



HRVATSKO  
KATOLICKO  
SVEUCILISTE  
ZAGREB  
UNIVERSITATE  
STUDIORUM  
CATHOLICA  
CROATICA  
ZAGREB

# Detailed Course Syllabus

**Academic year:**

2025/2026

**Semester:**

Winter semester

**Study programme:**

Psihologija (R) (elective)

**Year of study:**

1

## I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

**Name:** Psychology of Games and Play

**Abbreviation:** IZBP263

**ECTS:** 4

**Code:** 280122

**Prerequisites:** No

*Total Course Workload*

**Teaching Mode**

**Total Hours**

Lecture

30

Seminar

15

**Class Time and Place:** HKS - according to the published schedule

## II. TEACHING STAFF

*Course Holder*

**Name and Surname:** Brkljačić Tihana

**Academic Degree:**

**Professional Title:** naslovni redoviti profesor

**Contact E-mail:**

[tihana.brkljacic@unicath.hr](mailto:tihana.brkljacic@unicath.hr)

**Telephone:**

**Office Hours:** According to the published schedule

*Course Assistant*

## 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.

<b>Educational Outcomes</b>	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;	
<i>Textbooks and Materials</i>		
<b>Required</b>	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. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229006">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229006</a> 3. Kalliala M. (2007). Play culture in a changing world. Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK. Open University Press.	
<b>Supplementary</b>	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 <a href="https://www.perlego.com/book/1497763/play-and-wellbeing-pdf">https://www.perlego.com/book/1497763/play-and-wellbeing-pdf</a> 4. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Play and Intrinsic Rewards. In: Flow and the Foundations of Positive Psychology. Springer, Dordrecht. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9088-8_10">https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9088-8_10</a> 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. <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q16s5b">https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q16s5b</a> 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 <a href="https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01124">https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01124</a> psy	
<i>Examination and Grading</i>		
<b>To Be Passed DA</b>	<b>Exclusively Continuous Assessment NE</b>	<b>Included in Average Grade DA</b>
<b>Prerequisites to Obtain Signature and Take Final Exam</b>	essay	
<b>Examination Manner</b>		
<b>Grading Manner</b>	written exam	
<b>Detailed Overview of Grading within ECTS</b>		
<b>IV. WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE</b>		
<i>[Predavanja]</i>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Topic</b>	
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	Role of play in social, emotional and cognitive development.	
3	Development of play during childhood. Theories of child play.	
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.

[Seminari]

#	Topic
1	Seminars related to 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	Seminars related to the role of play in social, emotional and cognitive development.
3	Seminars related to development of play during childhood.
4	Seminars related to types of games and play.
5	Seminars related to digital games: distinction, importance, benefits and threats.
6	Seminars on the topic of differences in play.
7	Seminars on the topic of personality traits, temperament and tendency to play.
8	Seminars on the topic of humor and playfulness.
9	Seminars on the topic of adult play.
10	Seminars on play, deprivation of play, and quality of life and well-being
11	Seminars presenting games as a teaching tool.
12	Seminars on the topic of playful work environments
13	Seminars on the topic of games and play in treatment of physically and mentally challenged people.
14	Seminars on the topic of using games in psychological research.
15	Seminars on the topic of psychology of professional players, research on expertise.