



Locally Developed Courses

Understanding Video Games

For the 2026-2027 School Year

Introduction to the Understanding Video Games Course Sequence

Subject: Career and Technology Studies - Discipline: Information Processing

Video games are a globally entrenched entertainment medium that entertains, informs, educates, and challenges us. These games are influenced and defined by our modern culture. Given the relevance of video games in our students' lives, this course will expose students to the interdisciplinary nature of the video game industry, including the multitude of employment opportunities available within this fast-growing field. Students will learn how to critically study games and engage in informed discussions about them, which are transferable skills when students approach other topics or subjects in school and are useful skills they can apply to other jobs and career outside of school. Ultimately, this course is about understanding the literacy of video games and the social and cultural impacts of this field. The cross-curricular competencies that students will develop throughout the course include:

- Thinking critically: students will learn to conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge as it pertains to video games.
- Managing information: students will access, interpret, evaluate, and use information in a variety of ways and through a variety of media to analyze video games as objects and as a culture.
- Innovation and creation of opportunities: students will explore video games in a comprehensive and multidisciplinary way so as to enable them to identify and explore new and innovative ways of addressing challenges within the video game industry. They will learn to develop entrepreneurial skills by exploring the video game industry in a comprehensive way.

Student Need

Although many students play video games, this course takes something students are interested in and leverages this in order to educate them about how to critically analyze something in an interdisciplinary way. There are video game clubs in schools and students have expressed a desire to talk about video games in their classes. This course approaches video games from a multitude of disciplines, including computer science, social studies, language arts, and visual arts. The multidisciplinary nature of this course will expose students to the collaborative work that exists in this and many other industries, as well as post-secondary opportunities.

Courses in the Understanding Video Games Course Sequence

Understanding Video Games 15 (LDC1008)

Video games are a globally entrenched entertainment medium that entertains, informs, educates, and challenges us. These games are influenced and defined by our modern culture. In this course students will begin to develop an understanding about the mechanics of video games, multiple theories of game development, and the social and cultural aspects of games. Students will learn how to study video games in order to engage in informed discussions about them. Major topics include:

- Differentiating between games and play
- Emergent and progressive gameplay
- Game mechanics
- Story and games
- Interpreting games
- Gaming culture
- Violence and games
- Gender and games
- Race and games

Please note, some of the content discussed in the course, including but not limited to, representations of violence, gender, and race in video games, are serious topics that are better addressed if students display an appropriate level of maturity.

No required facilities or equipment are specified for this course.

Prerequisites: None

Versions Available: (Each version must be locally approved by Board Motion prior to offering to students.)

Credit Level	First School Year	Last School Year
5	2025-2026	2028-2029

Curriculum

Curriculum Elements		Understanding Video Games 15-5
1	Topic Video games have fundamental structures and rules that define their purpose and shape the player's gameplay experience	✓
1.1	General Outcome How can 'games' be differentiated from 'play'?	✓
1.1.1	Specific Outcome Define characteristics of game and play	✓
1.1.2	Specific Outcome Develop criteria to place games along a spectrum of structured or unstructured	✓
1.1.3	Specific Outcome Identify a set of core requirements of games	✓
1.2	General Outcome How can 'rules' shape emergence and progression in games to promote creativity and freedom?	✓
1.2.1	Specific Outcome Define game taxonomy	✓
1.2.2	Specific Outcome Define 'rules' in video games	✓
1.2.3	Specific Outcome Generate criteria to judge how different rules impact game play	✓
2	Topic Analyzing video games and gaming elements through multiple lenses builds an understanding of how games impact, and are impacted by, culture.	✓
2.1	General Outcome How can narrative and interpretative frameworks be used to analyze video games?	✓
2.1.1	Specific Outcome Analyze the role of narrative and narrative components have in video games	✓
2.1.2	Specific Outcome Analyze games using different interpretive frameworks	✓

Curriculum Elements		Understanding Video Games 15-5
2.1.3	Specific Outcome Evaluate a series of games, using different gaming concepts, to determine how games impact people differently	✓
2.2	General Outcome How can different choices provided to players in video games, including consequences, rewards, purpose, and social and cultural situations, be used to explore the culture of gaming?	✓
2.2.1	Specific Outcome Identify how representations of violence, gender, and race influence perceptions of who can/should/does play video games	✓
2.2.2	Specific Outcome Develop criteria to evaluate the extent to which a video game includes racial and gender diversity and suggest ways in which games might be made more diverse	✓
2.3	General Outcome How are video games used to motivate, persuade and educate?	✓
2.3.1	Specific Outcome Investigate how different games balance promotion versus keeping players motivated to play.	✓
2.3.2	Specific Outcome Explain how different gaming components contribute to an understanding of gaming culture and how gamers define themselves and others.	✓