



## **Locally Developed Courses**

# **Understanding Video Games**

For the 2026-2027 School Year

# Introduction to the Understanding Video Games Course Sequence

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*Subject: Career and Technology Studies - Discipline: Information Processing*

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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

Understanding Video Games 15-5 has been essential in allowing students to leverage their interest in video games to facilitate critical analysis of this unique medium through a multidisciplinary lens. Understanding Video Games 25-5 will build on the outcomes achieved in the 15-level course by expanding the scope of frameworks through which students critically examine and respond to games and gaming culture. The 25-level course will provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge to develop thoughtful and effective critique of video games, and create their own simple interactive experiences. This course will provide students with opportunities to develop their analytical and writing skills, and allow them to express themselves in constructive and creative ways. This will enhance their preparedness for post-secondary education and build skills to prepare them for future career opportunities.

# Courses in the Understanding Video Games Course Sequence

## Understanding Video Games 25 (LDC2024)

Students will enhance their understanding of elements of video games, use additional lenses for analysis, use personal connections to critique various games, and apply their knowledge to develop simple interactive experiences. They will further refine their knowledge of game mechanics, frameworks, and impact to analyze, critique, and develop simple games. Students will have opportunities engage in productive and constructive outlets for their creative ideas.

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:

- All of the following:
  - Understanding Video Games 15 (LDC1008)

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 25-5 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1                   | <b>Topic</b><br>Video games have fundamental structures and rules that define their purpose and shape the player's gameplay experience.                                                                                                             | ✓                              |
| 1.1                 | <b>General Outcome</b><br>How do different systems within a game work together to shape the player's experience and emotions?                                                                                                                       | ✓                              |
| 1.1.1               | <b>Specific Outcome</b><br>Identify the major systems in a game (such as rules, story, mechanics, aesthetics, user interface (UI), audio) and explain the role each one plays in shaping the player experience.                                     | ✓                              |
| 1.1.2               | <b>Specific Outcome</b><br>Analyze how two or more systems interact to influence player emotion.                                                                                                                                                    | ✓                              |
| 2                   | <b>Topic</b><br>Analyzing video games and gaming elements through multiple lenses builds an understanding of how games impact, and are impacted by, culture.                                                                                        | ✓                              |
| 2.1                 | <b>General Outcome</b><br>How can cultural and structural frameworks be used to analyze video games?                                                                                                                                                | ✓                              |
| 2.1.1               | <b>Specific Outcome</b><br>Identify major cultural frameworks and explain how they apply to video games.                                                                                                                                            | ✓                              |
| 2.1.2               | <b>Specific Outcome</b><br>Identify major structural frameworks (such as Mechanics-Dynamics-Aesthetics (MDA), narrative structure, progression models, control schemes, pacing, aesthetic design) and explain how they shape the player experience. | ✓                              |
| 2.1.3               | <b>Specific Outcome</b><br>Compare different interpretations of games when using a variety of lenses or frameworks.                                                                                                                                 | ✓                              |
| 2.2                 | <b>General Outcome</b><br>How can choices in video games influence the way we think about identity, culture, ethics, and mental health?                                                                                                             | ✓                              |
| 2.2.1               | <b>Specific Outcome</b><br>Explain how design choices around character representation, setting, perspective, and mechanics reinforce or challenge cultural norms.                                                                                   | ✓                              |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Understanding Video Games 25-5 |
| <b>Curriculum Elements</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                |
| 2.2.2                      | <p><b>Specific Outcome</b></p> <p>Critique how cultural biases can be embedded, intentionally or unintentionally, in a game's systems or narrative structure.</p>                                             | ✓                              |
| 3                          | <p><b>Topic</b></p> <p>Thoughtful and effective critique of video games is enhanced through an understanding of one's own identity and personal connection to gaming.</p>                                     | ✓                              |
| 3.1                        | <p><b>General Outcome</b></p> <p>How can opinions about games be expressed in thoughtful, structured, and creative ways?</p>                                                                                  | ✓                              |
| 3.1.1                      | <p><b>Specific Outcome</b></p> <p>Identify key components of a strong game critique (including claim, evidence, analysis, counterpoint, and conclusion).</p>                                                  | ✓                              |
| 3.1.2                      | <p><b>Specific Outcome</b></p> <p>Develop a critical analysis of a game using specific in-game examples (such as mechanics, narrative choices, design elements, player experience) to support an opinion.</p> | ✓                              |
| 3.1.3                      | <p><b>Specific Outcome</b></p> <p>Incorporate creative formats for expressing opinions (such as video essays, tier lists with justification, visual critiques, or interactive commentary).</p>                | ✓                              |
| 3.2                        | <p><b>General Outcome</b></p> <p>How has my relationship with games changed over time, and what does that say about me as a player, creator, or critic?</p>                                                   | ✓                              |
| 3.2.1                      | <p><b>Specific Outcome</b></p> <p>Describe ways that games have played a key role in shaping identity as a player.</p>                                                                                        | ✓                              |
| 3.2.2                      | <p><b>Specific Outcome</b></p> <p>Analyze how changing life circumstances, skills, or values can impact how students approach games or gaming.</p>                                                            | ✓                              |
| 4                          | <p><b>Topic</b></p> <p>Knowledge of video games can be applied in the design of simple, interactive experiences to achieve a specific goal.</p>                                                               | ✓                              |
| 4.1                        | <p><b>General Outcome</b></p> <p>How can an effective interactive experience be designed to tell a story, challenge a player, or elicit an emotion?</p>                                                       | ✓                              |

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|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Curriculum Elements |                                                                                                                                                                  | Understanding Video Games 25-5 |
| 4.1.1               | Specific Outcome<br>Analyze how mechanics, choices, pacing, and presentation shape the player's emotions or understanding to make an interactive story engaging. | ✓                              |
| 4.1.2               | Specific Outcome<br>Plan and create a simple interactive experience with a clear purpose, emotion, or message in mind.                                           | ✓                              |
| 4.1.3               | Specific Outcome<br>Present an interactive game to an audience and seek feedback on the player experience.                                                       | ✓                              |

# Statement of Overlap with Existing Programs

| Similar / Overlapping Courses | Description of Similarity / Overlap - Rationale                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Introduction to ESports 15    | Outcome 2.1 Analyze the influence of video games and esports on popular culture, emerging technologies, and ethical considerations in a rapidly evolving digital world.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                               | Introduction to ESports 15-5 has a greater focus on competitive gaming and the esports ecosystem, including organized play and its relationship to popular culture. Understanding Video Games 25-5 does not focus on esports or competitive gaming. Esports is neither a central topic nor a guiding framework for the course. Instead, Understanding Video Games 25-5 examines video games as a medium, emphasizing critical analysis of game systems, narrative structures, player choice, representation, and meaning. The course approaches games through a media literacy lens, exploring how games shape and reflect identity, culture, ethics, and mental health across a wide range of genres, including non-competitive and single-player experiences. |