

 FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	NEW COURSE PROPOSAL Undergraduate Programs		UUPC Approval <u>10-6-2025</u> UFS Approval _____ SCNS Submittal _____ Confirmed _____ Banner Posted _____ Catalog _____	
	Department Philosophy College Arts and Letters (To obtain a course number, contact erudolph@fau.edu)			
Prefix PHM Number 4131	(L = Lab Course; C = Combined Lecture/Lab; add if appropriate) Lab Code	Type of Course <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">Lecture</div>	Course Title Philosophy of Video Games	
Credits (See Definition of a Credit Hour) 3	Grading (Select One Option) Regular <input checked="" type="radio"/> Sat/UnSat <input type="radio"/>	Course Description (Syllabus must be attached; see Template and Guidelines) This course examines the philosophy of video games, exploring their nature, value, impact, and meaning. We'll investigate philosophical debates about their ethical, social, metaphysical, epistemological, and aesthetic significance. The course will also use the tools of philosophical analysis to examine psychological research on topics such as violence and addiction.		
Effective Date (TERM & YEAR) Fall 2026				
Prerequisites, with minimum grade* N/A		Corequisites N/A	Registration Controls (Major, College, Level) None	
*Default minimum passing grade is D-. Prereqs., Coreqs. & Reg. Controls are enforced for all sections of course				
WAC/Gordon Rule Course <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No WAC/Gordon Rule criteria must be indicated in syllabus and approval attached to proposal. See WAC Guidelines .		Intellectual Foundations Program (General Education) Requirement (Select One Option) None General Education criteria must be indicated in the syllabus and approval attached to the proposal. See Intellectual Foundations Guidelines .		
Minimum qualifications to teach course Terminal degree in philosophy				
Faculty Contact/Email/Phone Nicholas Baima, nbaima@fau.edu		List/Attach comments from departments affected by new course none		
Approved by Department Chair <u>Nicholas Baima</u> College Curriculum Chair <u>Robin Larson</u> College Dean <u>[Signature]</u> UUPC Chair <u>Korey Jorge</u> Undergraduate Studies Dean <u>Dan Meeroff</u> UFS President _____ Provost _____			Date <u>8/26/2025</u> <u>09/23/2025</u> <u>9/25/2025</u> <u>10-6-2025</u> <u>10-6-2025</u> _____ _____	

Email this form and syllabus to mjenning@fau.edu seven business days before the UUPC meeting.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

PHM 4131

Philosophy of Video Games

Date: Tuesday, Thursday 3:30 PM - 4:50 PM

Building: Social Science Boca **Room:** 370

3 Credit(s)

Fall 2026 - 1 Full Term

Instructor Information

Nicholas Baima

Email: nbaima@fau.edu

Office: SO 282

Office Hours: T/H 2-3 or by appointment

Phone: 551-297-3879

Course Description

This course examines the philosophy of video games, exploring their nature, value, impact, and meaning. We'll investigate philosophical debates about their ethical, social, metaphysical, epistemological, and aesthetic significance. The course will also use the tools of philosophical analysis to examine psychological research on topics such as violence and addiction.

Instructional Method

In-Person

Traditional concept of in person. Mandatory attendance.

Required Texts/Materials

All readings will be found in Canvas Files section, divided up into topics. Please make sure to have a copy of the readings in some format in class with you so you can access and use them during class.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

This class has two primary objectives: (1) to give you a basic overview and appreciation of philosophy of video games and (2) to give you a basis from which you can formulate your own opinions about philosophical issues related to gaming. Additionally, this course has several secondary objectives, such as: to improve your critical thinking skills; to improve your ability to write clearly, succinctly, and precisely; and to improve your ability to communicate effectively about difficult and complex issues.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Florida Atlantic University respects the rights of instructors to teach and students to learn.

Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede their exercise. To ensure these rights, faculty members have the prerogative to:

- Establish and implement academic standards.

- Establish and enforce reasonable behavior standards in each class.
- Recommend disciplinary action for students whose behavior may be judged as disruptive under the Student Code of Conduct University Regulation 4.007.

Disability Policy

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

Course Evaluation Method

1. Discussion leader (15%)

Your group will choose one day to be the discussion leader for. When you are discussion leader, it will be your job as a group to present important and interesting ideas from the week's readings and to create discussion questions for the class to discuss. It will be up to you how you lead discussion—you can assign activities, show videos, etc.---you are taking on the role of teacher. You will need to submit your discussion plan to Canvas. Your group will choose a paper to focus on, but can also incorporate ideas from the other assigned readings for the week. You can choose any assigned reading except for those indicated as background and those from Malanowski and Baima.

2. 1 thesis-driven research paper (~1500 words) (20%)

- Papers will require a draft and revision.
- Paper topics and thesis will be up to you and can be on any of the topics discussed in class.
- Grading criteria are included on rubric attached to assignment and will be discussed in class. The general factors considered in your paper grade:
 - i. Thesis and introduction: You have a clear argumentative thesis that you support throughout the paper and your introduction gives relevant background to the topic
 - ii. Paper structure and organization: The structure of your paper makes it easy to follow the flow of your ideas, and the reader is aware of what you are doing at all points in the paper.
 - iii. Reasoning: How well supported your thesis is, including depth and complexity of the ideas and arguments and full explanations of the ideas and their relationship to each other. Inclusion of all parts of all parts of the question (argument, objection, response).

- iv. Explanation of primary texts: How well and accurately the arguments from the primary sources have been explained, including the relationship between argument/objection/response.
 - v. Readability: Paper is concise, precise, easy to follow, and easy to understand. Any technical terminology that is used is explained. Words are chosen carefully, correct grammar.
 - vi. Citations: If you use materials from somewhere else, whether assigned readings or elsewhere, you must cite your sources at the points in your paper where you use them. You must cite even when you paraphrase rather than directly quote: if the idea, even if not the exact words, came from someone else, you must attribute that author. Failure to cite a source that you used is plagiarism.
- The final version of the paper will be due 4/18
3. Drafts and peer edits (5% total)
- Your paper requires a draft. It will receive comments from both me and a peer editor.
 - Paper draft is due 3/28,
 - Peer edits are due 4/6
4. Group presentation (15%)
- Choose a video game/set of games and talk about some of the philosophically interesting aspects of it
 - During finals time 4/29
5. 6 Critical reading responses (~400 words each): 25% total
- You need to do a total of 6 for the semester, and you cannot do more than one per week. Three (3) reading responses must be turned in prior to spring break: this means that, during weeks 2-8, for three of the weeks, you must do a response. The remaining 3 are to be done after spring break, the last of which must be turned in by week 14.** You thus have some flexibility regarding what weeks you turn in responses. **You cannot do a response for the week you are discussion leader, so plan accordingly.**
- The responses must be turned in prior to class on Tuesdays, and they must cover the readings that were assigned for that week—you cannot turn in a response that covers readings that were assigned in past weeks. The idea is that you carefully read through and think about the reading before they are discussed in depth in class.
- Part of your reading response should involve summarizing the author's argument—the reasoning that they employ to reach their conclusion. However,

reading responses should not only be summaries of a reading; instead they should bring up an objection to, a question for, or an extension of an author's view. An excellent reading response will give a brief summary of the overall argument made in the article, a more substantial summary of the specific point/argument you are responding to, and then give your critical response to the point. (Examples: I think x is wrong because...A counter-example to the claim that the author makes is....I find x's argument can be supported by this thing I learned in another class). There are multiple readings per week and you do not need to talk about all of them in your response (you could choose, for example, to focus on one), but comparing the points across the readings can also serve as a critical component of the response.

Reading responses should demonstrate that you have read the chosen article carefully, put effort into understanding the author's reasoning, and thought critically about the author's reasoning and claims. Although you are not graded on word count, accomplishing this would be difficult to do in less than 400 words—you should aim for *at least* 400 words. But simply writing 400 words does not guarantee a full score.

Grade points	Excellent 9-10	Good 8	Acceptable 6-7	Fail 0-5
Post criteria	Demonstrates substantial understanding of the reading; makes a clear and insightful critical claim about the reading either by raising an objection, talking about the relationship between the week's readings, raising a probing question, connecting it to other issues or cases, etc.	Demonstrates understanding of the reading, but may be somewhat superficial or may have some errors, makes a clear critical claim that may be somewhat superficial	Demonstrates only superficial understanding of the reading (makes it clear the reading has only been skimmed or only the abstract has been read), writing might be somewhat unclear and critical claims made are superficial (example: "I agree with the argument because it is good").	Little to no effort made to understand material, may be off topic, inappropriate, or reflect little to no understanding of the reading material, no critical claims made.

6. In class activities, participation, and attendance: 20%

You are expected to attend class, and I will be taking attendance. You may miss 1 class for any reason (including for sickness) without penalty—there is no difference between excused or unexcused absence for your first miss so you don't need to provide anything. AFTER you have missed a day, if you miss more days, you will need documented legitimate excuse (e.g. medical, school function).

You are also expected to contribute to class discussion, especially when your fellow classmates are leading discussion! This grade is thus also a reflection of what you do during class. This includes answering questions or raising thoughts during class, as well as doing in-class assignments. Throughout the semester, you can expect things to be assigned during class. These in-class assignments will often be done in groups, and provide an opportunity for you to work through and talk about the material. These in-class assignments must be done on the day they are assigned in class. They can only be made up if you have missed for a documented legitimate reason—they thus require you to be in class. You will be able to miss 1 without affecting your grade, and they will be graded on a simple check/check minus/0 scheme.

Code of Academic Integrity

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

Attendance Policy Statement

Students are expected to attend all their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of nonattendance.

Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations, or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances, and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

Religious Accommodation Policy Statement

In accordance with the rules of the Florida Board of Education and Florida law, students have the right

to reasonable accommodations from the University in order to observe religious practices and beliefs

regarding admissions, registration, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work

assignments. University Regulation 2.007, Religious Observances, sets forth this policy for FAU and

may be accessed on the FAU website at www.fau.edu/regulations.

Any student who feels aggrieved regarding religious accommodations may present a grievance to the

executive director of The Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. Any such grievances will follow Florida

Atlantic University's established grievance procedure regarding alleged discrimination.

Time Commitment Per Credit Hour

For traditionally delivered courses, not less than one (1) hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction

each week for fifteen (15) weeks per Fall or Spring semester, and a minimum of two (2) hours of outof-

class student work for each credit hour. Equivalent time and effort are required for Summer Semesters, which usually have a shortened timeframe. Fully Online courses, hybrid, shortened, intensive format courses, and other non-traditional modes of delivery will demonstrate equivalent time

and effort.

Course Grading Scale

Letter Grade Percentage

A 100 - 94%

A- < 94 - 90%

B+ < 90 - 87%

B < 87 - 83%

B- < 83 - 80%

C+ < 80 - 77%

C < 77 - 73%

C- < 73 - 70%

D+ < 70 - 67%

D < 67 - 63%

D- < 63 - 60%

Letter Grade Percentage

F < 60 - 0%

Grade Appeal Process

You may request a review of the final course grade when you believe that one of the following conditions apply:

- There was a computational or recording error in the grading.
- The grading process used non-academic criteria.
- There was a gross violation of the instructor's own grading system. University Regulation 4.002 of the University Regulations contains information on the grade appeals

process

Policy on Make-up Tests, Late work, and Incompletes

Late work is not accepted.

Policy on the Recording of Lectures

Students enrolled in this course may record video or audio of class lectures for their own personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach students about a particular subject.

Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to student presentations (whether individually or as part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), labs, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the lecturer, is prohibited.

Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation or class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the University's Student Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Academic Integrity.

Artificial Intelligence Preamble

FAU recognizes the value of generative AI in facilitating learning. However, output generated by artificial intelligence (AI), such as written words, computations, code, artwork, images, music, etc., for example, is drawn from previously published materials and is not your own original work. FAU students are not permitted to use AI for any course work unless explicitly allowed to do so by the instructor of the class for a specific assignment. **[Policy 12.16 Artificial Intelligence]** Class policies related to AI use are decided by the individual faculty. Some faculty may permit the use of AI in some assignments but not others, and some faculty may prohibit the use of AI in their course entirely. In the case that an instructor permits the use of AI for some assignments, the assignment instructions will indicate when and how the use of AI is permitted in that specific assignment. It is the student's responsibility to comply with the instructor's expectations for each assignment in each course. When AI is authorized, the student is also responsible and accountable for the content of the work. AI may generate inaccurate, false, or exaggerated information. Users should approach any generated content with skepticism and review any information generated by AI before using generated content as-is.

If you are unclear about whether or not the use of AI is permitted, ask your instructor before starting the assignment. Failure to comply with the requirements related to the use of AI may constitute a violation of the **Florida Atlantic Code of Academic Integrity, Regulation 4.001.**

Proper Citation: If the use of AI is permitted for a specific assignment, then use of the AI tool must be properly documented and cited. For more information on how to properly cite the use of AI tools, visit <https://fau.edu/ai/citation>

AI Language Specific To This Course

AI Prohibited

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (**CAPS**) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

Student Support Services and Online Resources

Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS)

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

FAU Libraries

Office of Information Technology Helpdesk

Center for Global Engagement

Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI)

Student Accessibility Services

Student Athlete Success Center (SASC)

Testing and Certification

Test Preparation

University Academic Advising Services

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The CTL has a variety of FREE TUTORING and other academic support services to help you succeed in your courses. You are encouraged to build your academic support team early in the term and meet with your team regularly. At the CTL, you can practice difficult course content, develop skills, and learn academic success strategies -- in person and online. Learn more about FAU academic support at www.fau.edu/ctl.

Course Topical Outline

Topic 1: Introduction

Week 1: 1/7-1/9: Introduction

Week 2: 1/14-1/16: How is this even a philosophy class?: Some basic philosophical issues in games studies and aesthetics

Suits, "The Grasshopper" Chapters 1-4, 8

Background: Tavinor, "The New Art of Videogames"

Topic 2: Virtuality

Week 3, 1/21-1/23: Aesthetics and virtuality

Robson and Meskin, "Video games as self-involving interactive fictions"

Chalmers, "The Virtual and the Real"

Tavinor, "Video Games and Virtual Media" (from The Aesthetics of Video Games chapter 10)

Week 4, 1/28-1/30: Virtuality

Background: Nozick, "The Experience Machine"

Ludlow, "Cypher's Choice" (from Experience Machines, chapter 1)

Pietrucha, "Intuition and Imaginative Failure" (from Experience Machines, chapter 2)

Wildman and McDonnell, "The Puzzle of Virtual Theft"

Topic 3: Violence and Gaming

Week 5, 2/4-2/6: Psychology and gaming violence

Background: Anderson and Dill, "Video Games and Aggressive Thoughts, Feelings, and Behavior in the Laboratory and in Life"

Background: Grossman and DeGaetano, "Feel Something When You Kill"

Waddington, "Locating the wrongness in ultra-violent video games"

Wonderly, "A Humean approach to assessing the moral significance of ultra-violent video games" McCormick, "Is it Wrong to Play Violent Video Games?"

Week 6, 2/11-2/13: Ethics of virtual violence

Schulzke, "Defending the morality of violent video games"

Young, "Agreeing to the Rules" (from "Ethics in the Virtual World" chapter 10)

Malanowski and Baima, Chapter 1, "Fatality!"

Week 7, 2/18-2/20: The Gamer's Dilemma

Luck, "The gamer's dilemma: an analysis of the arguments for the moral distinction between virtual murder and virtual paedophilia"

Bartel, C. "Resolving the gamer's dilemma"

Luck and Ellerby, "Has Bartel Resolved the Gamer's Dilemma?"

Week 8, 2/25-2/27: The Gamer's Dilemma

Partridge, "Pornography, ethics, and video games"

Young and Whitty, "Should gamespace be a taboo-free zone? Moral and psychological implications for single-player video games"

3/4- 3/6: Spring break

Week 9, 3/11-3/13: The virtuous and vicious gamer

LaBossiere, Digital Tears fell from her Digital Eyes: Or, the Ethics of Digital Beings (from "Experience Machines")

Bartel, "Virtual Immoral Fantasies" (from "Video Games, Violence, and the Ethics of Fantasy" chapter 5)

Malanowski and Baima, Chapter 2, "The virtuous and vicious gamer"

Topic 4: Gaming addiction

Week 10, 3/18-3/20: Addiction and Gaming

Petry et al, "An international consensus for assessing internet gaming disorder using the new DSM-5 approach"

Malanowski and Baima, Chapter 4, "Hooked on Gaming"

Kriss, "Potential" (From "The Gaming Mind" chapter 4)

Topic 5: Gaming and sociality

Week 11, 3/25-3/27: Gaming friends and parasocial relationships

Froding & Peterson, "Why virtual friendship is no genuine friendship"

Malanowski and Baima, Chapter 3, "Virtue, Raiding, and Best Buds"

Archer and Robb, "Ethics of Parasocial Relationships"

Draft of paper due 3/28

Week 12, 4/1-4/3: Pluralism and games

Patridge, "Video Games and Gendered Invisibility" (In The Aesthetics of Video Games)

Chess, "Ready Player Two", Introduction and Chapter 1

Topic 6: The Life Well-Played: Games and the Good Life

Week 13, 4/8-4/10: The Value of Games

Malanowski and Baima, Chapter 5, "Gaming Your Way out of the Cave"

Nyugen, "Value Capture"

Nyugen, "Agency as Art"

Jurgensen, "Appreciating Videogames" (from The Aesthetics of Video Games)

Week 14, 4/15-4/17: Games and the good life.

Suits, "The Grasshopper" chapters 14 and 15

Malanowski and Baima, Chapter 6, "The Life Well-Played"
Ridge, "Games and the Good Life"

Final exam time Thursday 4/29 10:30-1 Presentations

Title IX Statement

In any case involving allegations of sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report the matter to the University Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX (OCR9). If University faculty become aware of an allegation of sexual misconduct, they are expected to report it to OCR9. If a report is made, someone from OCR9 and/or Campus Victim Services will contact you to make you aware of available resources including support services, supportive measures, and the University's grievance procedures. More information, including contact information for OCR9, is available at <https://www.fau.edu/ocr9/title-ix/>. You may also contact Victim Services at victimservices@fau.edu or 561-297-0500 (ask to speak to an Advocate) or schedule an appointment with a counselor at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) by calling 561-297-297-CAPS.