# Detailed Course Syllabus

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| **Academic year:**<br>2026/2027 | **Semester:**<br>Summer semester |
| **Year of study:**<br>1 | **Study programme:**<br>Psihologija (R) (elective) (Prijediplomski) |

## I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

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| **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

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| *Course Holder* | |
| **Name and Surname:** Brkljačić Tihana | |
| **Academic Degree:** | **Professional Title:** naslovni redoviti profesor |
| **Contact E-mail:**<br>tihana.brkljacic@unicath.hr | **Telephone:** |
| **Office Hours:** According to the published schedule | |
| *Course Assistant* | |

## III. DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

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| **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. |

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| **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 https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01124 psy |
| *Examination and Grading* | |

| **To Be Passed** DA | **Exclusively Continuous Assessment** NE | **Included in Average Grade** DA |
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| **Prerequisites to Obtain Signature and Take Final Exam** | Regular class attendance (at least 70%).<br>Obtaining a minimum of 35% points during classes through assigned course activities. |
| **Examination Manner** | Excellent (5) – 90-100%<br>Very Good (4) – 80-89.9%<br>Good (3) – 65-79.9%<br>Satisfactory (2) – 50-64.9%<br>Fail (1) – 0-49.9% |
| **Grading Manner** | **Teaching activities**: lectures, workshops, partial e-learning, demonstration, discussions, case studies, multimedia, problem solving.<br>**Final exam:** minimum 50% score required to pass |

**Detailed Overview of Grading within ECTS**

| ACTIVITY TYPE | ECTS Student Workload Coefficient | GRADE PERCENTAGE (%) |
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| 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**<br>**(Classes + Final Exam)** | **4** | **100%** |

## IV. WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

*[Predavanja]*

| # | Topic |
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| 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. |

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| 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. |