

English 391, “Games and Interactive Fiction: Studies in a Genre”

Intended for 45 undergraduate students

Spring 2023 at the University of Victoria

[ləkʷəŋən](#) and [WSÁNEĆ](#) territories

TWF, 11:30am - 12:20pm

Taught by [Jentery Sayers](#) (he / him)

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Territory Acknowledgement

As a researcher and instructor at the University of Victoria, I acknowledge and respect the [ləkʷəŋən](#) peoples on whose traditional territory the University stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and [WSÁNEĆ](#) peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. I’m a settler scholar at UVic, and I arrived here as an uninvited guest in July 2011.

The fact that we’re gathering here to study games and genre in a UVic English course is a product of colonization and injustice upon local lands, waters, and people. I will make no assumptions about you or your knowledge of the lands on which we’re working this term. I am still learning, and thus far I’ve learned a lot from this [webpage](#) written by the Native Students Union about territory acknowledgements as well as this August 2019 [episode](#) of *U in the Ring*: “With Knowledge Comes Responsibility: Territory Acknowledgements,” featuring Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel, Maggie Easton, Steven Farina, Robbie Lewis, Qwul’sih’yah’maht Robina Thomas, and Kolin Sutherland-Wilson. I also invite ongoing dialogue with you about territory acknowledgements and how UVic students, faculty, and staff are giving back to local lands, waters, and people.

Description

Video games prompt us to play, but how do we tell stories with them? And how do genres shape that storytelling? We'll survey the articulation of video game genres (such as point-and-click, puzzle, role-playing, sim, and platformer) with literary genres (like fantasy, science fiction, mystery, adventure, and horror) to consider how genre affects our understanding, if not our experiences, of narrative and play. We'll attend to short, story-rich games that experiment with genre, and I'll ask you to [select a game](#) to study throughout the term.

Learning Goals

I designed this course for you to:

1. Build a vocabulary for approaching genre as an action instead of a category.
2. Learn a methodology for analyzing what genres *do* in video games and how they mediate the motives and objectives of players.
3. Document, describe, and evaluate the activity of multiple genres in a single game.
4. Compose your own "Player Story" *with* a game, not just *about* a game. This means you will relate, interact, and negotiate with a game by treating it as a process rather than a discrete object to be examined from a distance. (I define "Player Story" in the next section of this syllabus.)

I'll assume you've no previous experience with games or genre studies in an academic context.

Assignments

I am asking you to complete five assignments this term:

1. [Take-Home Exam 1](#) (22.5% of your final mark; response due by Friday, February 3rd at 11:30am).
2. [Activity Analysis](#) for your Player Story (20% of your final mark; response recommended by Friday, February 17th at 11:30am but required by Wednesday, March 1st at 11:30am).
3. [Take-Home Exam 2](#) (22.5% of your final mark; response due by Wednesday, March 22nd at 11:30am).
4. [Workshops](#) to refine your Player Stories (5% of your final mark; conducted during class March 28th - 31st).
5. [Player Story](#) about a game and its genres (30% of your final mark; response due by Tuesday, April 18th at 11:30am).

This combination of exams (1 and 3 above) and a project (2, 4, and 5 above) should help you to account for the fundamentals of genre studies while developing a specific line of

inquiry through a single game. Again, I am asking you to select one game from [this list](#) to study for the entire term.

Brightspace: Please use Brightspace to submit all your work. You do not need to purchase any software to use Brightspace; however, you'll need your UVic NetLink ID, access to the internet, and a computer.

Feedback: I will provide feedback on each assignment according to its rubric, with most of my energies dedicated to your Activity Analysis (see #2 above), which will be incredibly important as you prepare your Player Story (see #5 above). If you respond to all assignments on time, then you will know 70% of your final mark by Thursday, April 6th (the last day of classes).

Exams: I will distribute the questions for Take-Home Exams 1 and 2 *two weeks* in advance of their respective due dates. Responses will be short-answer, and the exams will be open-book, meaning you're allowed to use your notes, assigned readings, and other resources to address the questions. The exams will cover lectures, games, and readings in the course. There will be no multiple-choice questions. Please also note that I will not hold a final exam for this course during UVic's final exam period in April.

Activity Analysis: This assignment will ask you to start conducting genre research for your Player Story. I will circulate the prompt for it *two weeks* in advance of the due date. To complete the assignment, you will need to [select a game](#) to study this term. I recommend submitting your response by Friday, February 17th. This way, you'll know 42.5% of your final mark by February 28th, which is the last day to withdraw from this course without penalty of failure. That said, you are welcome to submit your response as late as Wednesday, March 1st.

Workshops: I will facilitate a series of writing and research workshops in late March. They will help you to refine your Player Story well before it's due on Tuesday, April 18th. During these workshops, I will distribute worksheets for you to complete with peers in small groups and then return to me for assessment.

Player Story: A "Player Story" is a methodology [my lab](#) developed to engage genre and narrative in games.

A Player Story documents the following experiences of a game:

1. Playing and reacting to it,
2. Making meaning of it,
3. Being affected by it, and
4. Arguing with it and all its contradictions.

A Player Story is, in the words of Kishonna Gray, a "narrative description" of a game as a system of activities. Player Stories are both personal and social, and their authors toggle between immersion and critical distance.

The two most common formats for Player Stories are:

1. Video essays with voice-over narration and
2. Written essays with images and/or embedded media such as video and audio.

You'll choose one of these two formats for your Player Story in this course, and I'll dedicate a few class meetings to studying and composing Player Stories about games, narrative, and genre. I will circulate the prompt for the Player Story assignment in early February alongside the prompt for the Activity Analysis.

Games

I am asking you to select *one* of the following games to study and play throughout the term for the purposes of your final Player Story (see the [assignments](#)). I will touch upon each of these games at some point during lectures (often with screen caps and recordings) but will go into depth about only three of them: *80 Days*, *Gris*, and *Citizen Sleeper*. (See the [schedule](#) below for details.) Please watch or play these three games if you can. You're also welcome to select one of them to study and play for your Player Story.

I recommend reviewing [this spreadsheet](#) before selecting a game. It includes the tagline, game genre(s), literary genre(s), cameras and perspectives, average cost, platforms (including mobile), average number of hours to completion, content warnings, and URL for each game, plus some notes. If you encounter any errors or mistakes, then please let me know. I'll correct them.

To make the following list, I focused on games published since 2010 that are story-rich, cost less than 30 CAD, are available on multiple platforms (ideally one that's mobile), and require no more than ten hours to complete, hence the absence of notable works such as *Disco Elysium*, *Inscryption*, *Mass Effect 2*, *Pentiment*, and *Outer Wilds*.

- *80 Days* by inkle (2014)
- *Butterfly Soup* by Brianna Lei (2017)
- *Card Shark* by Nerial (2022)
- *Citizen Sleeper* by Jump over the Age (2022)
- *Eliza* by Zachtronics (2019)
- *Even the Ocean* by Analgesic (2016)
- *Firewatch* by Campo Santo (2016)
- *Get in the Car, Loser!* by Love Conquers All (2021)
- *Gris* by Nomada (2018)
- *Immortality* by Half Mermaid (2022)
- *Inside* by Playdead (2016)
- *Kentucky Route Zero* by Cardboard Computer (2013-20)
- *Neo Cab* by Chance Agency (2019)
- *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)* by E-Line Media (2014)
- *Night in the Woods* by Infinite Fall (2017)
- *NORCO* by Geography of Robots (2022)

- *Oxenfree* by Night School (2016)
- *Portal 2* by Valve (2011)
- *Return of the Obra Dinn* by Lucas Pope (2018)
- *Signalis* by rose-engine (2022)
- *Stanley Parable: Ultra Deluxe* by Crows Crows Crows (2022)
- *Strange Horticulture* by Bad Viking (2022)
- *That Dragon, Cancer* by Numinous (2016)
- *To The Moon* by Freebird (2011)
- *Umurangi Generation* by Origame (2020)
- *Unpacking* by Witch Beam (2021)
- *When Rivers Were Trails* by the Indian Land Tenure Foundation (2019)

If this ends up being too much for the term, then we'll cut material or some of it will become optional.

Reading

You do not need to purchase any books for this course.

On the topic of genre studies, we will read:

- Selections of *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy*, by Anis S. Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff.
- “[Genre Troubles in Game Studies](#),” by Gerald Voorhees.

Both of these publications are open-access (available online without paywalls).

I will also supplement some of the games listed above with optional material: open-access readings, video, and podcast episodes.

See the [schedule](#) below for details about what to read and when.

Workload

The most important thing to know about this course is that *I'll opt for care in every instance*. If the workload becomes too much, or we're juggling more than we should, then we'll cut materials. I've planned for the maximum in advance, under the assumption that we won't get to everything. And that's totally fine.

I suggest dedicating 3 to 5 hours of study to English 391 each week, plus 3 hours for weekly meetings (TWF). Of course, 3 to 5 hours per week is only a guideline. You may find that you need more or less time depending on the activity, your preferences, and your own familiarity with the work and materials involved.

In Brightspace, I will also message you once each week (usually on Fridays) with an update on how the course is progressing and what you might consider as we move forward to plan for reading, games, assignments, due dates, and whatnot.

Schedule

Here's the schedule for the term. It's subject to change. I will use a Brightspace announcement to notify you at least two weeks in advance of any changes, and I will never use schedule changes to increase your workload.

Introductions (Jan. 10)

Tuesday, January 10th

- There's no need to prep for our first meeting. We'll introduce ourselves and talk about the course.
- We'll also play *Novena* in class.

Module 1: Why Genre? (Jan. 11 and 13)

The purpose of this module is to spark discussion about genre in games and to start thinking about how genre is an action.

Wednesday, January 11th

- Please review the syllabus and bring any questions or concerns you have to class.
- We'll finish our discussion of the syllabus, including the course policies, and then begin talking about how genre is an action. I'll ask you to complete a worksheet about genre in class. Please remember to finish it and return it to me before you leave.

Friday, January 13th

- Please revisit the "Assignments" section of the syllabus and bring any questions or concerns you have to class.
- We'll reflect on Wednesday's exercise and then look to *Even the Ocean* as an example of how genre is an action and not (just) a category.

Module 2: Genre in Literary Traditions (Jan. 17, 18, and 20)

The purpose of this module is to survey approaches to genre in literary studies. Although they are distinct from the treatment of genre as an action, these approaches will inform how we think about genre in games.

Tuesday, January 17th

- Please read Bawarshi and Reiff's "Genre in Literary Traditions." You should engage this chapter purposefully and take notes as you read. Focus on the five approaches

to genre (see the chapter's section headings) and see if you can put each into your own words. No worries if you find the chapter to be a bit dense. We'll distill it in class this week.

- We'll discuss the neoclassical approach to genre and test it by interpreting scenes from *Return of the Obra Dinn*.

Wednesday, January 18th

- You might revisit "Genre in Literary Traditions" and bring your questions and concerns to class. What from Tuesday's class made sense? What remains muddy?
- We'll discuss structuralist, romantic, and post-romantic approaches to genre and test them by interpreting scenes from *Portal 2*.

Friday, January 20th

- You might return to your notes for "Genre in Literary Traditions" and bring your questions and concerns to class. Which of the five approaches to genre remains most unclear to you? What are the appeals and limitations of each approach?
- We'll discuss reader response and cultural studies approaches to genre and test them by interpreting scenes from *Unpacking*.
- I will circulate *Take-Home Exam 1* today and review the prompt in class. A response is due (via Brightspace) by Friday, February 3rd at 11:30am.

Please note that Sunday, January 22nd is the last day for 100% reduction of second term fees for standard courses.

Module 3: Genre Trouble in Games (Jan. 24, 25, and 27)

The purpose of this module is to introduce you to some debates about genre in game studies. We will also return to the notion of genre as an action.

Tuesday, January 24th

- Please read Vorhees's "Genre Troubles in Game Studies". You should engage this article purposefully, too, and take notes as you read. Focus on the notions of "genre trouble," "ludological line," "agonistic line," and "agonistic pluralism" (see the chapter's section headings) and see if you can put each into your own words. No worries if you find the article to be a bit dense. We'll distill it in class this week.
- We'll discuss ludological and agonistic approaches to genre and test them by interpreting scenes from *Firewatch*.

Wednesday, January 25th

- You might revisit "Genre Troubles in Game Studies" and bring your questions and concerns to class. What from Tuesday's class made sense? What remains muddy?
- We'll discuss genre as a social action and test it by interpreting scenes from *Umurangi Generation*.

Please note that today is the last day for adding courses that begin this term.

Friday, January 27th

- Please visit this [list of games](#), select *one* to play and study this term, and then respond to the brief online survey I circulated in Brightspace. You will write about this game for your *Activity Analysis* and *Player Story*.
- We'll review the last two modules and discuss how you might document, describe, and evaluate the activity of multiple genres in a single game.

Module 4: Games as Activity Systems (Jan. 31; Feb. 1 and 3)

The purpose of this module is to introduce you to the methodology of activity theory in genre studies and to the treatment of games as activity systems.

Tuesday, January 31st

- Please read Bawarshi and Reiff's "[Rhetorical Genre Studies](#)". You should engage this chapter purposefully, too, and take notes as you read. Try to put uptake, genre sets, and activity systems into your own words. Again, no worries if you find the chapter to be a bit dense. We'll distill it in class this week.
- We'll look to *The Stanley Parable* to better understand uptake, genre sets, and activity systems and to further engage multiple genres in a single game.

Please note that today is the last day for paying second-term fees without penalty.

Wednesday, February 1st

- You might revisit "[Rhetorical Genre Studies](#)" after yesterday's discussion of uptake, genre sets, and activity systems. What from Tuesday's class made sense? What remains muddy?
- Using yesterday's discussion of *The Stanley Parable* as an example, we'll collectively diagram *Neo Cab* as an activity system. Be sure to submit your response to this exercise before class is over.

Friday, February 3rd

- Your response to *Take-Home Exam 1* is due today by 11:30am.
- We'll conduct a review of what we've learned about games as activity systems.
- We'll also review the *Activity Analysis* and *Player Story* prompts.

Case Study 1: 80 Days (Feb. 7, 8, and 10)

The purpose of this case study is for us to apply activity theory to the work of multiple genres in a single game. The case study will begin to address some of the "how" questions you might have for your own work, including the Activity Analysis you're conducting for this course.

Tuesday, February 7th

- Please play or watch *80 Days* for about an hour.
- We'll identify who participates in the game of *80 Days* and what their motives and objectives might be.

Wednesday, February 8th

- Please play or watch *80 Days* for another hour.
- We'll attend to how multiple genres behave in *80 Days* and how they mediate people's motives and objectives, including matters of play and narrative.

Friday, February 10th

- You might revisit your notes from this week. What's clear? What isn't? Bring your questions and concerns about *80 Days* and activity theory to class.
- We'll compare *80 Days* with *Card Shark* to briefly consider how they resonate and differ as activity systems.

Please note that Sunday, February 12th is the last day for a 50% reduction of tuition fees for standard courses.

Case Study 2: *Gris* (Feb. 14, 15, and 17)

The purpose of this case study is for us to apply activity theory to the work of multiple genres in a single game. The case study will continue to address some of the "how" questions you might have for your own work, including the Activity Analysis you're conducting for this course.

Tuesday, February 14th

- Please play or watch *Gris* for about an hour.
- We'll identify who participates in the game of *Gris* and what their motives and objectives might be.

Wednesday, February 15th

- Please play or watch *Gris* for another hour.
- We'll attend to how multiple genres behave in *Gris* and how they mediate people's motives and objectives, including matters of play and narrative.

Friday, February 17th

- I recommend submitting your response to the [Activity Analysis](#) today by 11:30am. This way, you'll know 42.5% of your final mark by February 28th, which is the last day to withdraw from this course without penalty of failure.
- We'll compare *Gris* with *Inside* to briefly consider how they resonate and differ as activity systems.

Reading Break (Feb. 20-24)

I wish you a wonderful and relaxing reading break. We don't have class this week, and Monday, February 20th is Family Day.

Case Study 3: *Citizen Sleeper* (Feb. 28; Mar. 1 and 3)

The purpose of this case study is for us to apply activity theory to the work of multiple genres in a single game. The case study will continue to address some of the "how" questions you might have for your own work, including the Activity Analysis you're conducting for this course.

Tuesday, February 28th

- Please play or watch *Citizen Sleeper* for about an hour.
- We'll identify who participates in the game of *Citizen Sleeper* and what their motives and objectives might be.

Please note that today is the last day to withdraw from full-year and second-term courses without penalty of failure.

Wednesday, March 1st

- Your response to the [Activity Analysis](#) is due today by 11:30am if you've not already submitted it.
- Please play or watch *Citizen Sleeper* for another hour.
- We'll attend to how multiple genres behave in *Citizen Sleeper* and how they mediate people's motives and objectives, including matters of play and narrative.

Friday, March 3rd

- You might revisit your notes from this week. What's clear? What isn't? Bring your questions and concerns about *Citizen Sleeper* and activity theory to class.
- We'll compare *Citizen Sleeper* with *Oxenfree* and *Eliza* to briefly consider how they resonate and differ as activity systems.

Module 5: Composing Player Stories (Mar. 7, 8, and 10)

The purpose of this module is to communicate the process of a Player Story, reflect on it, and evaluate it. We'll sketch narrative descriptions of three different games by attending to the activity of multiple genres in each of them. We'll also address genre contradiction in games, how Player Stories are both personal and social, and why their authors toggle between immersion and critical distance.

Tuesday, March 7th

- Please review the [Player Stories](#) prompt and bring any questions or concerns you have to class.
- We'll sketch ways of approaching a Player Story about *Kentucky Route Zero*.

Wednesday, March 8th

- Please revisit your notes about *Kentucky Route Zero*, including possible Player Stories about it. What stuck? What's still unclear?
- We'll sketch ways of approaching a Player Story about *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)*.
- I will circulate *Take-Home Exam 2* today and review the prompt in class. A response is due (via Brightspace) by Wednesday, March 22nd at 11:30am.

Friday, March 10th

- Please revisit your notes about *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)*, including possible Player Stories about it. What stuck? What's still unclear?
- We'll sketch ways of approaching a Player Story about *To the Moon*.

Activity Snapshots of Player Stories (Mar. 14 - 24)

The purpose of these nine "activity snapshots" is to demonstrate what Player Stories can do with activity theories of genre and games. Each snapshot will be mostly lecture, and all of them will focus on moments of intricate contradiction where multiple genres unfold simultaneously in a single game. The snapshots are also meant to help you prepare your own Player Story for submission in April.

Tuesday, March 14th

- Please review my documentation (in Brightspace) of *Signalis* and *NORCO*.
- I'll share my snapshots of these two games during class.

Wednesday, March 15th

- Please review my documentation (in Brightspace) of *That Dragon, Cancer* and *Butterfly Soup*.
- I'll share my snapshots of these two games during class.

Friday, March 17th

- Please review my documentation (in Brightspace) of *Get in the Car, Loser!* and *Strange Horticulture*.
- I'll share my snapshots of these two games during class.

Tuesday, March 21st

- Please review my documentation (in Brightspace) of *Immortality*.
- I'll share my snapshot of this game during class.

Wednesday, March 22nd

- Your response to *Take-Home Exam 2* is due today by 11:30am.
- Please review my documentation (in Brightspace) of *When Rivers Were Trails*.
- I'll share my snapshot of this game during class.

Friday, March 24th

- Please review my documentation (in Brightspace) of *Night in the Woods*.
- I'll share my snapshot of this game during class.

Workshops (Mar. 28, 29, and 31)

The purpose of these workshops is to help you to refine your Player Story well before it's due on Tuesday, April 18th.

Tuesday, March 28th

- You selected a game to study and play all term. Please bring some documentation (images, audio, and/or video) of your play sessions to class.
- I'll circulate a worksheet on documentation for you to complete individually in small groups. Please return the worksheet to me before you leave class.

Wednesday, March 29th

- Please bring to class any notes you have on some conflicting player motives you've observed in the game you're studying.
- I'll circulate a worksheet on motives for you to complete individually in small groups. Please return the worksheet to me before you leave class.

Friday, March 31st

- Please bring to class any notes you have on some contradictions between two or more genres in the game you're studying.
- I'll circulate a worksheet on genre sets and contradiction for you to complete individually in small groups. Please return the worksheet to me before you leave class.

Review (Apr. 4 and 5)

We did it! It's review time.

Tuesday, April 4th

- We'll review what we learned in English 391 this term.
- I'll address your questions about genre, games, and activity theory.

Wednesday, April 5th

- We'll celebrate the end of term, and I'll address any last-minute concerns you have about the Player Story, which is due by Tuesday, April 18th.
- We'll complete Course Experience Surveys in class.

Please note that Thursday, April 6th is the last day of classes for all faculties.

Roll Credits (Apr. 18)

Tuesday, April 18th

- Your [Player Story](#) is due today by 11:30am.

I hope you've a wonderful summer! Keep in touch.

Policies

Here are the policies for this course. If anything is unclear, ignorant, or mistaken, then please let me know. I'll correct it.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this 300-level English course.

Assessment and Feedback

The [Activity Analysis](#) and [Player Story](#) are required to pass this course. Failure to complete these two assignments will result in a failing N grade (calculated as a 0 for your GPA).

I will use UVic's [official grading system](#) to produce rubrics to assess your work. I will not post marks publicly or outside my office, and I do not use plagiarism detection software.

All assignments should be submitted via Brightspace. I will also use Brightspace to provide feedback on your work. If you ever want additional feedback, then feel free to ask me. I can provide it in person or via email.

Throughout the term, I'll request feedback from you on how the course is going. I'll also ask you to complete Course Experience Surveys at the end of the term (during our last meeting on Wednesday, April 5th).

Late Submissions and Extensions

For the [Activity Analysis](#), I will deduct *three* points per working day (excluding holidays and weekends) for every submission I receive after Wednesday, March 8th at 11:30am. This gives you one week of wiggle room for this assignment, which is due by Wednesday, March 1st at 11:30am. I will close the Brightspace submission portal for the Activity Analysis assignment at 11:30am on Wednesday, March 22nd.

For Take-Home Exams [1](#) and [2](#), I will deduct *five* points per working day (excluding holidays and weekends) for every submission I receive after Friday, February 3rd at 11:30am and Wednesday, March 22nd at 11:30am, respectively. This does not include wiggle room for late submissions; however, you will have two weeks to complete each of these exams. I will close the Brightspace submission portal for Take-Home Exams [1](#) and [2](#) at 11:30am on Friday, February 10th and Wednesday, March 29th, respectively.

For the [Player Story](#), I will deduct *five* points per working day (excluding holidays and weekends) for every submission I receive after Wednesday, April 19th at 11:30am. This gives you one day of wiggle room for your final project. I will close the Brightspace submission portal for the Player Story assignment at 11:30am on Monday, April 24th.

Please email me if you need an extension for any assignment, and we can discuss possibilities on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance and Participation

There is no participation or attendance mark in this course; however, I will take roll during meetings, and I will assume you are attending each class meeting this term. If you are unable to attend a particular meeting, then please email me in advance. *You do not need to provide me with documentation for an absence.*

Communications and Office Hours

The best way to communicate with me is by email (jentery@uvic.ca) or during office hours, which are Wednesday, 10-11am in CLE D331. I can also make an appointment to meet with you in person or via Zoom.

I respond to email between 9am and 5pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Learning Climate

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. We are expected to adhere to [UVic's equity and human rights policies](#) and the [Trifaculty Code of Professional Behaviour](#). You should alert me immediately if you have any questions about these policies and their application, or if you have concerns about course proceedings or participants.

Academic Integrity

We are expected to adhere to [UVic's academic integrity policy](#) and be aware of the policies for the evaluation of student work. Violations of the integrity policy will result in a failing grade for the given assignment and may additionally result in a failing grade for the course. By taking this course, you agree that all submitted assignments may be subject to an originality review. I do not use software to detect plagiarism in essays, exams, or any other assignments.

Copyright

All course materials, including my notes and lectures, are made available for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students in this course. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked as such. The syllabus itself is licensed [CC BY-NC 4.0](#). Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires written permission, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result

in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300).

Online Conduct

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and supportive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to this experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment. The University will not tolerate racism, sexualized violence, or any form of discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

Please be advised that, by logging into UVic's learning systems and interacting with online resources, you are engaging in a university activity. All interactions within this environment are subject to the university's expectations and policies. Any concerns about student conduct may be reviewed and responded to in accordance with the appropriate university policy. To report concerns about online student conduct, email onlineconduct@uvic.ca.

Accessibility

If you have a disability or health consideration that may require supports, please feel free to approach me and/or the [Centre for Accessible Learning \(CAL\)](#) as soon as possible. CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate supports. I will never ask you to disclose a diagnosis, health consideration, or disability to me, and I know that access needs are social, cultural, and structural issues that aren't always addressed, or adequately addressed, by institutions such as the academy.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

I aim to create an inclusive learning environment that attends to difference and honours each of you, including your experiences as well as the intersections of race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, power, and class. I want to be a resource for you, and I am still learning. If something is said in class (by anyone, including me) that makes you feel uncomfortable, then don't hesitate to talk with me. If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your university records, then let me know and I'll correct the documents provided to me. If your performance in the class is being impeded by your experiences outside of class, then keep me posted and we'll make adjustments. I also welcome any suggestions to improve the quality of the course and/or its culture and materials, and I will make available mechanisms for anonymous feedback since you may prefer them. If you'd rather speak with someone outside the course, then Luke Carson (chair) and Erin Ellerbeck (undergraduate adviser) in English are excellent resources.

The following student groups may be relevant to your life as a student here at UVic:

- [The Native Students Union](#) "is an organization run for and by Indigenous students at UVic. Since circa 1969, Indigenous students have been coming together to form community, support each other, advocate for Indigenous rights and wellbeing, and

just exist together at the institution. The NSU runs events and programs, manages a student space with services, and advocates for Indigenous student success and wellness at UVic. The NSU Council leads the NSU in running and developing these services.”

- [The Students of Colour Collective](#) “are a Collective of self-identified people of colour at the University of Victoria. Anyone identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and Person of Colour) is welcome to use our lounge and access our resources. SOCC exists to create space that fosters community building, and facilitates networking and gatherings for self-identified BIPOC folks. Our work centres on art, awareness, education, action, advocacy, and support. Every student of colour is welcome to get in touch and find out how to get involved.”
- [The Society for Students with a Disability \(SSD\)](#) “is a post-secondary student advocacy group under the University of Victoria Students’ Union which promotes the full participation and inclusion of students who self-identify as having one or more disabilities at the University of Victoria. The SSD aims to support students who self-identify as having one or more disabilities; in particular, we support students to reduce barriers in the social, emotional, and educational domains of student life.”
- [The Gender Empowerment Centre \(GEM\)](#) “is an inclusive space, focused on the needs of self-identified women, non-binary, trans and gender non-conforming folks to organize, network, access resources, attend workshops and events, study, and relax. Our space is open to both University of Victoria students and community members.”
- [UVic Pride](#) “is an organization for all people who are queer, queer-positive, gender-variant and/or intersex. We strive to meet the needs of people who self-identify as queer (including but not limited to people who identify as Two Spirit, bisexual, lesbian, gay, asexual, demisexual, aromantic, and pansexual, as well as people who do not identify with these labels); trans people; those who are questioning their sexuality or gender; those who are struggling with concerns related to intersexuality; and supportive partners, friends, family members, and allies.”

Language for this policy was drawn from the Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University and the work of Monica Linden in particular.

Basic Needs

I want you to thrive in this course and everywhere else. Please let me know as early as possible if you have any concerns or if you require any supports to succeed. I’ll do my best to help. If, for instance, you need to cover gaps in care, then please don’t hesitate to bring your children to class meetings. Babies who are nursing are always welcome, as I do not want you to choose between feeding your child and continuing your education.

UVic takes student mental health very seriously, with a [website](#) full of resources. They offer services such as assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills concerns. Services for students also include crisis and emergency mental health consultation, confidential assessment, and counselling services (individual and small

group). Many of these programs are connected with Health Services, which you may contact by phone.

The [Student Services website](#) lists several policies, a knowledge of which may make your life at UVic safer and easier. Only some of them are directly related to this course, but they're still important.

Language for this policy was drawn from the work of Richard Pickard at UVic.

About Me

My name is Jentery Sayers (he / him). I skip a syllable and say it in two: "JEN-tree." You can call me Doctor Sayers or Professor Sayers if you prefer. I spend 14.32% of the day looking for my glasses, and I enjoy writing about games, media, and fiction. I grew up in Richmond, Virginia and went to Virginia Commonwealth University for my BA and BS degrees. Then I moved to Seattle, where I received an MA and PhD in English from the University of Washington. I've been at UVic, on lək̓ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ territories, since 2011. I teach courses for UVic English, and I direct the Praxis Studio for Comparative Media Studies. You can email me at jentery@uvic.ca or find me in CLE D331.

Many thanks to Julie Funk for providing feedback on this syllabus and to Anis Bawarshi for introducing me to genre studies when I was a graduate student at UW.

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