

University of Bucharest | Department of English

Elective, 3rd Year, Summer Semester

The Emotional Rhetoric of Video Games

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The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of video game rhetoric that focuses on the emotional dimension of the gameplay experience. The method proposed pays tribute to recent approaches to the reception of games which are informed by affect science. While the course is indeed tailored for video games, the method taught has a transmedial application and will also help students understand the way in which audiences emotionally relate to media in general.

Some of the topics and questions covered in this course include:

- What types of emotion do video games cue?
- How do intermedia networks contribute to the emotional reception of games?
- What is empathy in game reception?
- How do games engender empathy with the playable character?
- How does affect science contribute to our understanding of the representation of trauma in video games?
- Is there a political dimension to the emotional reception of games? What is the relationship between emotions and ideology?

Throughout the semester we will apply the theoretical framework to several video games that focus on the British cultural context, including here *Alice: Madness Returns*, *We Happy Few*, *Amnesia: A Machine for Pigs*, etc. The students who elect this course are asked to take into consideration the fact that many of these games belong to the horror genre and that the levels we analyse in class may contain explicit representations of physical and psychological violence.

The final grade in this course is based on a written exam taken in the final week of teaching, i.e. the 10th. In order to sit the exam, students must attend at least 50% of all lecture.

Selected Bibliography

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