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Learning Italian Through Gaming at Saint Louis University

They're jumping across rooftops in Renaissance Rome. They're finding treasure in city streets. They're fighting off villains in order to save the world. And they're doing it all from a classroom in Saint Louis University's Morissey Hall.

Learning through Gaming



For Simone Bregni, Ph.D., associate professor of languages, literatures and cultures at SLU, video games are far more than a source of entertainment; they are means to teach and connect.

That's why Bregni uses video games like Assassin's Creed in his courses to transport students to a world that they wouldn't normally have access to otherwise. The best part? They're learning the language while doing it.

"My students from the Midwest get the opportunity to see what Florence was like in 1476," Bregni said.

Bregni's history with video games can be traced back to 1975 when he started playing them, soon finding that his English improved rapidly as a result. He would go on to incorporate that ideology into

his research and teaching, even working as a correspondent reporting about the video game industry.

Integrating video games into his classroom seemed like a natural next step, he said

While Bregni uses video games to teach in many of his courses, ITAL 1200: Intensive Italian for Gamers introduces students to Italian within the first few weeks of the class. The last time the course was taught, all students made progress equal to two semesters of Italian over the course of a single fall semester, Bregni said. By the final, students were three to five points ahead of students in a traditional Italian course.

Allison Claudson (A&S '18) took the course while pursuing a graduate degree in Spanish.

“You do not have to identify as a ‘gamer’ to benefit from this type of learning,” Claudson said. “The games used in the class created a context for the language elements being learned, which ultimately helped students to better connect with and understand the material.”

For questions or to learn more about the course, contact **Simone Bregni, Ph.D.**

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Saint Louis University is a Catholic, Jesuit institution that values academic excellence, life-changing research, compassionate health care, and a strong commitment to faith and service. Founded in 1818, the University fosters the intellectual and character

development of more than 13,000 students on campuses in St. Louis and Madrid, Spain. Building on a legacy of nearly 200 years, Saint Louis University continues to move forward with an unwavering commitment to a higher purpose, a greater good.