



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2021

3,720: Technologien/Technologies: Digital Games - Business, Culture, Ethics

ECTS credits: 3

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (50%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (50%)

Examination time: term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[3,720,1.00 Technologien/Technologies: Digital Games - Business, Culture, Ethics](#) -- Englisch -- [Busch Thorsten](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

None.

Learning objectives

After successful completion of this class, students will be able to:

- understand the broad scope of today's gaming landscape from a wide range of perspectives;
- make informed decisions as managers, policymakers, and designers;
- critically evaluate:

- (a) the design of games as cultural artifacts,
- (b) the business of creating games,
- (c) the political processes that influence game development,
- (d) the ethical controversies that surround games,
- (e) the international and intercultural dimensions of game development.

Course content

Over the course of the past 40 years, digital games have become a dominant and pervasive medium - not only culturally, but also commercially. In their future careers, HSG graduates will thus interact with social contexts influenced by game culture, business, and ethics in many different ways. For instance, companies and other organizations use game-based incentives to achieve their goals, consumers interact with a wide variety of games every day on their smart phones and on social media, and political decision-makers need to decide whether game companies deserve tax breaks in order to create a game development studio in their respective region. Games literacy is thus not only required knowledge for anyone seeking a career in digital media, but for any professional in a wide range of industries and in public service. The course will cover a broad range of cultural, technological, political, and ethical aspects regarding both classic and current games.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course will be held via Zoom.



1. Introduction
2. Just mindless fun? Reading games as cultural artifacts
3. A brief history of games
4. Business models: console, PC, MMOs, social, mobile, freemium
5. Business culture and practices
6. Diversity in the games and technology industries
7. Games industry ethics and moral issues in games
8. Political dimensions of the games business
9. Journalism ethics and gaming media
10. Gamification: game-based incentives in business, health care, education, and everything
11. Virtual worlds, toxic player behavior, and the governance of online gaming platforms
12. International and intercultural perspectives

This class will adapt a flipped classroom model that engages students in active and collaborative learning processes. At the start of the semester, I will upload an introductory lecture video and extended syllabus to StudyNet. You can use those as a guideline for the independent research you will be doing for your group presentations. Our class will be conducted online via Zoom during the semester break, and all students are expected to contribute to everybody else's respective learning success by actively contributing to group presentations and class discussions. After the break, students will need to perform independent research for their individual term papers. Students are free to write about any topic they are interested in, as long as it is relevant to the scope of this class.

Contextual Studies are considered part of **Contact Learning**; thus, taking part properly implies **regular attendance**, be it online or in the classroom. In order to fully comply with the distance and hygiene rules applicable at the university, the course can be taught online or in smaller groups. It is the students' own responsibility to ensure that there is **no timetable clash** between the courses they have chosen. A detailed course outline and all relevant documents will be made available on **StudyNet**.- Students are generally expected to contribute to classroom discussions.

Course literature

The following list represents introductory materials. Most of the literature used in class will consist of academic papers, newspaper articles, and videos, all of which will be provided digitally prior to class.

- Busch, T., Boudreau, K., and Consalvo, M. (2016). "Toxic gamer culture, corporate regulation, and standards of behavior among players of online games." In Conway, S., and deWinter, J., eds., *Video Game Policy: Rules of Play*. New York: Routledge.
- Consalvo, M. (2007). *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Dyer-Witheford, N., and De Peuter, G. (2009). *Games of empire: Global capitalism and video games*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Ess, C. (2014). *Digital media ethics*. 2nd edition. Cambridge/Malden, MA: Polity.
- Fuchs, M., et al (eds.) (2014). *Rethinking gamification*. Lüneburg: Meson Press.
- Harambam, J., Aupers, S., & Houtman, D. (2011). Game over? Negotiating modern capitalism in virtual game worlds. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14. 299-319.
- Humphreys, S. (2008). Ruling the virtual world: Governance in massively multiplayer online games. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11. 149-171.
- Jones, P, Comfort, D. & Hillier, D. (2013). Playing the game: corporate social responsibility and the games industry. *Journal of Public Affairs* (online first). DOI: 10.1002/pa.1457.
- Juul, J. (2005). *Half-real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Juul, J. (2009). *A Casual Revolution: Reinventing Video Games and Their Players*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Lastowka, G. (2010). *Virtual Justice: The New Laws of Online Worlds*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- Paul, C. A. (2012). *Wordplay and the discourse of video games: Analyzing words, design, and play*. New York: Routledge.
- Sicart, M. (2013). *Beyond choices. The design of ethical gameplay*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Struppert, A. (2011). *Developing intercultural awareness and sensitivity through digital game play: three cases studies with the simulation RealLives 2010 in Australian, American, and Swiss middle schools*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Macquarie University, Australia. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.14/173464>
- Suzor, N., & Woodford, D. (2013). Evaluating consent and legitimacy amongst shifting community norms: an EVE Online case study. *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research* 6(3).
- Zackariasson, P., and Wilson, T. L. (eds.) (2012). *The Video Game Industry: Formation, Present State, and Future*. New York: Routledge.

Additional course information



Dr. Thorsten Busch is Adjunct Teaching Fellow at Trinity College Dublin, chargé de cours at HEC Montréal, Affiliated Faculty at Concordia University Montréal, and a Lecturer in game studies, digital business ethics, and responsible innovation at the University of St. Gallen.

This class covers subject matter that is evolving fast. Class content is thus subject to change, depending on whether new developments make it necessary to supplement, change or replace content.

The course will be conducted online.

Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (50%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Presentations

In presentations, aids for visual presentation can be used. These aids can be specified or restricted by the lecturers.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (50%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Term papers

Written work must be written without outside help according to the known citation standards, and a declaration of authorship must be attached, which is available as a template on the StudentWeb.

Documentation (quotations, bibliography, etc.) must be carried out universally and consistently according to the requirements of the chosen/specified citation standard such as e.g. APA or MLA.

The legal standard is recommended for legal work (cf. by way of example: FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R., SCHINDLER B., Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (the latest edition in each case), or according to the recommendations of the Law School).

The reference sources of information (paraphrases, quotations, etc.) that has been taken over literally or in the sense of the original text must be integrated into the text in accordance with the requirements of the citation standard used. Informative and bibliographical notes must be included as footnotes (recommendations and standards e.g. in METZGER, C., Lern- und



Arbeitsstrategien (latest edition).

For all written work at the University of St.Gallen, the indication of page numbers is mandatory, regardless of the standard chosen. Where page numbers are missing in sources, the precise designation must be made differently: chapter or section title, section number, article, etc.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Examination content

A syllabus including presentation topics and literature will be made available via Studynet once the course bidding process has been completed.

How to approach your presentations

Each student within a group is supposed to present for 15 minutes. Depending on your group size, your group is thus responsible for a presentation of 45-60 minutes, after which you will be asked to contribute to a discussion moderated by the professor. Please feel free to prepare some questions that you can use to start the discussion with the class. Your goal is to teach your fellow students in simple yet precise terms the most fundamental and interesting things you think they should know about your subject matter. You should approach games from a critical academic perspective that includes business, cultural, and ethical dimensions, and your presentations should reflect these dimensions. Try to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main concerns, contexts, and stakeholders in your field?
2. What cases can you use to illustrate these concerns?
3. Why do these concerns matter in terms of business, culture, and ethics, respectively?
4. Are there games or game-related cultural expressions that deal with those concerns? (If so, please talk about them or feel free to demonstrate them in class through screenshots, video or live gameplay.)

Term papers

In addition to your group presentation, you will also be tasked with writing an individual term paper. This paper should not be longer than 13,000 characters, and it needs to be submitted via email as a pdf attachment to my above-mentioned email address. The deadline for submission is *January 10, 2021*. I will assume that you have already been trained at the University of St.Gallen to write a term paper, but I will gladly give you a few suggestions and guidelines in class. Generally speaking, you will be expected to identify an interesting research question yourself, and I will gladly discuss the feasibility of that project with you individually at the end of our class. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask anytime.

Examination relevant literature

See course literature.



Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW51) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 42 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 34 (Thursday, 26 August 2021);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 18 October 2021);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 18 October 2021);

Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before the end of the registration period in CW 45 (Monday, 8 November 2021).