictly forbidden.

All In-Class Essays should be completed in the order they are assigned and are due Sunday at midnight the week they were assigned. Making up In-Class Essays after the Sunday deadline will only be possible in extenuating circumstances, and extension requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, so please email me if you become sick and require additional accommodation.

PLAYLOG & GAME PITCH JOURNAL (20%, DUE SUNDAYS):

Over the course of the semester, students will submit **3 Playlog** and **3 Game Pitch Journal Entries**. Due dates will be set every week, but students are asked to select due dates and activities that work for their schedules. These assignments require students to demonstrate understanding and engagement with course material in greater depth than in-class discussion, responding to one particular concept, idea, or question by designing a game, narrative components of a game, or innovative game mechanics.

Playlog Entries will be reflections on 1 or more games that students played independently (or as part of a course game night) during the course of the week. They will explore gameplay experience through the lens of our course in 350–500 words.

Game pitches entries will be drafted/designed in response to the texts, games, and themes we explore over the course of the semester. They will take the form of either 350-500 word descriptions and/or 1-page of visual design/images).

Playlog and Game Pitch Journal Entries will be completed *after* students have attended their class session(s) and finished their coursework for the week and will be submitted on Sundays via Canvas, whenever that due date does not coincide with another major deadline. Please see the assignment on our course's Canvas site for more information.

CONTENT QUIZZES (20%):

To ensure that students are keeping up with the assigned readings and to encourage close engagement with the games we are exploring in class, students will be asked to complete short content quizzes at the beginning of each class or in preparation for class. These quizzes will also function as a preview for the session's discussion of the material to help students reinforce their understanding of key themes, characters, and plot points, ensuring that students are prepared for in-depth discussions and activities during class.

TWINE GAME (15%):

Our course deals with social justice issues in games and gaming cultures, Part of this work will be to engage with these themes through creative methods. The first creative project of the semester will ask students to gamify structured archival research in the **UBC's Rare Books and Special Collections** (RBSC) by turning it into an interactive narrative.

For this group project, students will explore a selection of archival documents in RBSC in order to create a short Twine game or interactive narrative based on/using these materials. Working in groups of 2-3, students will first be introduced to UBC's RBSC through a Canvas Course and a class visit by an RBSC archivist. Then students will be invited to explore the materials, selecting some to integrate into their game, transforming these historical documents into a compelling interactive narrative.

TAROT CARD (5%)

This course integrates a decolonial Tarot Card workshop, for which students will each produce one Tarot Card. The workshop will be led by decolonial educator and Tarot practitioner Christopher Marmolejo. Select cards may be published as part of the **Tarot for Decolonization Project**.

FINAL PROJECT: GAME (20%)

The course will culminate with a final project, for which students will select one of their Game Pitches to turn into a game. Students can work alone or in groups of two or three.

There are no traditional final exams or midterms in this course.

COURSE POLICY ON GENERATIVE AI

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools is strictly prohibited in all course assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise. This includes ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence tools and programs.

Submitting work generated by AI tools without citation is not only a form of academic misconduct. it also misrepresents your understanding and efforts within the context of our course, which is unfair to your peers.

It's easy to rely on AI tools when you're participating in a class that require a lot of online work, but I hope you'll trust that you're capable of this work without the assistance of technology, especially since you're here to develop critical thinking skills, broaden your understanding of the role of popular media in our lives, and deepen your engagement with it, which AI can't do for you.

Moreover, many of these assignments are part of our grading contract, which was designed to afford students the opportunity to think and learn freely while taking chances in their interpretation of the texts and performance of literary, visual, and media studies analysis. This approach means that there are no "wrong" answers to these low-stakes assignments, so students should feel encouraged to engage thoughtfully and creatively without concern for the impact on their grades.

Finally, writing and critical thinking are essential skills that you will continue to use throughout your academic and professional careers. Practicing these skills now will benefit you in the long run.

OUR PLAN FOR THE TERM

Week 1	THURS., JAN. 9	Course Introduction
Week 2	THURS., JAN. 16	Introduction to Game Studies ROUNDTABLE OF LOCAL GAME DEVELOPERS
Week 3	THURS., JAN. 23	Video Games, Gender, & Disability ANNA ANTHROPY
Week 4	THURS., JAN. 30	RBSC Archival Research & Twine Workshop JOHN AYLIFF
Week 5	THURS., FEB. 6	Interactive Narratives on Forced Migration
Week 6	THURS., FEB. 13	Card Games
		CANDIE TANAKA & LAURA FUKUMOTO
Week 7	THURS., FEB. 20	WINTER BREAK
Week 8	THURS., FEB. 27	Indigenous Game Design: Video Games
		MAIZE LONGBOAT
Week 9	THURS., MAR. 6	Role Playing Games (RPGs) JESS WIND
Week 10	THURS., MAR. 13	Indigenous Game Design: Board Games JAMES DARIN CORBIERE DAVID PLAMONDON
Week 11	THURS., MAR. 20	Tarot for Decolonization CHRISTOPHER MARMOLEJO
Week 12	THURS., MAR. 27	Critical Board Game Modification GREG LORING ALBRIGHT
Week 13	THURS., APRIL. 3	Group Project Presentations

UBC POLICIES AND HELPFUL RESOURCES:

The following policies and procedures are considered part of the class syllabus and policy. Feel free to talk them over with your instructor!

UBC Attendance Policy
Applying for Academic Concession

UBC's Academic Code of Honour

UBC's current COVID-19 Policy

Resources to support Student Success

Accommodations for Religious Holidays and Days of Significance

Using Online Netiquette

Use of Electronic Devices at UBC

Center for Accessibility: Support for Disabled Students

UBC Calendar Entry for this course:

"Competence and fluency in everyday situations; ability to report and narrate past events fluently and to express opinions; familiarity with contemporary issues in the German-speaking societies."

HMM... WHAT ABOUT A MAJOR OR MINOR IN GERMAN?

There is so much to explore in CENES! Courses range from culture and film studies, to literature and historiography, philosophy and language, sexuality and gender, media, activism, and society.

Our professors are experts in fields ranging from Comics and Games studies and Queer Studies and Critical Race Theory. Our Honours students participate in community and capstone projects, including our annual undergraduate research conference and journal.

2024/25 GMST Courses





GMST 335: **Germanic Horror Film** (T2) (Dr. Jason Lieblang)



CENS 202: **Gender & Sexuality in CENES** (T2) (Dr. Biz Nijdam)



GMST 121: **Fairy Tales & Popular Culture** (T2) (Dr. Jason Lieblang)



GMST 445 **Music and German Literature** (T2) (Dr. Florian Gassner)

These courses require no prerequisites. And don't worry! Many courses in UBC German (all GMST courses) are taught in English. Your new German knowledge will be a bonus!

Questions? Reach out to your instructor or to the director of undergraduate studies, Dr. Biz Nijdam, ubc.german@ubc.ca! She is a joy to be around and would love to chat with you.

You can also check out more information about courses offered this term and next on our Instagram @ubcgermanstudies.

THE GERMAN PROGRAM HELPS YOU TO:

- Experience and contribute to our multilingual world
- Recognize how multilingual meanings impact people and processes—in complex, subtle, and profound ways
- Describe how monolingualism and linguistic nativism intersect with racism, nationalism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression

Undoing the effects of monolingualism, Anglocentrism, and linguistic nativism

- describe the means by which knowledge is made
 in diverse Germanophone contexts—including
 collaborative, historical, methodological,
 linguistic, social, aesthetic, creative, technological,
 material, and political processes
- interpret texts and narratives using various literary, linguistic, and multimodal frameworks
- help undo colonial processes of knowledge production—both those arising from Germanophone colonial modernity and in Canada's colonial past and present

Knowing—from a multilingual, Germanophone standpoint

- Speak, read, and write in German creatively and confidently, taking pride in the accents and heritage language proficiencies you came to the program with (English, German, Mandarin, Persian, Cree, etc.
- Work across languages—through translation, interpretation, code-mixing, assistive technology, etc.
- Understand that language is constantly changing amid social and historical fluid

Enjoying using German—with confidence



- Express what it means for you to be alive and human today
- Express what responsibilities you have to other people, communities, land, and ecologies
- Identify the complexities of historical, sociopolitical, and cultural processes that particularly affect German-speaking people and places

Living and being alive in a volatile age

- Identify and describe how power works in the settings that matter to you and your communities
- Describe Germanophone societies' specific responsibility to redress genocide, eugenics, Nazism, colonialism, settler colonialism, and the ongoing effects of empire
- Use resources from cultural history and experiences of crisis from the 20th century and before to pursue justice and responsibility in the 21st century
- critique propaganda, linguistic deceit, obfuscation, linguistic racism, elitism, authoritarianism, hate, exclusionary purism, and various forms of fascism in linguistic, visual, and symbolic form

Aiming for planetary justice & public responsibility

- Strive to comprehend beyond your own personal experience and standpoint, through processes of listening, reflecting, conceptualization, analysis, and translation
- View knowledge and language as a commons, rather than a possession
- Identify the difference between the use of language and knowledge to manipulate or gain power over others, and the use of language to uplift and nourish others
- Identify how your experiences shape you differently than do those of a person of another gender, sexuality, race, religion, background, immigration status, ethnicity, language, accent, embodiment, age, language, and worldview

Modelling intellectual humility

These course materials were designed and prepared by Dorothee Leesing, Emilie Kneifel, and David Gramling in 2022 and updated annually by Biz Nijdam