PUGET SOUND SKILLS CENTER

Video Game Design & Development Syllabus 2026-27

Session Information

1st Session: 7:55am – 10:25am 2nd Session: 11:15am – 1:45pm * Monday – Friday

* Students from Tahoma and Federal Way are dismissed at 1:25pm and must complete the day's exit ticket to account for the missed time.

Class Location:
PSSC # 210

Teacher Information

Name: Orion Wenzinger **Phone:** (206) 631-7319
Email: Orion.Wenzinger@highlineschools.org
Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:25 – 7:55 AM and 1:45 – 2:15 PM
Email is the fastest and most reliable way to reach me. I check messages before school and during my prep period. Phone messages are returned as time allows, since I am rarely at my desk while class is in session.

Culture of Learning

This class reinforces PSSC's school-wide Behavioral Agreements:

Be Present, Be Respectful, Be Engaged and Be Professional.

Students and teachers will create their own classroom version of these agreements in their class charter, through thoughtful discussion from the perspective of their industry's expectations. These agreements will be upheld through a positive, progressive support system including regular check-ins with individual students, quarterly self-assessments, positive reinforcement strategies, contact with sending schools, dialog with families, and interventions from our Student Success Dean and Counselor as needed.

This classroom runs like a small studio. We build a culture around collaboration, respect, and a shared interest in making things, and every student is expected to contribute to that environment. Giving and receiving critique on work in progress is a normal part of the job here, and students are encouraged to take ownership of their own learning and of the projects they ship.

Course Description

In Video Game Design & Development, students learn programming and design fundamentals by building playable games in industry-standard tools including Unity and Unreal Engine. Students work through the full development cycle of concept, prototype, playtest, and release, both individually and in team-based game jams that use professional project management and version control practices. No prior programming experience is required for 1st year students; 2nd year students extend those skills through advanced engine work, industry feedback from our advisory board and guest speakers, and a capstone project.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Game Programming Proficiency:** Write, read, and debug code in languages used in the industry, including C#, C++, Python, and Unreal Blueprints.
- **Game Engine Utilization:** Build, script, and package playable projects in industry-standard engines such as Unity and Unreal Engine.
- **Project Management:** Plan and track development work using timelines, task delegation, and iterative production cycles.
- **Collaborative Development:** Work effectively on a development team, including shared source control and role-based responsibilities.
- **Problem-Solving:** Apply systematic debugging and critical thinking to complex technical problems.
- **Game Design Principles:** Apply core design concepts including player experience, game mechanics, balance, and narrative.
- **Portfolio Development:** Produce and present a portfolio of completed projects that demonstrates technical and creative skill.

Essential Standards

Scope and Sequence

- **Unit 1: Industry Orientation and Studio Culture** (lab safety, professional expectations, OSHA 10, CPR/First Aid, class charter)
- **Unit 2: Game Design Fundamentals** (player experience, core mechanics, feedback systems, and design analysis using Code.org Game Lab)
- **Unit 3: Programming Foundations** (variables, conditionals, loops, functions, and debugging in Python and block-based environments)
- **Unit 4: 2D Development and Game Jams** (rapid prototyping, playtesting, iteration, and presenting a finished build)
- **Unit 5: 3D Engine Skills** (Unreal Engine Blueprints and Unity essentials, scripting game environments and systems)
- **Unit 6: Team Production and Project Management** (game design documents, task delegation and tracking, version control, and team MVP builds)
- **Unit 7: Portfolio, Capstone, and Career Readiness** (professional documents, showcase preparation, and end-of-course exam)

Professional Attire & Uniform Requirements

Students must wear a lanyard with their PSSC Student ID daily, and PSSC-provided attire and/or program-specific uniform as directed. This program has no additional uniform requirement beyond the PSSC-provided attire and the student ID lanyard.

Required Materials and Program Costs

All required materials, including computers, engines, and software licenses, are provided by PSSC.

There are no classroom fees, and uniforms will be provided.

Course Technology

This course utilizes Microsoft Teams for Education, and access information will be shared with students. Further this class uses the following software tools used in the industry: Unreal Engine, Unity, Godot, Visual Studio and Visual Studio Code, Code.org, MakeCode Arcade, GitHub, Microsoft Planner, Adobe Creative Suite, and OBS.

3.0 Credits Offered Per Year

High School Equivalency Credits
Students will be enrolled in multiple gradebooks that reflect the equivalency credits available. **Some course equivalencies may not be taught and assessed until later in the school year. Students may not have a progress grade recorded for these equivalencies until that time.** Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Equivalency credits: 1.0 CTE, 1.0 Geometry, 1.0 Fine Arts (0.5 each per semester).

College Dual Credits
PSSC dual credit programs give students the opportunity to earn high school and college credit at the same time. Most programs have “Dual Credit Articulations” with specific colleges, and others are College in the High School (CiHS) courses such as those with Central Washington University. These credits may only be earned by successfully completing the course and all of the requirements set forth by the colleges. Most dual credit articulations require students earn a C or better for every semester in the program, though some require a B. CiHS programs will have additional information listed on their syllabus.

College credits: Green River College, 5 credits, IT 102 Scripting for Cybersecurity. Program details are posted on the PSSC program page.

Standards-Based Grading

Grades are a reflection of learning. Student work is scored on rubrics for the grade-level standards we are learning. Students demonstrate learning through assignments, activities and assessments.

- Formative Assessments: Measures understanding during a learning experience
- Summative Assessments: Measures understanding after a learning experience is complete
- Reassessments: Measures understanding after more learning (see below)

Learn more about standards-based grading: highlineschools.org/grading

- Formative assessments are required because they help you practice skills and give you feedback on your learning before the summative assessment.
- The most recent scores of formative or summative assessments are generally used to calculate your grade. Formative assessments you complete early in the semester provide you with feedback on your learning and guide you on how to improve your grade.

Some standards in this class take more than three to four weeks to learn, and some may not be fully addressed until 2nd semester. We will do formative assessments on these standards when you should be at a "2" on the standard rubric, but before you are expected to fully master the standard. When this happens, you will see "Target 2" in the title of the assignment in the gradebook. While the score will not affect your grade it will give you important feedback to know if you are on track to learn the standard.

Assessment Methods

- Technical skill demonstrations
- Peer and self-assessment

- Class discussions on industry topics (no reassessment)
- Game jams and product presentations
- Industry recognized certifications (no reassessment)
- Capstone Project Showcase or Community Impact Project (no reassessment)

End of Course Exams

At the end of the year, students will take an End-of-Course exam that will include a written exam, and a practical (hands-on) exam. These exams are designed to measure student mastery of program competencies, ensure alignment with industry expectations, and support student readiness for workforce or advanced program placement

Student Expectations and Support Needs

Students are expected to fully engage in our learning community and complete all assignments as part of individual and collective learning. Please contact me if you need additional time to complete work or need support to engage in our learning community. If you struggle to complete work and engage in our learning community, I will schedule a meeting with your family to discuss concerns and identify ways to support your learning.

Our goal is to maximize each student's opportunity for success in life and work, but some students may need supports beyond what PSSC is able to provide. We will work with the staff at sending schools and families to make reasonable efforts in accommodation. However, industry-mandated safety standards and expectations are non-negotiable items.

PSSC classes are 2 ½ hour blocks, and CTE preparatory courses. The ability to be self-motivated and work without direct oversight and redirection is crucial to success. Teamwork and working independently are both necessary skills in life and expectations in the workplace. These 21st Century Skills standards are as important as the technical skills students can master. In situations where these standards cannot be met with accommodations provided, we will work with the necessary parties to ensure a more suitable placement.

Expectations for Independent Work

PSSC students are expected to work successfully in teams and independently toward skills mastery, as they would in industry. Independent work within the program (student projects) must align with the program's curriculum and framework. Students working on their Capstone Showcase or Community Impact Project should choose something that demonstrates their advanced levels of mastery in their program content. Students will complete a project training plan that details the skills, standards and assessment criteria which will be used to determine the project's grade.

Reassessment Policy

Continued learning is necessary and always encouraged when you do not yet show proficiency in a standard. I will share reassessment opportunities for you to improve your grade.
Reassessment in this class works the way revision works in the industry: you identify the problem, do the work again, and resubmit. To reassess a summative assignment or skill demonstration, talk with me first and complete the relearning we agree on, then submit new evidence of learning within before the end of the grading period. Resubmitting the same build without changes does not count as new evidence. Game jam presentations, class discussions, IRC exams, and the Capstone Showcase are not eligible for reassessment.

Reassessment Opportunities

Reassessment opportunities will be determined by the instructor and clearly published, including how reassessment is earned, and how long it may be available. Not all assignments and evaluations are eligible for reassessment, especially those done in a lab setting.

Grades

In StudentVUE and ParentVUE, the most recent scores for essential standards are averaged and generate a letter grade based on this scale*:

- **A: 4.0-3.2 -** Student is meeting most standards and exceeding on some.
- **B: 3.19-2.4** - Student is meeting most standards and may be approaching or exceeding on some.
- **C: 2.39-1.6** - Student is approaching on most standards and may be beginning or meeting on some.
- **D: 1.59-1.2** - Student is beginning on most standards and may be approaching on some.
- **NC: 1.19-0.00** - Student has not yet demonstrated learning on most standards and may be beginning in some. In high school, the NC does not earn credit for a course.

*These are general descriptions and there may be exceptions.

Recommended Academic Skills

Students in all programs will be working toward several Industry Recognized Certifications (IRCs), including ones focused on their career field, and ones that are useful in any job setting. Many programs are also "College in the High School" courses taught and graded to that college's standards. Because these IRCs and college-level courses require advanced academic ability, students will have the greatest success in earning these certifications and/or college credit with the following skills:

Reading Level: Grade 10
Math Level: Algebra 2 or higher
Science Level: Grade 9-10 Physical Science or Introductory Physics

Industry-Recognized Certifications (IRCs)

Industry-Recognized Certifications (IRCs) are an important component of every program at PSSC. Some of these certifications will be specific to the industry you are training for and are a requirement for entering the workforce. Some of them will be beneficial no matter what career field you enter. It is projected that more than 75% of jobs in Washington state will require credentials, certifications and/or education beyond a high school diploma, so our students are getting a head start. Every student will complete at least one IRC.

- OSHA 10 General Industry
- CPR / First Aid
- Unreal Engine Certification

PSSC Capstone Project

To successfully complete your Career and Technical Education (CTE) program at PSSC, you must complete a Capstone Project and present it. This is mandatory for earning credit during 2nd semester and could impact your ability to earn the CTE graduation pathway. This project demonstrates the skills and knowledge you've gained throughout your time in the program, the IRCs you have earned, and readiness to enter your chosen career field or continue your education. It will also include a showcase of your best work. It is a graduation requirement that cannot be waived. You will be given a checklist with the requirements.

- Along with your main project, all students must complete the essential professional documents including:
- a resume
- a cover letter
- a thank you email
- a reference request email
- a reference list
- a showcase of exemplar work to be presented

- and a written reflection essay summarizing the year's learning and your plan for the future
- performance evaluations (student monthly or quarterly self-reflections & teacher feedback)

- **Capstone Project Showcase for 1st Year Students:**

- Complete a presentation of your capstone and your best work to industry professionals, family, and/or friends, as required by your program.

- **Community Impact Project for 2nd Year Students:**

- Research and complete an individual or group project that showcases multiple industry skills mastered and meets a need in the community. 2nd year students will have already completed the minimum professional documents requirements during the previous year, though their resume should be updated regularly.

Work-Based Learning (WBL)

WBL is an instructional strategy that provides students with career exploration opportunities and hands-on learning where knowledge gained in CTE courses can be applied to real-life work experiences. The goal of every work-based learning program is to prepare students for the next generation of the workforce. PSSC students will participate in WBL through their program, and some may earn elective credits.

All PSSC students will participate in some form of Work-Based Learning, and fill out a contract at the beginning of the year to start the process.

Common WBL opportunities

- Job placement in career pathway
- Internships
- Clinicals
- Externships
- Field Trips to Industry Sites
- College Visits

Leadership

Leadership is a key component of Video Game Design & Development where your student can be a member of a Career & Technical Student Organization (CTSO). Our CTSO is SkillsUSA. The purpose of SkillsUSA is to encourage the development of vocational understanding, leadership qualities, social awareness, and a sense of responsibility to school and community. It is each student's choice as to how active they will become in SkillsUSA.

Partial list of leadership opportunities:

- attend SkillsUSA conferences and competitions
- perform a community service project
- be a student leader or class officer in your program
- serve as an ASB representative
- lead campus tours
- volunteer for career days at elementary and middle schools

STUDENT PERSONAL SMART DEVICES POLICY (CELL PHONE, TABLETS, HEADPHONES/EAR PODS)

Purpose: The guiding language from Governor Ferguson is "Away for the Day" - To keep phones from disrupting learning, increased safety, productivity and well-being.

When Phones Must Be Put Away

- During class: Phones off or on Do Not Disturb, stored in backpack or designated classroom location
- Classroom breaks: No phone use while moving between spaces
- Restroom passes: Leave phone in classroom when using the restroom

When Phones Are Allowed

- Before school: Anytime before the bell rings
- After school: Anytime after your session's final bell

Emergency Communication

- Parents: Call the main office directly in emergencies at (206) 631-7300
- Students: Get a pass to use the office phone for urgent calls

Classroom Use & Exceptions

- No instructional use unless pre-approved by an administrator
- Computers available at all school sites for academic work
- Accommodations honored: Students with 504, IEP, MV, or Health Plans may use devices as documented

Consequences (Progressive)

1. First: Verbal reminder to store phone properly from the classroom instructor – documented in Synergy
2. Second: Phone confiscated by classroom instructor for the period; possible admin referral – documented in Synergy
3. Third: Admin referral and parent/guardian contact and phone to be held by the Dean of Student Success – documented in Synergy

Immediate referral if the disruption is significant or dangerous – documented in Synergy

Goal: These steps are instructive, not punitive, to maintain a respectful and safe learning environment.

Attendance Policy

The seat time mandate for CTE courses in Washington ensures students receive sufficient instructional hours and hands-on training time to master necessary technical skills. Prescribed minimum seat time safeguards the quality of CTE programs by allowing for in-depth classroom learning, adequate lab practice on equipment, and fulfillment of certification requirements. Upholding seat time standards is crucial for preparing a workforce with job-ready expertise meeting industry needs. To align with our 4 PSSC Agreements, all students will complete an attendance contract at the beginning of the year, signed by themselves and their parent/guardian.

Therefore, it is critical that students are present. **Whether excused or unexcused, missed time is missed time**.

1. Upon entering the classroom, each student will scan the QR code to check in for the day, and put their smart devices in the designated area in the classroom. It is their responsibility as a student to complete the QR code so their presence is documented for the day. If they do not complete the QR code, the student will be marked absent.
2. As a professional courtesy, please contact the course instructor via email, voice text or phone call.
3. Absences may be excused **by a parent/guardian** by the following methods within 48 hours of the absence:
    a. Phone call to PSSC Attendance Specialist, Kelsey Gomez (206) 631-7353
    b. Email to Ms. Kelsey (kelsey.gomez@highlineschools.org)
    c. Text message to Ms. Kelsey at (425) 298-7345
    d. Hand-written note turned into PSSC Attendance Specialist Kesley Gomez
4. Please include the following information in the note, call or email:
    a. Student Name
    b. Parent/Guardian Name

c. Program Name
d. Date of the absence
e. Reason for the absence

5. Students who are 18 years of age may excuse their own absence **in writing only** for the following reasons: school-related absence, medical appointment, or personal illness.
6. Prearranged absence forms are in the office. The form must be completed with all required signatures before departure date. This form will be shared with your sending school as well.
7. Reassessment opportunities will be determined and clearly published by the instructor. Not all assignments and evaluations are eligible for reassessment, especially those done in a lab setting.

Student Handbook: PSSC Student Handbook

Eligibility to Return as a 2nd Year Advanced Student

All PSSC students will have quarterly performance evaluations with their PSSC teachers to assess success in their program, and communication will take place with the student success dean, counselor, sending school and families when additional supports are needed.

In order to return as a 2nd Year Advanced Student, they must demonstrate mastery of content and skills considered necessary by their industry-trained teacher(s), and pass the End-of-Course exam. Students must also successfully earn the schoolwide and program specific required IRCs.

Students who are unable to complete the required skills, and unable to pass the End-of-Course exam, and IRCs in one year may be eligible to return to PSSC for another year and additional time to complete those items, but would not have earned the advanced status to be considered a 2nd Year Advanced Student.

Students who return to PSSC and enroll in a different program will also be considered a 1st year student, as it is their first year in that program.

Students may attend the same program at PSSC for a maximum of two school years. However, this does not count summer school which is open to students who have finished the 8th grade until the summer before their senior year.

To return as a 2nd Year Advanced student in this program, a student must:

- Build, script, and package a playable project independently in Unreal Engine, Unity, or an accepted game engine.
- Complete and present the Capstone Project Showcase at an acceptable level of quality
- Pass the end-of-course written and practical exam
- Earn the schoolwide IRCs (OSHA 10 General Industry and CPR / First Aid)
- Maintain a portfolio of at least three completed, playable projects

Academic Honesty

We take academic honesty seriously. You are expected to maintain the highest levels of integrity. It is important that we can assess what you know and can do independently so that we can accurately support your learning. Here are guidelines that ensure that you are upholding academic honesty:

- Do your own work: Do not copy or plagiarize someone else's work, including text, images or ideas. Strive to produce original work that represents your own thoughts and ideas.
- Give credit: If you use a source such as a book, article, website or generative Artificial Intelligence, you must give appropriate credit. Include a citation that clearly identifies the source of your information.

Failure to uphold academic honesty will be addressed and corrected, including but not limited to re-doing the assignment and family conferences. Academic honesty ensures you are learning and growing in the most effective way possible.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Academic Integrity

AI tools may be used to support work in this class when specifically allowed by the teacher — but not to replace student thinking or voice. Students are expected to follow assignment-specific guidance and identify when AI is used in submitted work. Submitting AI-generated work as one's own without permission or explanation is not acceptable and considered academic dishonesty.

Language Support

If you need language support to understand this document, contact your school office at 206-631-7300.
Si necesita ayuda con el idioma para comprender este documento, por favor comuníquese con la oficina de su escuela al 206-631-7300.
Nếu quí vị cần hỗ trợ về ngộn ngữ để hiểu tài liệu này, xin liên lạc với văn phòng trường học của con em quí vị số 2 06-631-7300.
Haddii aad u baahan tahay taageerada luqadda si aad u fahamto dukumeentigan, kala xidhiidh xafiiska dugsigaaga 206-631-7300.
ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਕੂਲ ਦੇ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। 206-631-7300.
اگر برای دانش‌آموز این سند به خدمات ترجمه نیاز دارید، لطفاً با شماره 2066317300 با تیم تماس گرفته حل مطلب نمایید.