

**ENG 1131: WRITING THROUGH MEDIA  
HAPTIC WORLDS OF HORROR  
(SECTION 1786; CLASS 12446)**

**Instructor:** Lillian Marie Martinez

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**Course Meeting Times & Locations:** MWF6, WEIL 408D & M9-11 WEIL 408D

**Office Hours & Location:** M4-5, TUR 4405

**Course Website:** Canvas, Discord



**Course Description:**

In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva describes fear as “a fluid haze, an elusive clamminess.” The horror genre aims to scare its audience. It seeks to entertain us by evoking fear of the unknown and the uncanny. Paradoxically, we are delighted when we’re frightened!

This course takes horror video games as its primary texts. Video games necessitate participation. We can’t experience a game unless we play through it. Horror video games resultingly put us, the player, into close interaction with fear and delight. We will study horror video game rules, levels, worlds, narratives, music, gameplay, and communities to analyze the powers of horror. Where we find fear, disgust, and play interwoven in horror video games, we also find opportunities to engage with questions of humanity, morality, and identity. What scares us? What do our fears reveal about what we desire?

Literary and video game theorists including Jesper Juul, Julia Kristeva, Jack Halberstam, Janet H. Murray, and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen will aid our studies as we delve into these digital worlds of monsters and mayhem that ceaselessly rise from their graves to terrify and challenge us.

Students are not required to have previous experience with video games for this course. The instructor will provide information about how to access and play the games assigned for this course.

**Required Materials:**

Title (Year)	Studio/Developer/Author	Available On
<i>Little Nightmares</i> (2017)	Tasier Studios	Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Steam
<i>World of Horror</i> (2019)	Panstasz, Pawei Koźmiński	Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4/5, macOS, Microsoft Windows, Steam
<i>The Monster Theory Reader</i> (2020)	Edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock	UF Library (Online Access)
<i>Inscription</i> (2022)	Daniel Mullins Games	Demo Free on Microsoft Windows, Steam
<i>Parasocial</i> (2023)	Chilla’s Art Games	Microsoft Windows, Steam

*Note: All texts can be located through the [Steam](#) store or [itch.io](#) and downloaded onto a computer or laptop with Windows 10 or Windows 11 installed. The link to download Steam for macOS and Microsoft Windows can be found [here](#). A detailed how-to on accessing Steam games will be provided by the instructor in class and on Canvas.*

*Texts may also be available on consoles and macOS. Materials not listed will be provided via Course Reserves or Online in Canvas. Students will also have the opportunity to play each assigned game during Screening days. Please contact the instructor if you are having issues with accessing the technology required for this course.*

**General Education Objectives:**

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

**General Education Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

### **Grade Distribution:**

- Unit Responses: 150 (50 each, 15%)
- Close Reading: 150 (15%)
- Video Game Review: 150 (15%)
- Video (Game) Essay: 200 (20%)
- Conference Paper: 350 (35%)

*\*All papers are graded on a percentage scale of 1 to 100%: 90-100, excellent; 80-89, good to very good; 73-79 below average to average; below 72 is not a passing grade. Assignment specific rubrics will be included on each assignment's Canvas page. However, each assignment's rubric will include the above qualifiers with regards to an assignment's thesis, argumentation (e.g. evidence and analysis), style/language, and conclusion. A general rubric is provided below.*

An A paper includes an excellent thesis that conveys its ideas clearly and without ambiguity, develops an effective organization of its ideas, and provides effective analysis of evidence from its chosen text.

A B paper includes a good thesis that could use clarification, attempts to develop clear organization of its ideas, and would benefit from further analysis of the text.

A C paper includes a sufficient thesis but is generally obscure about what it intends to argue, does not adequately connect its ideas, and would benefit from further analysis of alternative evidence.

A D paper does not make a claim, does not develop or connect its ideas, and provides little to no evidence in its analysis.

For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

### **Grading Scale & Equivalent GPA**

Grading Scale:

A: 94-100 (4.0)

A-: 90-93 (3.67)

B+: 87-89 (3.33)

B: 84-86 (3.0)  
B-: 80-83 (2.67)  
C+: 77-79 (2.33)

C: 74-76 (2.0)  
C-: 70-73 (1.67)  
D+: 67-69(1.33)

D: 64-66(1.0)  
D-: 60-63 (.67)  
E: 0-59 (0)

*Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. Grades will NOT be rounded up at the end of the semester. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>*

### **Assignment Descriptions:**

#### **Unit Responses**

**Word Count:** 500 (x3 = 1500 Total)

**Due:** 2/2, 3/1, 3/29, 4/12, 4/24

Three times over the course of the semester students are required to write 350-word responses to teacher provided prompts related to Unit materials. Your responses may require you to: interpret or discuss critical questions concerned with textual meaning; perform a close reading of a scene; engage with video game paratexts, discussing the broader histories, politics, and ethical questions that are relevant to a video game; or expound upon key-terms covered in class. Further information and expectations will be provided within the prompt.

*Note: there are five due dates for these responses—one for each Unit. Respond to only three of the five prompts provided over the course of the semester.*

#### **Close Reading**

**Word Count:** 750 Words

**Due:** 2/23

For this essay, you will have to analyze a level or sequence in an assigned video game with attention to its ludic form and narrative content. You will develop an argument with a defensible, arguable thesis about an aspect of the form/content that speaks to the larger work as a whole. No critical/outside sources may be used for this assignment.

#### **Video Game Review**

**Word Count:** 1000 Words

**Due:** 3/22

A video game review covers anything from sound, graphics, gameplay, replay value, story, to the opinion of the writer. Using our course-assigned reviews and two reviews of your choosing, you will write a game review of *Little Nightmares* (2017). Take note of the approximate lengths and substance of your template reviews. As a part of your review, provide reflections on a specific game element that stood out to you, any glaring problems that arose, how well the game's features work and how (if so) they are unique from video games within its genre/release date, any elements that did/did not excite you, and how it compares to competing games. You are encouraged to include images in your response. Please consult the assignment prompt on Canvas for a more detailed description of this assignment.

#### **Video (Game) Essay**

**Word Count:** 1000 Words

**Due:** 4/22

In the vein of video essays by [the Completionist](#) and [VideogameDunkey](#), you will script a video that addresses one of the concepts discussed in the course. Choose one unassigned video game of significant interest to you. You will use at least two secondary sources to develop an argument about the video game you are covering. You will create a video or PPT featuring images and/or gameplay relevant to your essay. You are encouraged to include gameplay of up to your first 30 minutes playing your chosen game. Please consult the assignment prompt on Canvas for a more detailed description of this essay.

### Conference Paper

**Word Count:** 1750 (2000 max.)

**Due:** 5/1

In this paper, you will use the skills we have built throughout the course and in our previous assignments. Your paper should have a debatable, significant, and specific argument about a video game of your choosing and should consult five (5) critical sources. This should not be a regurgitation of the issues, ideas, and themes we have discussed in class, but should instead be a result of your own critical thinking and understanding of the text. You will write this paper with a mind towards presenting it at a conference open to undergraduates. Please consult the assignment prompt on Canvas for a more detailed description of this paper and potential conferences to submit to.

### Course Schedule

*Note: Titles included in gray highlight are video games. This schedule is subject to change.*

<b>Unit 1 The World of Horror: An Introduction to Horror Games</b>		
<b>Week 1</b>		
M 1/8	An Introduction to Haptic Worlds of Horror “Approaching Abjection” – Julia Kristeva  <b>Screening:</b> <i>Hunt the Wumpus</i> (1972)	
W 1/10	Haptic History Part 1: Coding Horror <i>Half-Real</i> – Ch. 3 “Rules” – Jesper Juul	
F 1/12	Haptic History Part 2: Writing Terror <i>Half-Real</i> – Ch. 4 “Fiction” & Ch. 5 “Rules & Fiction” – Jesper Juul	
<b>Week 2</b>		
M 1/15	<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b> – No Class or Screening	
W 1/17	Interplay of Rules & Fiction “Ludonarrative Dissonance in <i>Bioshock</i> ” – Clint Hocking <i>Texas Chainsaw Massacre</i> (1982)	
F 1/19	Diegetic and Non-Diegetic Storytelling Zach Whalen, “Play Along: An Approach to Videogame Music” <i>Castlevania</i> (1986)	
<b>Week 3</b>		

M 1/22	<p>“Fear of Failing? The Many Meanings of Difficulty in Video Games” – Jesper Juul</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> <i>The Typing of the Dead</i> (1999)</p>	
W 1/24	<p>Putting Theories of Play into Practice: The Classics</p> <p><i>Friday the 13<sup>th</sup></i> (1989)</p>	
F 1/26	<p>Putting Theories of Play into Practice: The Contemporary</p> <p><i>World of Horror</i> (2019)</p>	
<b>Unit 2 Just a Rookie Cop: Surviving Survival Horror</b>		
<b>Week 4</b>		
M 1/29	<p>“<i>Resident Evil</i>’s Rhetoric: The Communication of Corruption in Survival Horror Video Games” – Charley Reed</p> <p><i>Resident Evil</i> (1996)</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> <i>Resident Evil</i> (1996)</p>	
W 1/31	<i>Resident Evil 4</i> (2005)	
F 2/2	<p>Remaking Horror: Sequels and Franchises</p> <p><i>Resident Evil 4</i> (2005)</p>	<b>Unit 1 Response Due</b>
<b>Week 5</b>		
M 2/5	<p>“The Uncanny” – Sigmund Freud</p> <p>“The Uncanny Valley” – Masahiro Mori</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> <i>Silent Hill</i> (1999)</p>	
W 2/7	<p>“Horror Video Games and the Uncanny” – Ewan Kirkland</p> <p><i>Silent Hill</i> (1999)</p>	
F 2/9	<p>Horror on the Move: Motion Sensing Technology</p> <p><i>Silent Hill: Shattered Memories</i> (2008)</p>	
<b>Week 6</b>		
M 2/12	<p>“<i>Bioshock</i>: Complex and Alternate Histories” – Ryan Lizardi</p> <p><i>Bioshock</i> (2007)</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> <i>Dino Crisis</i> (1999)</p>	
W 2/14	<i>Bioshock</i> (2007)	
F 2/16	<p>“Immersion” – Janet H. Murray</p> <p><i>Inscription</i> (2022)</p>	
<b>Week 7</b>		
M 2/19	<p>“Zombie Trouble: Zombie Texts, Bare Life, and Displaced People” – Jon Stratton</p> <p><i>The Last of Us</i> (2013)</p>	

	<b>Screening:</b> <i>The Last of Us</i> (2013)	
W 2/21	<i>The Last of Us</i> (2013)	
F 2/23	“Undead Avatars: The Zombie in Horror Video Games” – Ewan Kirkland <i>The Last of Us II</i> (2020)	<b>Close Reading Due</b>
<b>Unit 3: Horror for Kids: The Vulnerable Player (Character)</b>		
<b>Week 8</b>		
2/26	Embodying Vulnerability in Video Games “Ghosts of the Present Past: Spectrality of the Video Game Object” – Justyna Janik <i>Fatal Frame</i> (2001)  <b>Screening:</b> <i>Fatal Frame: Maiden of the Black Water</i> (2014)	
2/28	“Monster Culture (Seven Theses)” – Jeffrey Jerome Cohen <i>INSIDE</i> (2016)	
3/1	“Invisible Monsters: Vision, Horror, and Contemporary Culture” – Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock <i>INSIDE</i> (2016)	<b>Unit 2 Response Due</b>
<b>Week 9</b>		
3/4	“Taming the Monster” – Jaroslav Švelch <b>Screening:</b> <i>Little Nightmares</i> (2017)	
3/6	<i>Little Nightmares</i> (2017)	
3/8	Games that Know You <i>Doki Doki Literature Club</i> (2017)	
<b>Week 10</b>		
3/11-3/15	<b>Spring Break</b> – No Class	
<b>Week 11</b>		
3/18	<i>Videogame Atlas: Mapping Interactive Worlds</i> (Excerpts) – Luke Caspar Pearson and Sandra Youkhana <i>Yomawari: Night Alone</i> (2015)  <b>Screening:</b> <i>Yomawari: Night Alone</i> (2015)	
3/20	<i>The Book of Yōkai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore</i> (“Yōkai Practice/Yōkai Theory” & “Epilogue: Monsterful”) – Michael Dylan Foster <i>Yomawari: Night Alone</i> (2015)	
3/22	<i>Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai</i> (“Introduction to the Weird” & “Yokai Culture”) – Michael Dylan Foster <i>Yomawari: Midnight Shadows</i> (2017)	<b>Video Game Review Due</b>

<b>Unit 4 LFM: Cooperative Horror</b>		
<b>Week 12</b>		
3/25	<p>“Magic Nodes and Proleptic Warfare in the Multiplayer Component of Battlefield 3” – Johan Höglund <i>Left 4 Dead</i> (2008)</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> <i>Left 4 Dead</i> (2008) &amp; <i>Left 4 Dead 2</i> (2009)</p>	
3/27	<p>GG TYFP: Us vs. The Other “The Art of the Monstrous” – Jaroslav Švelch <i>Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Game</i> (2017)</p>	
3/29	<i>Dead by Daylight</i> (2016)	<b>Unit 3 Response Due</b>
<b>Week 13</b>		
4/1	<p>The Game Will Remember That: Decision-Making in Gaming “Ethics at Play in Undertale: Rhetoric, Identity and Deconstruction” – Frederic Seraphine <i>Until Dawn</i> (2016)</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> <i>The Quarry</i> (2022)</p>	
4/3	<p>“‘Main Objective: Don’t Starve’: Representations of Scarcity in Virtual Worlds” – Robert Baumgartner <i>Don’t Starve Together</i> (2014)</p>	
4/5	<p><i>Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self</i> (“Introduction”) – Margrit Shildrick <i>Phasmophobia</i> (2020) <i>Lethal Company</i> (2023)</p>	
<b>Unit 5 Crafting a Spectacle: Content Creation &amp; Livestreaming</b>		
<b>Week 14</b>		
4/8	<p>“New Haunts” – Jaroslav Švelch <i>Amnesia: The Dark Descent</i> (2010)</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> <i>Amnesia: The Dark Descent</i> (2010)</p>	
4/10	<i>Murder House</i> (2020) –Puppet Combo Games	
4/12	<i>I’m on Observation Duty</i> (2018) – Notovia	<b>Unit 4 Response Due</b>
<b>Week 15</b>		



4/15	Perspectives of Horror: Discussing Survival Horror, Action Horror, Psychological Horror, and the Jumpscare “‘Definitive playthrough’: Behind-the-scenes narratives in let’s plays and streaming content by video game voice actors” – Jan Švelch and Jaroslav Švelch <i>Five Nights at Freddy’s</i> (2014) <b>Screening:</b> <i>Five Nights at Freddy’s</i> (2014)	
4/17	<i>The Mortuary Assistant</i> (2022) – DarkStone Digital	
4/19	“Live-Streaming Changes the (Video) Game” – Thomas P.B. Smith, Marianna Obrist, and Peter Wright <i>Parasocial</i> (2023) – Chilla’s Art Games	
<b>Week 16</b>		
4/22	Critical Analysis Paper Conferencing <b>Screening:</b> Video (Game) Essay Presentations	<b>Video (Game) Essay Due</b>
4/24	How We Play(ed): Controlling Horror “Agency” – Janet H. Murray <i>World of Horror</i> (2019)	<b>Unit 5 Response Due</b>

### 5/1 Conference Paper Due

### Course Policies

**Completion:** You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

**Attendance:** More than six (6) absences will result in automatic failure of the course. Only those absences involving university-sponsored events (such as athletics and band) and religious holidays are exempt from this policy with documentation. I will consider documented extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis. For further information on university attendance policy, please see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

**Paper Format & Submission:** All papers will be submitted through Canvas in an accepted electronic file format (.doc, .docx, .rtf) unless otherwise explicitly stated. Papers should be formatted in accordance with MLA formatting (Times New Roman 12pt, double-spaced, one-inch margins, MLA header, and MLA citations).

**Late Papers/Assignments:** Papers received late will be docked a third (1/3) letter grade for each day they are late. Papers later than three (3) days will earn a 0, save for any extenuating circumstances.

**Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

**Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

**Grade Appeals:** The student should first request a meeting to discuss their final course grade with the course instructor. If you want to submit a Grade Appeal after discussing your grade with your instructor, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade. This grade appeal process is for the final course grade and can only be pursued after the semester’s end.

**Accessibility:** Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.

**Counseling and Wellness:** *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF’s Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

**Classroom Behavior:** This class, both off- and on-line, is a diverse environment, consisting of individuals from various cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds. Many of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. I expect that you will conduct yourself with civility, decorum, and demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. While discussions may become impassioned, I will not tolerate rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, ability, or sexual identity in written assignments or in-class discussion. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

**Discord Server Expectations:** This course is invested in developing a community of gamers and game scholars. A course discord server will serve as a space to discuss thoughts, progress, and challenges as we work through our assigned games. I will be a member of this discord, but the space is meant to be driven by and for the interests of you all. It will also provide a place for ease of communication; you can ask me questions or tag me in relevant posts. The expectations for this server align with expectations of classroom behavior. Discussions in the server do not need to be formal, but they should always be respectful.

**In-Class Technology:** Laptops, e-readers, and/or tablets should only be used for research, writing, or reading related to texts currently under discussion. Silence your cell-phone before class and do not use during lecture/class-discussion.

**UF's policy on Harassment:** The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community:

<https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>

**Policy on Environmental Sustainability:** Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#))