University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Historiographical Game Design, PG_00216100		
Field of study	Historical Games and Digital Heritage		
Date of commencement of studies	October 2027	Academic year of realisation of subject	2027/2028
Education level	Master's studies	Subject group	Obligatory subject group in the field of study Subject group related to scientific research in the field of study
Mode of study	full-time studies	Mode of delivery	at the university
Year of study	1	Language of instruction	English
Semester of study	2	ECTS credits	6.0
Learning profile	academic	Assessment form	credit
Conducting unit			
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor		
	Teachers		

Lesson types

Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
Number of study hours	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	30

E-learning hours included: 0.0

Learning activity and number of study hours

Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM
Number of study hours	30	60.0	60.0	150

Subject objectives

The module aims to develop students' ability to design historical games as a form of historiography. Through a team project, students critically analyse sources and competing interpretations, formulate a historiographical argument and express it through game rules, world design and player choices. They learn to use playtesting to assess whether gameplay conveys the intended interpretation and to justify their research and design decisions in light of current theories in historical game studies. The module also develops skills in teamwork, project documentation and responsible representation of the past.

Learning outcomes	Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
	[GHDCMU2_U02] Critically analyses and synthesises information from historical sources and scholarly literature to address complex research and creative problems, taking into account the reliability and limitations of the materials used, as well as competing interpretations.	Critically analyses and synthesises historical sources and scholarly literature to inform the design of the game, assessing their relevance and reliability.	[SU2] presentation/project/paper/ report
	[GHDCMU2_U07] Uses English at a level of at least B2+ of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in spoken and written communication in academic and professional contexts, employing specialist terminology from history, game studies and digital heritage.	Uses English at a minimum of B2+ in academic and project communication, applying specialist terminology from historiography, game studies and historical game design when presenting the game concept, justifying design decisions, participating in team discussions and preparing documentation.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SU3] text preparation/written work
	[GHDCMU2_U08] Organises and leads the work of an interdisciplinary research, development or project team, defining objectives, methods and resources required to carry out tasks, planning schedules, assigning responsibilities, establishing communication procedures, and monitoring and evaluating outcomes.	Organises and coordinates a selected stage of the team's work, defining objectives, scope and schedule, allocating tasks and responsibilities, monitoring progress, evaluating results and proposing corrective action.	[SU5] implementation of a problem task [SU8] observation of student's independent or team work
	[GHDCMU2_K04] Is prepared to responsibly fulfil professional roles as a researcher, creator or consultant, to uphold and promote the principles of professional ethics, and to require others to adhere to them, while maintaining academic integrity, professional standards of conduct and social sensitivity when working with historical and cultural materials.	Applies principles of academic integrity, creative responsibility and social sensitivity when working with historical and cultural material.	[SK2] presentation/project/paper/ report [SK8] observation of student's independent or team work
	[GHDCMU2_W01] Has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of theoretical and methodological approaches in historical research and historiography, including their underlying assumptions, principles of source criticism and assessment of source reliability, major debates over historical interpretation, and contemporary developments in historical research, taking into account their connections with cultural and religious studies and communication and media studies.	Justifies design and research decisions in light of current theories that understand historical games as a form of historiography.	[SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report [SW5] implementation of a problem task
	[GHDCMU2_W03] Has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the principles and methods of iterative game design and prototyping, particularly historical games as interactive models of the past informed by historical knowledge and source interpretation, and culturally themed games as forms of engagement with cultural heritage.	Explains advanced principles of the iterative game design and prototyping process, including through examples from their own projects, with attention to the specific challenges of working with historical and cultural material.	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion

	Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
	[GHDCMU2_U03] Independently develops and refines design solutions in the creation of games focused on history and cultural heritage, drawing on historical knowledge and critical source analysis, selecting appropriate methods and tools during concept development, prototyping, playtesting and iterative refinement, and collaborating within an interdisciplinary team to prepare the outcomes for dissemination to audiences.	Participates effectively in the historical game design process, carrying out tasks in three integrated areas: 1. creating, testing and modifying functional prototypes to achieve intended player experiences; 2. designing gameplay by selecting and combining mechanics, dynamics and interaction structures; 3. designing and writing the narrative layer (world, characters, scenes and dialogue).	[SU5] implementation of a problem task [SU8] observation of student's independent or team work
	[GHDCMU2_U05] Independently prepares and presents the results of research or creative work concerning history, its interpretation or representation in games and digital heritage, in the form of a scholarly text or project documentation, drawing on critically selected source material, formulating logically reasoned conclusions and justifying the adopted research or design solutions.	Produces comprehensive documentation of research and design for a historical game, including analysis of sources, justification of the historiographical interpretation, a description of design solutions, the prototyping and testing process, and conclusions.	[SU2] presentation/project/paper/ report

Subject contents	Historical games as a form of historiography: current theories and analysis of selected examples. Critical assessment of the relevance and reliability of sources and comparison of competing interpretations of a historical problem. Formulation of a historiographical argument and its expression through mechanics, rules, the structure of the game world and the actions available to players. World design with attention to relationships between communities, conflicts and the limits of knowledge about the past. Team prototyping, playtesting and revision based on observations and feedback. Documentation of the links between sources, interpretation and design decisions. Academic integrity, creative responsibility and social sensitivity when working with historical and cultural material.
Prerequisites and co-requisites	Completed courses: Historical Game Design and Methods in Historical Research.

Assessment methods and criteria

Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
Team-based postmortem and individual reports	51.0%	100.0%
Instructor's observation of student work	51.0%	0.0%

Recommended reading

Basic literature

McCall, Jeremiah. 2026. *Designing Historical Games for Classrooms: A Practical Guide for Educators*. Routledge.

Bazile, Julien A. 2022. ‘An “Alternative to the Pen”? Perspectives for the Design of Historiographical Videogames’. *Games and Culture* 17 (6): 855–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412022111539

Brandis, Rüdiger. 2026. ‘Historical Theory and Game Design’. In *Writing Game Histories*, edited by Esther Wright, Iain Donald, and Nick Webber. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Reid, Darren. 2024. ‘Video Game Development as Public History’. *The Public Historian* 46 (1): 74–107. https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2024.46.1.74.

Kynn, Tyler. 2025. ‘A Digital Ottoman Road to Mecca: Time, Distance, and Game Design’. *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 14 (2): 347–63. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijia_00175_1.

	Supplementary literature	Wright, Esther, Iain Donald, and Nick Webber, eds. 2026. *Writing Game Histories.* Bloomsbury Publishing. Cook, Kate, Robert Houghton, and Chris Kempshall, eds. 2027. *The Routledge Companion to Video Games and History*. Routledge. Tremblay, Kaitlin. 2023. *Collaborative Worldbuilding for Video Games.* Taylor and Francis. Brandis, Rüdiger. 2020. 'Tracing the Past with Digital Games. Historical Procedural Rhetorics'. In *History in Games: Contingencies of an Authentic Past*, edited by Martin Lorber and Felix Zimmermann. Transcript.
	eResources addresses	
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	**Adapting historical material:** Which aspects of the selected historical material can be translated into game rules, player choices and their consequences? **Historiographical game:** Drawing on current theories and definitions of historiographical games, assess the extent to which the game meets the defining criteria. **Worldbuilding:** Design a game world grounded in reliable historical knowledge, taking care to represent and simulate the past accurately. **Team project:** Agree on the project scope, allocate tasks and set a schedule. Build a game prototype, run a playtest and revise the prototype based on your observations and player feedback.	
Work placement	Not applicable	

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