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Spring 2022

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Spring 1-15-2022

### ENG 5091-600 Special Topic Language and Literacy in Videogames

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#### Recommended Citation

Binns, Donna, "ENG 5091-600 Special Topic Language and Literacy in Videogames" (2022). *Spring 2022*. 42.  
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## **ENG 5091A--600 (Online)**

Special Topic: Language and Literacy in Videogames

Professor: Donna Binns, PhD

Online “Office” Hours: Mondays 5:00 pm—7:00 pm; Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:00 pm—6:00 pm. Schedule Zoom conferences with Dr. Binns well in advance.

E-mail: [djbinns@eiu.edu](mailto:djbinns@eiu.edu); DO NOT E-MAIL DR. BINNS THROUGH D2L: Use **Panthermail**.

English Department Phone Number: 217-581-2428

### **Texts**

- Classmates’ and Your Writing
- *What Video Games Have Two Teach Us About Learning And Literacy* by James Paul Gee
- *Unified Discourse Analysis: Language, reality, virtual worlds, and video games* by James Paul Gee
- *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexus, Interaction, Textuality* by Astrid Ensslin & Isabel Balteiro
- *The Rhetoric of Videogames as Embodied Practice: Procedural Habits* by Steve Holmes
- Articles and excerpts provided via D2L or Links

### **Course Description & Student Learning Objectives**

This seminar focuses on theories of language and literacy in video games. Students will explore diverse scholarship on the course topic and be introduced to the various theoretical influences that have shaped topic-related research and theory.

The student learning objectives are as follows:

- Demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge about language and literacy in video games
- Analyze theories regarding language and literacy and video games
- Demonstrate preparation to apply relevant video game theories and pedagogies to one’s own teaching or other applications as appropriate
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication through a short presentation, D2L discussions, response papers, and a seminar project
- Demonstrate the ability to produce a seminar project that could lead to presentation, application (such as teaching), or publication

### **Other Information about the Course**

In addition to the official objectives, participants should also do the following:

- Grow as independent writers and thinkers
- Gain knowledge from exposure to and close reading of texts of topic -related video game theory
- Understand how video games influence society
- Connect video game language and literacy to academic and professional interests
- Demonstrate academic research skills

Success in this course includes (1) finding your own ways to make topics and assignments personally interesting—especially if your first instinct is to label them “boring” or “too hard,” (2) believing that you have something worthwhile to say, and (3) expressing it after you’ve debated, pondered, analyzed, and explored beyond the surface.

### **Additional Expected Performance Outcomes**

Participants will exhibit the ability to do the following:

- Work effectively, ethically, and professionally as a member of a graduate seminar
- Create and share a five-minute Article or Chapter Video Talk about a course topic - related chapter or article not read for class, along with a related response paper
- Craft relevant and rhetorically effective response papers to reading assignments
- Conduct research effectively
- Craft, develop, and polish a research-driven seminar project

### **Course Requirements**

The course consists of assigned readings, peer responses, online discussions of assigned readings, a short presentation, and small and large writing assignments. Active and constructive class participation will make a positive impact on your overall grade. In fact, especially in an online class, keeping up with the work and making deadlines is crucial.

### **Instructor Response Time**

Instructor email response time is usually within 24-48 hours. If you have not received an email response by then, send your inquiry a second time.

### **Learner Interaction for the Online Section (Online)**

Just like a classroom in a face-to-face classroom, the online classroom community demands good manners, careful reading of each other’s ideas, respect for diverse backgrounds and opinions, and adherence to Netiquette Guidelines.

I expect students to act in a mature and collegial manner. You should read the material, participate, and write as required.

### **Discussion Board Participation Guidelines for our Online Section**

Because we cannot talk in a face-to-face classroom setting, discussion forums serve as our way to interact with each and learn from each other.

For each discussion, you need to post a substantive, response to the discussion post question/s and then later reply to three of your peers’ posts with depth and attention if required (instructions will be provided). You are more than welcome to respond to more than three peers. While I may have a minimum requirement of paragraphs for posts, the most important criterion is the **quality**

**of the post**—whether the response exemplifies critical thinking and has details to support one’s points, observations, assertions, or arguments.

If a student provides a quality response to the questions in the discussion forum and also provides a substantive reply to peers' response If required (Pass), the student earns 10 out of 10 for that discussion forum. If a student does not provide substantial comments or only one of the two types of comments (Fail), the student earns 0 out of 10.

### **Response Papers**

Over the course of the semester, you are required to write response papers according to our course calendar (submitted to the Dropbox by the due date and time). These responses have you analyze concepts, precepts, ideas, and issues that authors present in their works. Depending on what text or texts you’re responding to, the response may focus on main points in at least three chapters of the text, an assumption within an argument about the text as a whole, or specific details or ideas in the text that you want to closely analyze in your response. Make certain that you include specific examples from the text to support or develop your ideas.

These response papers are graded pass/fail:

- If the response paper fails to reach basic requirements and/or mainly provides a summary of an article or a point, it will fail: 0/10.
- If you provide a thoughtful, analytical, and interesting reaction to an authors' ideas, it will pass: 10/10.

In sum, REACT.

Demonstrate an interesting, valid, and accurate response and analysis of reading material. Each document needs to demonstrate stylistic maturity and mastery of editorial conventions (grammatical correctness). Response papers need to be at least three double-spaced pages.

### **Article or Chapter Talk Video**

You will produce and share an approximately five-minute video presentation about an article or chapter of your choosing related to our course topic, as long as it is not something we read for class. You will post it to the Discussion Board. Cover key points or themes from the article or chapter that you think might be of interest to our class. If appropriate, you may make connections to a chapter or chapters we read. Basically, discuss the significance of the article or chapter in relation to language and/or literacy and video games. Response 4 should be about your article or chapter. You will also be required to respond to assigned classmates’ videos on the Discussion Board.

### **Seminar Project**

This research project is designed for you to work with a topic, subject, issue, or argument related to video game language and literacy that you’re interested in exploring with greater depth and detail.

This project must have a defined outside audience; it's not just meant for this class. It should have the potential to move *beyond* this seminar.

You have four options for this project:

- **Conference paper** (6-8 pages) along with a proposal/abstract that concisely introduces your project that connects to reading and your work done in ENG 5007 and possibly elsewhere
  - For this project, you have to identify a specific conference you would submit the proposal and paper.
- **Journal article** related to your concentration in the M.A. program that connects to reading and work done in ENG 5007 and possibly elsewhere
  - For this project, you have to identify the journal you would submit the article and produce an article according to the submission guidelines of that journal, including length guidelines.
- **Major writing assignment sequence with a rationale** for a class you may teach.
  - For this project, you have to identify the grade level and course you'd be teaching. The writing assignments (minimum of five) should relate to our course topic, and the rationale will have to explain the assignments' theoretical foundations. The rationale should also address how instructors will incorporate videogame language and/or literacy for each paper and provide necessary documents if warranted (such as rubrics, grading criteria, peer review sheets, conference sheets, checklists, etc., if appropriate).
- **Unit plan** (4 weeks) that pulls from your work in ENG 5091 and translates that work to the specific students you would be teaching.
  - For this project, you have to identify the grade level and course you'd be teaching and provide detailed rationales and discussion about the unit plan's progression. The lesson plans will have to show theoretical foundations and provide rationales for pedagogical strategies and tactics. You may determine the specific format you feel will best convey plans.

I expect students to act in a mature and collegial manner. You should read the material, participate eagerly, and write purposefully.

If you have concerns about this list or any other aspect of the class, please contact me. Similarly, if circumstances arise that will affect your performance in this class, let me know as soon as possible.

### **Email Policy**

I welcome emails **sent to me through Panthermail** if you have questions or concerns about your work in this class. I will send emails to individuals or the entire class through Panthermail. However, I expect you to write emails in a professional manner—not like you are texting a close friend.

When you send an email, follow the guidelines below. Emails should...

- Have a clear and concise subject line that provides gist of the email and course number, such as “5007 Question about Today’s Reading”
- Begin with a formal address, such as “Dr. Binns:” or “Professor Binns”
- Use a respectful tone
- Provide questions or information in a succinct manner
- Use paragraph breaks for reading ease and strong organization
- Be edited and proofread effectively so as not to cause confusion
- Close with a short statement followed by a comma and your name, such as “Thanks for your time,” or “Sincerely,” or “Have a good weekend,” to name a few examples.

### **Academic Integrity & a Social Contract of Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

In this class, there is a social contract between the instructor and students that the work submitted will be the students’ own documents, not someone else’s work.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Here is the official statement on plagiarism by the EIU English Department: “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources. “In this class, if a student is found to have plagiarized, the document will earn a zero for the assignment, and I will report the occurrence to the EIU Judicial Affairs Office.

In general, if you have to have a source before your eyes as you write, you need to copy it accurately, put quotation marks around it, and acknowledge your source. If you are paraphrasing information from a source, you need to use an introductory phrase and properly cite what page or paragraph (if it’s online) where the information is located.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee 1210 or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

**The Student Success Center:** Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other

skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee 1301.

### **Composition of the Overall Course Grade**

assignments and point totals are tentative

#### **Participation 30%**

Discussion posts and replies via D2L

Peer responses

#### **Small Writing/Presentation Assignments 30%**

Response Papers

Article or Chapter Talk

Prospectus for the Seminar Project

#### **Large Writing Assignment 40%**

Seminar Project

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#### **Overall Grading Scale:**

100-90% = A

69-60 = D

89-80 = B

59 and below = F

79-70 = C

**Late Work:** Late work that is not granted an extension by me before its due date will be penalized by 10% of the maximum possible score for each day it is late. Computer problems are not an excuse for turning in late work, so make certain you have a back-up plan if your computer experiences issues. Also, make certain that you save your work in more than one way (i.e., computer hard drive and a usb drive). Even as you draft, save your work often.

#### **Important University Dates:**

- Jan. 14: Last day to add a class
- Jan. 24: Last day to drop a course with no grade
- Jan. 24: Last day to withdraw from all classes with full tuition and fees refund
- Feb. 7: Last day to withdraw from all classes with 50% tuition and fees refund
- Apr. 1: Last day to withdraw from a class

## ENG 5091A Calendar Spring 2022

All readings and deadlines are **tentative**, so they're subject to change if warranted. D2L Posts will be available under "Discussions" each week. Follow instructor and student post guidelines. Response papers should discuss all assigned chapters, but students may focus on some chapters or sections more than others. *What Video Games Have Two Teach Us About Learning And Literacy* is not be as recent because it is a seminal book in the history of this field that remains influential. **All assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the due date unless otherwise indicated.**

### Learning and Literacy with Video Games

#### Week 1

- 1-10 Discussion 1 Part 1: Introduce Yourself
- 1-11 Discussion 1 Part 2: Respond to at least three classmates' posts, including at least one student who has not already received a response, if possible
- 1-13 *What Video Games Have Two Teach Us About Learning And Literacy* Chapters 1 – 4: Discussion 2 Part 1
- 1-16 Discussion 2 Part 2: Respond to at least three classmates' posts, including at least one student who has not already received a response, if possible

#### Week 2

- 1-20 *What Video Games Have Two Teach Us About Learning And Literacy* Chapters 5 – 8 & Appendix: Discussion 3 Part 1
- 1-23 Discussion 3 Part 2; Response 1 to *What Video Games Have Two Teach Us About Learning And Literacy*

### Discourse Analysis and Video Games

#### Week 3

- 1-27 *Unified Discourse Analysis: Language, reality, virtual worlds, and video games* Chapters 1 – : Discussion 4 Part 1
- 1-30 Discussion 4 Part 2

#### Week 4

- 2-3 *Unified Discourse Analysis: Language, reality, virtual worlds, and video games* Chapters 8 – 14: Discussion 5 Part 1
- 2-6 Discussion 5 Part 2; Response 2 to *Unified Discourse Analysis: Language, reality, virtual worlds, and video games*

### Lexis, Interaction, and Textuality

#### Week 5

- 2-10 *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexis, Interaction, Textuality* Introduction and Chapters 1 – 3: Discussion 6 Part 1
- 2-14 Discussion 6 Part 2



Week 6

2-17 *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexus, Interaction, Textuality* Chapters 4 – 5:  
Discussion 7 Part 1

2-20 Discussion 7 Part 2

Week 7

2-24 *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexus, Interaction, Textuality* Chapters 6 – 7 &  
*Getting Gamers* Chapter 14 (D2L): Discussion 8 Part 1

2-27 Discussion 8 Part 2

Week 8

3-3 *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexus, Interaction, Textuality* Chapters 8 – 9 &  
*The Art of Failure* Chapter 2 (D2L): Discussion 9 Part 1

3-6 Discussion 9 Part 2

Week 9

3-9 *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexus, Interaction, Textuality* Chapters 10 – 11 &  
*How to Play Video Games* Chapters 9&10 (D2L): Discussion 10 Part 1

3-11 Discussion 10 Part 2 (will accept by 3-13 with no penalty)

3-14-3-18 Spring Break

Week 10

3-24 *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexus, Interaction, Textuality* Chapters 12 – 13 &  
*Getting Gamers* Chapters 13&15 (D2L): Discussion 11 Part 1

3-27 Discussion 11 Part 2; Response 3 to *Approaches to Videogame Discourse: Lexus,  
Interaction, Textuality*

**Rhetoric of Video Games & Multimodality**

Week 11

3-31 *The Rhetoric of Videogames as Embodied Practice: Procedural Habits* Introduction and  
Chapters 1 – 2: Discussion 12 Part 1

4-3 Discussion 12 Part 2; Article or Chapter Book Talk Video Due to Discussion Board with  
associated Response 4

Week 12

4-7 *The Rhetoric of Videogames as Embodied Practice: Procedural Habits* Chapters 3 – 4:  
Discussion 13

4-10 Discussion 13 Part 2 & Discussion: Article or Chapter Talk Video Responses to Assigned  
Classmates Due to Discussion Board

Week 13

4-14 *The Rhetoric of Videogames as Embodied Practice: Procedural Habits* Chapters 5 – 6:  
Discussion 14 Part 1

4-17 Discussion 14 Part 2 & Discussion: Article or Chapter Talk Video Responses to Assigned  
Classmates Due to Discussion Board

Week 14

- 4-21 *The Rhetoric of Videogames as Embodied Practice: Procedural Habits* Chapter 7 and Conclusion: Discussion 15 Part 1
- 4-24 Discussion 15 Part 2; Response 5 to *The Rhetoric of Videogames as Embodied Practice: Procedural Habits*

Week 15

- 4-27 Seminar Project Draft due to Discussion Board for Peer Responses
- 4-28 *A Multimodal Approach to Video Games and the Player Experience* Chapters 10 – 12 (D2L): Discussion 16
- 4-30 Seminar Project 2 Assigned Peer Responses due

**Final Seminar Project Due to D2L Dropbox by 11:59 pm on 5-4**