



Detailed Course Syllabus

Academic Year	2025/2026	Semester	I (winter)
Study Program	Undergraduate University Study of Psychology	Specialization / Major in	Year of Study 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd

I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Name	Psychology of Games and Play		
Abbreviation		Code	
Status	Elective	ECTS 4	
Prerequisites	none		
Total Course Workload			
Teaching Mode	Total Hours	Teaching Mode	Total Hours
Lectures	30	Seminars	15
Class Time and Place	CUC according to published timetable		

II. TEACHING STAFF

Course Holder

Name and Surname	Tihana Brkljačić		
Academic Degree	Ph.D.	Professional Title	associate professor
Contact E-mail	tihana.brkljacic@unicath.hr	Telephone	
Office Hours			

Course Collaborator

Name and Surname			
Academic Degree		Professional Title	
Contact E-mail		Telephone	
Office Hours			

Course Collaborator

Name and Surname			
Academic Degree		Professional Title	
Contact E-mail		Telephone	
Office Hours			

III. DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

Teaching Language	English
Course Description	In the focus of this course is play in all its manifestations. While the course primarily deals with psychological aspects of play, it often borrows ideas and theories from other disciplines including philosophy, anthropology, ethnology, zoology and computer sciences. Therefore, the students will get a comprehensive overview of play dynamics in various aspects of life.
Expected Educational Outcomes	1. Define various concepts related to psychology of game and play; 2. Analyse historical, cultural, gender, age and personality differences in playful attitudes and behaviour; 3. Compare various forms of play; 4. Explain importance, benefits and threats of different types of play in childhood, adolescence and adulthood; 5. Create playful learning and work setting; 6. Explain the role of play in therapy; 7. Describe current theories and research on expertise of professional players;
Textbooks and Materials	
Required	1. Brown, S. (2009). Play. How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul. New York, NY: Avery, Penguin Group. 2. Dankiw, K. A., Tsiros, M. D., Baldock, K. L., & Kumar, S. (2020). The impacts of unstructured nature play on health in early childhood development: A systematic review. PloS one, 15(2), e0229006. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229006 3. Kalliala M. (2007). Play culture in a changing world. Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK. Open University Press.
Supplementary	1. Bekoff, M., Byers, J. A. (Eds.). (1998). Animal play: Evolutionary, comparative, and ecological perspectives. Cambridge University Press. 2. Cattanach, A. (2003). Introduction to play therapy. Brunner-Routledge. 3. Clark, C. (2017). Play and Wellbeing (1st ed.). Taylor and Francis. Retrieved from https://www.perlego.com/book/1497763/play-and-wellbeing-pdf 4. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Play and Intrinsic Rewards. In: Flow and the Foundations of Positive Psychology. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9088-8_10 5. Huizinga, J. (1955). Homo ludens; a study of the play-element in culture. Boston: Beacon Press. ISBN 978-0-8070-4681-4. 6. Kernan M. (2007). Play as a Context for Early Learning and Development. Dublin, Ireland. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. 7. Sutton-Smith, B. (1997). The Ambiguity of Play. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q16s5b 8. Zosh, J. M., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Hopkins, E. J., Jensen, H., Liu, C., Neale, D., Solis, S. L., & Whitebread, D. (2018). Accessing the Inaccessible: Redefining Play as a Spectrum. Frontiers in psychology, 9, 1124. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01124
Examination and Grading	
To Be Passed	Exclusively Continuous AssessmentnoIncluded in Average Gradeyes
Prerequisites to Obtain Signature and Take Final Exam	
Examination Manner	Teaching activities: lectures, workshops, partial e-learning, demonstration, discussions, case studies, multimedia, problem solving. Final exam: no
Grading Manner	sufficient (2) – 51% good (3) – 66% very good (4) 81% excellent (5) 91%

**Detailed
Overview of
Grading within
ECTS**

ACTIVITY TYPE	ECTS Student Workload Coefficient	GRADE PERCENTAGE (%)
Class attendance	0.4	10
Seminars	0.6	15
Individual assignments	0.6	15
Group project	0.6	15
Midterm exam	0.6	15
Total in Class	2.2	70
Final Exam	1.2	30
TOTAL ECTS (Classes + Final Exam)	4	100%

**Midterm Exam
Dates**

To be announced

**Final Exam
Dates**

According to the exam schedule

IV. WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Lectures

Week	Topic
1.	Definitions of game and play. History of games and play. Comparative research on play. Theories of purpose of play. Motivation to play. Homo Ludens.
2.	Development of play during childhood. Theories of child play.
3.	Role of play in social, emotional and cognitive development.
4.	Types of games and play.
5.	Digital games: distinction, importance, benefits and threats.
6.	Sex, age and cultural differences in play.
7.	Personality traits, temperament and tendency to play.
8.	Humour and playfulness.
9.	Adult play. License to play. The fun theory.
10.	Play, deprivation of play, and quality of life and well-being.
11.	Games as tools for teaching.
12.	Games as tools to increase work motivation and work satisfaction. Playful environments.
13.	Games and play in treatment of physically and mentally challenged people.

14.	Games in psychological research of artificial intelligence, perception, learning and memory processes, logical reasoning and decision making.
15.	Psychology of professional players, research on expertise.
Seminars	
Week	Topic
1.	Seminars on the topic of history of play in different cultures.
2.	Seminars on the topic of development of play during childhood.
3.	Seminars on the topic of role of play in social, emotional and cognitive development.
4.	Seminars on the topic of types of games and play.
5.	Seminars on the topic of digital games: distinction, importance, benefits and threats.
6.	Seminars on the topic of sex, age and cultural differences in play.
7.	Seminars on the topic of personality traits, temperament and tendency to play.
8.	Seminars on the topic of humour and playfulness.
9.	Seminars on the topic of adult play.
10.	Seminars on the topic of role of play in quality of life and well-being.
11.	Seminars on the topic of games and play as teaching tools.
12.	Seminars on the topic of playful environments.
13.	Seminars on the topic of using play in treatment of physically and mentally challenged people.
14.	Seminars on the topic of using games in psychological research of artificial intelligence, perception, learning and memory processes, logical reasoning and decision making.
15.	Seminars on the topic of psychology of professional players.
Exercises	
Week	Topic
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	