

Spring 2026 ITLS-4410-001 Syllabus

ITLS 4410 Intro to eSports Syllabus

Semester: Spring 2026

Meeting Time: Tuesdays, 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Format: In-person

Instructor: Taehyun Kim (taehyun.kim@usu.edu (mailto:taehyun.kim@usu.edu))

Location: Logan Main Campus Campus | Recreation Annex | Room 109

Course Description

This course provides an introductory exploration of esports as a form of competitive play, a cultural phenomenon, and a growing industry. Rather than focusing on high-level gaming performance, the course emphasizes participation, reflection, teamwork, and industry awareness.

Students will engage in hands-on activities including basic game creation, esports gameplay (Valorant and League of Legends), in-class discussions, guest speaker sessions, and role-playing simulations of esports industry roles. The course is designed to be accessible to students with diverse gaming backgrounds and prioritizes attendance, engagement, and timely completion of assignments.

Course Objectives

IDEA Objectives:

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
2. Learning to Apply Course Material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
3. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
4. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team

Also, by the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe esports as a form of competitive activity and explain why it can be considered a sport.
 2. Demonstrate basic understanding of the esports industry and its related career pathways.
 3. Apply personal gameplay experiences to reflect on teamwork, competition, and decision-making.
 4. Collaborate with peers in discussions and role-playing activities related to esports contexts.
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Weekly Schedule (Tentative)

Note: This schedule is subject to change depending on class progress, guest speaker availability, and instructional needs.

Week 1 (Jan 6)

Course Introduction

- Student introductions
- Overview of the course structure, assignments, and expectations
- Explanation of course objectives and grading policies

Week 2 (Jan 13)

Creating a Game with Vibe Coding

- Instructor demonstration (first 30 minutes)
- In-class game development activity (1.5 hour)
- Students share game links and descriptions on Canvas

Assignment 1 (30 pts - due by next class):

Play at least **five classmates' games** and select one that you think is the best.

Write a short reflection (approximately **150 words**) explaining why the game is well designed.

Week 3 (Jan 20)

Is Esports a Sport?

- In-class reading and group discussion
- Discussion: competitive sport vs. recreation
- Creating Valorant and League of Legends accounts (gameplay begins in February)

Assignment 2 (30 pts - due by next class):

Based on in-class discussion, write a short reflection (approximately **150 words**) expressing your view on esports.

Week 5 (Feb 3)

Understanding the Esports Industry

- Overview of esports careers and required skills

Assignment 3 (100 pts - due by next class):

Write a report introducing the esports industry and discuss which esports-related job you would like to pursue and why.

Week 6 (Feb 10)

Valorant Gameplay Session 1

Assignment 4 (30 pts):

Review the guest speaker's profile and submit **two questions** on Canvas.

Week 7 (Feb 17)

Valorant Gameplay Session 2

- Guest Speaker 1 - Donnie Chell
 - **Assignment 5 (30 pts):**
Review the guest speaker's profile and submit **two questions** on Canvas.
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Week 8 (Feb 24)

League of Legends Gameplay Session 1

- Guest Speaker 2 - Elisabeth Marchini
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Week 9 (Mar 3)

League of Legends Gameplay Session 2

Midterm Assignment (Due March 17 before class):

Students will write a report (**maximum 1,000 words**) reflecting on their experiences playing Valorant and League of Legends.

The report should include:

- Personal reflections on gameplay experiences
 - An overview of each game's esports industry
 - Similarities and differences between the two games
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Week 10 (Mar 10)

Spring Break – No Class

Week 11 (Mar 17)

Role-Play Project 1

- Students revisit their Week 5 industry report
 - Role-play groups formed with instructor guidance
 - Each group selects a game and begins working as an esports organization
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Week 12 (Mar 24)

Role-Play Project 2

- Continued group work and in-class support
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Week 13 (Mar 31)

In-Class Assignment 6 (200 pts)

- Groups prepare presentations on their role-play experience
 - Presentations are due **in class**, but groups needing more time may submit PPT slides to Canvas by **April 5** with no penalty
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Week 14 (Apr 7)

No Class

Week 15 (Apr 14)

Role-Play Presentations & Peer Evaluation

- Each group presents for approximately **15 minutes**

Redesign your game, then present the changes you made.

Week 16 (Apr 21)

Final Report Due

Final Report: Instructions (25%)

The Final Report is an **individual reflection paper** that synthesizes your learning across the semester.

Length: 1,000–1,500 words

Submission: Canvas

The report should address the following:

1. What did you learn about esports through gameplay, discussions, and role-playing activities?

2. How did your understanding of esports change from the beginning to the end of the course?
3. What role or activity (gameplay, industry analysis, role-play, guest speakers) was most meaningful to you, and why?
4. How can the skills or perspectives gained in this course be applied to your future academic or career goals?

There is **no strict formatting requirement** beyond clear writing and complete responses.

Evaluation Methods and Criteria

Component	Percentage
Attendance & Participation	15%
Assignments	35%
Mid-term Report	25%
Final Report	25%
Total	100%

Attendance and Excused Absences Policy

Regular attendance is essential for this course due to its in-class activities and discussions.

- Students are expected to attend every class session.
- Absences must be approved **in advance by the instructor** to be considered excused.
- **Unexcused absences will result in a 3% deduction from the final course grade per absence.**
- **Five (5) unexcused absences will result in an automatic course failure**, regardless of assignment performance.

Students who anticipate an absence should contact the instructor as early as possible.

Syllabus Modification Statement

This syllabus is a guide for the course and may be modified during the semester to better support student learning or due to scheduling constraints (e.g., guest speaker availability). Any changes will be clearly communicated in class and on Canvas.

Grade Scheme

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade	Range
A	100 % to 93.0%

Grade	Range
A-	< 93.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 73.0%
C-	< 73.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 60.0%
F	< 59.0 % to 0.0%

Library Services

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at libguides.usu.edu/statewide. (<http://libguides.usu.edu/statewide>)

Syllabus Review

This syllabus may go under several reviews and modifications during the semester. The reviews will aim to insure achieving the objectives of the class. All modifications should be in favor of students' learning process. The instructor must discuss these modifications with students prior to implementation, making sure those modifications are understandable and applicable.

Classroom Civility

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read Student Code Article V Section V-3 (<https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article5>) for more information.

University Policies & Procedures

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. Faculty Code Policy #403 (<https://www.usu.edu/policies/403>) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
 - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
 - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
 - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
 - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
 - Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
 - Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/article6>)

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

General Overview

USU strives to provide an environment for students and employees that is free from discrimination (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/non-discrimination>) and sexual misconduct (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Sexual-Misconduct-Terms>). If you experience sexual misconduct or discrimination at any point during the semester inside or outside of class, you are encouraged to contact the USU Title IX Coordinator via Distance Education room 400 in Logan, 435-797-1266, titleix@usu.edu (<mailto:titleix@usu.edu>), or at [equity.usu.edu/report](https://www.usu.edu/equity/report) (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/report>). You can learn more about the USU resources available for individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct at [sexualrespect.usu.edu](https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/) (<https://www.usu.edu/sexual-respect/>). Resources for individuals who have experienced discrimination are listed at [equity.usu.edu/resources](https://www.usu.edu/equity/resources) (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/resources>).

Required Reporting of Sexual Misconduct

The instructor is designated by USU as a "reporting employee (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/employees#reporting>)." This means that if you share information about sexual misconduct (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/Sexual-Misconduct-Terms>) (sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual assault, relationship violence, or sex-based stalking) with the instructor, they *will report* that information to the USU Title IX Coordinator. The instructor is also required to tell you about designated confidential resources (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/sexual-misconduct/confidential-resources>), supportive measures (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/Supportive-Measures>), and how you can file a report (<https://www.usu.edu/equity/report>) with the USU Title IX Coordinator.

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (<http://www.usu.edu/drc>) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, drc@usu.edu (<mailto:drc@usu.edu>)). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Students who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 or who contract COVID-19 may also be eligible for accommodations.

Respect for Diversity

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.usu.edu> (<https://studentaffairs.usu.edu/>), (435) 797-1712, studentservices@usu.edu (<mailto:studentservices@usu.edu>), TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: <https://www.usu.edu/involvement/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services> (<https://www.usu.edu/involvement/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services>), (435) 797-2912, TSC

326,

- Access and Diversity: <https://www.usu.edu/inclusion> (<https://www.usu.edu/inclusion>), (435) 797-1728, access@usu.edu (<mailto:access@usu.edu>); TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: <https://www.usu.edu/inclusion/programs/multicultural> (<https://www.usu.edu/inclusion/programs/multicultural>), (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: <https://www.usu.edu/inclusion/programs/lgbtplus-and-allies> (<https://www.usu.edu/inclusion/programs/lgbtplus-and-allies>), (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: <https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity> (<https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity>), (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:

The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State

University: <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode> (<https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode>)

Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/article7>).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- Student Conduct (<http://www.usu.edu/studentconduct>)
- Student Code (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/>)
- Academic Integrity (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/article6>)
- USU Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=38&navoid=28932>)
- Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy (<https://www.usu.edu/policies/403>)

Emergency Procedures

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

General Health Protocols

The cold, flu, COVID-19, and other illnesses can have an impact on the health of our university community. USU welcomes the wearing of masks in all university buildings and encourages taking measures to mitigate risk as recommended by federal and state public health officials: getting vaccinated, staying home if you are sick (even with mild symptoms), and frequent hand washing.

Mental Health

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (<https://counseling.usu.edu/>).

Students are also encouraged to download the "SafeUT App" (<https://safeut.org/>) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship

problems, mental health, or suicide related issues. (<https://www.usu.edu/teach/help-topics/teaching-tips/syllabus-resources#mental>)