

GMD 102 Understanding Games

Credits	20
Module Code	GMD102
Level	4
Assessment 1 of 1 = 100% Weighting	What should games be accountable for as cultural forms?
Assessment Type	Essay

Overview

- Write a 2,000-2,500 word critical essay that addresses the question: What should games be accountable for as cultural forms?
- Use one game as your main case study
- Apply theoretical frameworks from the module
- Present a clear and sustained argument
- Explore how game design shapes player experience
- Discuss the social, ethical, cultural, and professional issues that emerge from these designs
- Read and use strong academic sources to support your argument, properly citing/referencing them

Your essay will be written throughout the module through weekly tasks, and you will use tutor feedforward to improve your essay before final submission.

Purpose

This assessment is designed to help you develop your ability to think critically about games as cultural forms, using theory and evidence to support your own ideas. Rather than simply describing a game, you will investigate how its design shapes player experience and raises social, ethical, and professional questions. Through this work, you will practise close analysis, structured argument, and independent research, gradually building a well-supported position using concepts from Game Studies. The aim is to help you become a confident and informed critic of games, able to connect design, culture, and meaning in a clear and academically rigorous way.

Supporting Work

- Weeks 1–4: Journal (Research development)
 - You will complete weekly journal entries to support your essay that will help you apply key concepts from each week to a game.
- Weeks 5–11: Essay Development
 - You will develop your essay through weekly writing tasks and milestones.

- By the final submission, your argument should be well-developed and supported by evidence and research.

Submission Checklist

- 2000–2500 words (excluding references)
- Falmouth - Harvard referencing
- File name: Initial_Surname_Essay
- Include a link to your online journal
- Submit via Learn (Word or PDF)

Academic Integrity

You must adhere to Falmouth University's Regulations and Policies as you complete this assignment.

Assessment Rubric

Item	Outstanding (1 st) 80-100%	Excellent (1st) 70-80%	Very Good (2:1) 60-69%	Competent (2:2) 50-59%	Adequate (3rd) 40-49%	Marginal fail Fail 30-39%	Fail 0-29% Fail
LO3 - Advocate Identify legal, social, ethical and professional issues.	INDUSTRY: The student's work demonstrates an outstanding , ethically informed, real-world experience of industry/business environments and markets.	The student's work demonstrates an excellent , ethically informed, real-world experience of industry/business environments and markets.	The student's work demonstrates a very good , ethically informed, real-world experience of industry/business environments and markets.	The student's work demonstrates a competent , ethically informed, real-world experience of industry/business environments and markets.	The student's work demonstrates an adequate , ethically informed, real-world experience of industry/business environments and markets.	The student's work demonstrates some ethically informed, real-world experience of industry/business environments and markets.	The student's work demonstrates little or no ethically informed real-world experience of industry/business environments and markets.
Essay explains key legal, social, ethical, and professional issues relevant to games and their development. (MO1/LO3) – 10 pts	Explains a wide range of legal, social, ethical, and professional issues with insight and precision. Issues are critically evaluated and clearly connected to design, culture, and industry context.	Explains relevant legal, social, ethical, and professional issues clearly and in depth. Issues are well connected to design and cultural context.	Explains key issues clearly with good understanding. Connections to design and culture are evident but may lack depth or consistency.	Explains some relevant issues with basic clarity. Connections to design or cultural context are limited or uneven.	Identifies issues but explanation is limited or unclear. Little connection to design or cultural context.	Mentions issues but with minimal understanding or relevance.	Fails to identify or explain relevant issues.

Essay describes different perspectives on how games impact players, communities, and culture. (MO2/LO3) – 10 pts	Demonstrates comprehensive understanding of multiple perspectives. Critically compares viewpoints and shows how they shape interpretations of games.	Clearly describes and compares different perspectives. Shows strong awareness of how games impact players and culture.	Describes multiple perspectives with good understanding. Some comparison or evaluation is present.	Describes more than one perspective, but analysis is limited or descriptive.	Identifies basic perspectives with little explanation or comparison.	Limited or unclear reference to perspectives.	No meaningful discussion of perspectives.
Essay makes clear, coherent, and sustained argument that fully answers the essay question. (LO3)-10 pts	Presents a sustained, persuasive, and original argument that fully answers the essay question. Reasoning is precise and coherent.	Presents a clear and well-structured argument that answers the question effectively. Reasoning is strong and consistent.	Presents a clear argument with good structure. Some areas may lack depth or consistency.	Argument is present but may be inconsistent, underdeveloped, or partially descriptive.	Argument is unclear or weak, with limited structure or coherence.	Very limited attempt at argument; largely descriptive.	No clear argument.
Essay effectively uses gameplay and case study evidence. (LO3) – 10 pts	Uses detailed, precise, and highly relevant examples from gameplay. Evidence is consistently integrated to support analysis and argument.	Uses clear and relevant gameplay evidence. Examples are well integrated and support the argument effectively.	Uses appropriate gameplay examples with good relevance. Some integration may be uneven.	Uses some gameplay evidence, but examples may be limited, descriptive, or weakly connected to argument.	Limited or unclear use of gameplay examples.	Very little relevant evidence from the game.	No meaningful use of gameplay evidence.
Essay demonstrates depth of critical	Demonstrates sophisticated and insightful interpretation of games as cultural	Demonstrates strong critical interpretation with clear analytical depth and insight.	Shows good critical understanding with some depth, though	Shows basic interpretation but remains partially descriptive.	Limited critical engagement; mostly descriptive.	Minimal attempt at interpretation.	No evidence of critical interpretation.

interpretation. (LO3) – 10 pts	forms. Analysis shows originality and critical depth.		not consistently sustained.				
LO4. Research: Report findings using appropriate evidence and conventions.	The student demonstrates outstanding research and information skills.	The student demonstrates excellent research and information skills.	The student demonstrates very good research and information skills.	The student demonstrates competent research and information skills.	The student demonstrates adequate research and information skills.	The student demonstrates some research and information skills.	The student demonstrates little or no research and information skills.
Essay applies theoretical concepts to interpret games. (MO3/LO4) 10 pts	Applies theoretical concepts with precision and originality. Theory is used as a tool to generate new insights.	Applies theory clearly and effectively to interpret the game.	Applies theory with good understanding, though application may lack depth in places.	Applies theory in a basic way, often descriptively.	Limited or unclear use of theoretical concepts.	Very minimal application of theory.	No meaningful use of theory.
Essay integrates theory into analysis. (MO3/LO4) 10 pts	Theory is seamlessly integrated into analysis and argument throughout, shaping interpretation at every stage.	Theory is well integrated and supports analysis consistently.	Theory is integrated in most places, though sometimes applied unevenly.	Theory is present but often separate from analysis.	Theory is referenced but not meaningfully integrated.	Very limited integration of theory.	No integration of theory.
Essay has at least 5 relevant, quality academic sources (MO4/LO4) – 10 pts	Uses a wide range of high-quality academic sources beyond expectations, all highly relevant.	Uses 5–7 high-quality, relevant academic sources.	Uses appropriate academic sources with good relevance.	Uses some academic sources, though range or quality may be uneven.	Limited or partially relevant sources.	Very few appropriate academic sources.	No appropriate academic sources.

Essay demonstrates synthesis of research into argument (MO3 &4/LO4) – 10 pts	Synthesises research with precision and originality. Sources are critically combined to support a sustained argument.	Synthesises research effectively to support argument.	Shows good synthesis, though some sources may be used more descriptively.	Some attempt to connect sources to argument, but largely descriptive.	Limited synthesis; sources used independently.	Minimal use of research in argument.	No synthesis of research.
Essay demonstrates appropriate organisation and academic writing (MO4/LO4)– 10 pts	Writing is clear, fluent, and precise. Structure is logical and enhances the argument. Academic conventions are consistently applied.	Writing is clear and well structured with strong use of academic conventions.	Writing is generally clear, though minor issues with structure or clarity.	Writing is understandable but may include errors or inconsistent structure.	Writing lacks clarity or coherence; structure is weak.	Writing is difficult to follow.	Writing is unclear or incoherent.