

1. Unidade curricular (UC)/Curricular Unit

a) Designação: Mitos Vitorianos e Americanos nos Videojogos.

Name: Victorian and American Myths in Video Games.

b) Número de vagas/Vacancies: 25.

2. Pequeno texto introdutório que deve refletir, o enquadramento da UC proposta na oferta curricular da NOVA FCSH, bem como, o carácter inovador ou a complementaridade com outras UC's existentes.

This research seminar aims to bridge a gap in the existing undergraduate degree on Languages, Literatures, and Cultures offered by FCSH NOVA, by offering a course on video games and by seeking to critically analyze the relationship between English and North American literature and culture and digital games. This course attempts to reassess and deconstruct pervasive myths, archetypes, and sociocultural conventions that have recurrently permeated media from the seventeenth century onwards, embracing perspectives from the fields of literary, cultural, and game studies. Following a discussion on theoretical approaches to video games, this seminar will delve into an exploration of Victorianism and neo-Victorianism, presenting an overview of the Victorian Era in order to show whether or not Victorian myths and archetypes, especially related to masculinity and femininity, are subverted in digital games such as *American McGee's Alice* (2000) and its sequel *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011), *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* (2015), *Ravenous Devils* (2022), *Vampyr* (2018), and *Hogwarts Legacy* (2023). Afterwards, the foundational American myths of the frontier and of the self-made man will be explored, alongside the concept of remediation and popular video games such as *The Last of Us* (2013), *Horizon: Zero Dawn* (2017), the *Great Theft Auto* (1997-2025) and the *Bioshock* (2007-2013) series.

3. Unidade de Investigação/Research Unit: CETAPS – Anglophone Cultures and History Research Area - Culture, Science, and the Media Strand.

Página Web/Web page <https://www.cetaps.com/anglophone-cultures-and-history/>

4. Curso/Course: Opção livre aberta aos cursos de: (indicar um dos cursos)

Licenciatura x Mestrado

5. Número de créditos/Number of credits (1 crédito = 28h):

Licenciatura 6 ECTS x Mestrado 10 ECTS

6. Docente ou Investigador responsável/Teacher or principal Researcher: Teresa Pereira/Jéssica Bispo.

7.

a) Número de horas por sessão/Number of hours per session:

2 horas (licenciatura) x 3 horas (mestrado)

b) Número de sessões por semana/Number of sessions per week:

Duas sessões (licenciatura) x Uma sessão (mestrado)

c) Periodicidade/*periodicity*: Semanal

d) Período de funcionamento/*Class period*. (deve tomar como referência o calendário escolar do ciclo de estudos a que se destina a unidade curricular): 1st semester 2024/25.

8. Objetivos da unidade curricular/*Learning objectives*:

- To develop a better understanding of the Victorian Era and its contemporary representations through Neo-Victorianism, by opening up new and different interpretations;
- To promote the deconstruction of Victorian conventions, archetypes and myths as a way to critically think about 19th century England;
- To critically relate representations of Victorian myths in video games to the artistic, literary, political and sociocultural realities of the period;
- To examine some of America's core foundational myths;
- To understand how and why those myths have been used in different moments throughout American history;
- To critically analyze the literary, visual, and digital manifestations of some of America's main myths;
- To conduct individual research in the field of Game Studies, Victorian Studies, and American Studies;
- To develop an academic presentation and paper under tutorial supervision.

9. Requisitos de frequência/*Attendance requirements*: Proficient knowledge of the English language.

10. Conteúdo da unidade curricular/*Syllabus*:

1. Introduction to Video Games and Game Studies:

- 1.1. What is a (video) game?
- 1.2. Game genres;
- 1.3. Theoretical approaches to video games: Game Studies, ludology and narratology;
- 1.4. The concept of heterocosm;
- 1.5. Procedural rhetoric;
- 1.6. Video games as tools to deconstruct myths and conventions.

2. (Neo-)Victorianism and Video Games: Deconstructing Victorian Myths and Conventions:

- 2.1. The Victorian Era – an overview: defining “Victorian”; sociocultural conventions, myths and archetypes; the “gentleman” and the “angel in the house”; representing childhood: the innocent and the sexual(ized) child;
- 2.2. The Gothic;
- 2.3. Neo-Victorianism and adaptation;
- 2.4. Representing the female child in *American McGee's Alice* (2000) and *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011);
- 2.5. Conventional and subversive Victorian femininity in *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* (2015);
- 2.6. Neo-Victorian cannibalism in *Ravenous Devils* (2022);
- 2.7. Subverting the Victorian vampire in *Vampyr* (2018);
- 2.8. Changing the historical setting and promoting LGBTQIA+ representation in *Hogwarts Legacy* (2023).

3. American Myths and Digital Games:

3.1. Myth and remediation;

3.2. Agrarianism, expansionism, and the myth of the American West: An overview;

3.3. The agrarian west; Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) and Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785); Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Arthur Rothstein's photographic representations of the Great Depression; the pop country fusion genre in the early 21st century;

3.4. Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis; Richard Slotkin, Annette Kolodny, and Patricia Nelson Limerick's critique of the Turner Thesis; Cowboys and "Indians" in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and 20th century Westerns;

3.5. *The Last of Us* (2013), *Horizon Zero Dawn* (2017), and the remediation of the myth of the frontier;

3.6. An introduction to the myth of the self-made man;

3.7. From Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1791) to Horatio Alger's success narratives;

3.8. Immigrant stories of self-(un)making;

3.9. The *Grand Theft Auto* series and the *Bioshock* universe..

11. Bibliografia recomendada/*Recommended reading*: (máx. 5 títulos. Por ordem decrescente de data de edição.)

1. Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon, Jonas Heide Smith and Susana Pajares Tosca. *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*. Routledge, 2016. [2008].

2. Paul, Heike. *The Myths that Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*. Transcript Verlag, 2014..

3. Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd ed. Routledge, 2013..

4. O'Gorman, Francis. *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2010..

5. Aarseth, Espen J. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

12. Métodos de ensino/*Teaching Methods*: The course will combine both theoretical and practical classes, including moments of presentation, practical exercises, and group discussion.

13. Métodos de avaliação/*Assessment methods*. (para cada elemento de avaliação deve indicar a respetiva ponderação): Class presentation (40%) and final essay (60%).

14. Percentagem de aulas práticas/*Percentage of practical classes*: Most classes will be both of a theoretical and practical nature.

15. Língua de ensino/*Teaching language*: English.