

# Game Over – Dystopia x Utopia x Video Games.

## Interdisciplinary Conference at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg

### Call for Papers:

**Place and date: 14 to 16 November 2024 at Paris Lodron University of Salzburg**

**Website:** <https://bit.ly/Game-Over-Salzburg>

Video games often depict the end times, post-apocalyptic scenarios, and other related themes. These themes, which can be summarized as Dystopia, Utopia, and Video Games, are the focus of an interdisciplinary conference taking place from 14-16 November 2024 at the Department of Art, Music, and Dance Studies. The conference is organized by the Popular Culture Studies Doctorate School (Kolleg) at the University of Salzburg.

The organizers' premise is that **dystopian** games do not exclude **Utopia** as a **kind of counter-foil**: The conference aims to bring together a diverse range of research fields, including scientific approaches to climate change, psychology, and humanities research such as historical analysis of dystopian or utopian video games, gender studies, and popular music research. The organising team encourages submissions from all areas of research to create a colourful and multidisciplinary event. The focus should be on dystopian and/or utopian video games as objects of investigation within a broader research context.

Possible themes and questions that may arise might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How are dystopian and utopian topics represented in the narrative structure of video games?
- What is the role of reference media in selected case studies?
- How do these differ from traditional literary media formats? (Case example: *The Last of Us*).
- What social attitudes are reflected and underlie the case studies?
- To what extent do video games influence players' attitudes and perceptions?
- What are the psychological effects, and can these be determined empirically through quantitative research methods? (Case example: *Detroit: Become Human*).
- Which epochal constructs of dystopia are included in games with historical settings (for example: the Dark Ages and/or Romantic Middle Ages)?
- What educational opportunities do dystopian and utopian video games offer to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills? (Case example: *Stray*).
- How is sound design and composition utilized in case studies, and how do sound designers and composers collaborate?
- How have AI technologies been used in video games to create immersive dystopian and utopian worlds? (Case example: *Alien: Isolation*).

The conference is designed as an in-person event, with hybrid participation only in exceptional cases. This interdisciplinary workshop explicitly invites contributions from all research disciplines, and current research findings are particularly welcome. We strongly encourage young researchers (Bachelor/Master students) to apply.

**Presentation Format:** Presentations should be 20 minutes long, followed by a 10-minute discussion, and can be delivered in either German or English.

**Submission Format:** Proposals should outline the presentation content, proposed key points, and methodology and must include a title, an abstract of approximately 2,500 characters (including spaces), and 3-5 key terms. Additionally, a short biography should be provided, including a few sentences about the person, including academic affiliation and relevant publications, if applicable.

**Deadline:** Please submit your proposal as a PDF document to [gameover.salzburg.2024@gmail.com](mailto:gameover.salzburg.2024@gmail.com) by **30.04.2024**. After evaluation by the organizing team, acceptance notifications will be sent out on or before 15th July 2024.

We look forward to receiving your submission,

Johanna Jastrinsky, Miriam Lisa Ljubijankic, Roland Mair-Gruber und Vlad Cotuna

(Organisers / Local Arrangements Committee)