

**INSS 5390: CAPSTONE (CRN 21329)**  
**ONLINE COURSE**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO**  
**Spring, 2023**

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Thursdays, 6:00-8:50pm, [Classroom Building C304](#)

**I. Diana I. Bolsinger**

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30-4:30pm, in Prospect 203, or by arrangement.

Email: [dibolsinger@utep.edu](mailto:dibolsinger@utep.edu)

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will demonstrate their mastery of INSS core competencies by completing a capstone project. This capstone seminar provides a culminating experience in which students apply concepts, theories, and research skills gained in the program to professional practice. This course is taken in the students' final year of the program.

**IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students will complete and present one of four options for a capstone project:

- Research Proposal. A traditional academic paper examining an intelligence or national security-related topic. This option is recommended for students planning to continue their academic studies.
- Workplace Problem. Students will place themselves in the position of a member of an intelligence or national security agency planning staff; to review an approved agency problem; to summarize some research on the topic, and to write an action paper for a chief or other suggesting and justifying some proposed solution and course of action.
- Intelligence Estimate. Students will place themselves in the position of an intelligence analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, or some other intelligence agency. Students choosing this option will write an estimate of likely future developments of a "wicked problem," a complex challenge that is impossible to solve but must be addressed. The goal is not to provide the policymaker with a solution, but with the larger perspective needed for optimum decision making.
- Collection Management Project. Students will assume the role of a collection management officer and plan the national collection effort on a critical topic of national security. The goal is to identify a key national security issue and develop a feasible, logical, and coherent intelligence collection plan to enable the IC to support policymaker needs.

## V. OVERALL COURSE GRADING SCALE

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A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

D = 60 – 69%

F = below 60%

NOTE: Final grades are a weighted average of assignments and exam grades. Final grades are not curved.

Your grade in this course will be determined according to the following weights:

Attendance	10%
Topic Proposal	5%
Project Outline	10%
First Rough Draft	10%
Second Draft	10%
Presentation	20%
Final Project	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## VI. COURSE COMMUNICATION

Please note that I will only use your UTEP email to communicate with you.

### General expectations

Students are encouraged to take an active and engaged orientation to their own learning. Ultimately, the more students put into the process, the more they will learn. The following guidelines will create a comfortable and productive learning environment throughout the semester.<sup>1</sup>

#### You can expect me:

- To do my utmost to provide you with an interactive and interesting class
- To reply to e-mails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends. When I am traveling, I will respond in 48 hours.
- To assign coursework and reading that adequately covers the material and meets the learning objectives of the course while adhering to the time expectations for the course.

#### I can expect you:

- To participate fully in online class discussions, team exercises, and other class activities.
- To spend an adequate amount of time on the coursework each week, making an effort to understand the content.

- To share the responsibility of making our class a supportive, respectful, and safe environment for discussion and debate. To remember that our classroom is not a public venue. Postings on this site are private and to be shared only with me and other members of the class. Think of this as preparation for a career where you may be entrusted with classified national security documents.
- To seek help when you need it.

## VII. TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS

For all technological, hardware, software problems, lost files, and/or questions with Blackboard, as well as difficulties you are having during an exam, contact Technology Support Help Desk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Tech support is set up to specifically address technical questions and problems about Blackboard. **If you have question on how to operate in the Blackboard Learning System, please check out the resources available at the [Blackboard Student Orientation](#) site.**

**Professors are not technical support staff.**

Phone: 915.747.4357 or toll free: 1-877-382-0491

Website: <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/>

In-Person (Currently closed due to pandemic): UTEP Library, Room 300

Please regularly refer to Blackboard for links, documents, announcements, and calendar changes. You are responsible for staying up to date on all class information that is posted on Blackboard.

### CHECK YOUR TECHNOLOGY

- To complete this course, you must have a computer with a reliable internet connection. Mobile devices are not reliable to access exams and use the discussion board.
- Blackboard (BB) Learning Management System. This entire course is run through UTEP's BB system, so students must activate and use their BB accounts regularly. Always log in using your UTEP name and password, and never as a "guest" (the guest option will kick you out after 15-20 minutes, which is problematic when taking a test because you will not be able to finish your test). All students are responsible for regularly logging in and checking for posted announcements, submitting assignments, participating in discussion boards, and taking tests through BB. Contact UTEP tech support for any questions or concerns regarding navigating in BB or learning how to do something in BB.
- Browser Information (See the left side of the menu on the main BB page for hardware, software, and browser checks) Firefox seems to consistently work the best, but other supported Browsers include Chrome, Safari, and Internet Explorer. Be sure to "Allow pop-ups" for Blackboard Clear your browser cache
- Verify that you have the most updated version of "Java" <http://java.com>.
- All word documents should be saved with a "docx" extension identifying it as a Microsoft Word file or compatible with MS Word, Windows Media Player, Quick Time, Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash Player.

- We will be using Microsoft Excel for several exercises.

## VIII. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

If a student is suspected of cheating on the exams through collaboration with other students, the instructor will follow the University's policy regarding student dishonesty, which may result in a grade of zero and referral of the student to the Office of Student Conduct. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the instructor will follow the University's policy regarding student dishonesty, which may result in a grade of zero and referral of the student to the Office of Student Conduct.

Academic dishonesty or cheating is simply unethical and not acceptable under any circumstances. Plagiarism is a form of cheating that involves stealing the words and thoughts of others. It is a very serious academic violation and cannot be tolerated. The most common form of plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper or other assignment without giving credit to the source of that information or wording. Plagiarism also includes the direct copying of a source verbatim (word for word) and incorporating that copied material into your paper or assignment without first paraphrasing with proper referencing or placing the copied text into a direct quotation, again without appropriate footnotes or citations. Students must use their own words when not using direct quotes.

Direct quotes should be used sparingly and only when appropriate to provide examples, evidence, or illustrate specific points. Students cannot simply cut and paste wording or text from source material to artificially construct their papers, essays, and other assignments. This practice is also considered plagiarism, even if references are done properly.

Likewise, students must not submit work under their name that they did not do themselves. Students also may not submit work for this course that they produced for another course. If students are found to be cheating in any capacity including plagiarism and collusion, they will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Cases of academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for adjudication and possible sanctions. Possible penalties for academic dishonesty include a zero for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, suspension, and even expulsion from the university.

Students are responsible for understanding their specific obligations to maintain academic integrity at all times. Please refer to the following link for further information on UTEP's policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty: <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/>.

## IX. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please contact me personally in the first week of class, to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in the East Union Bldg., Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes. The CASS Office can also be reached in the following ways:

Website: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

## X. UTEP COURSE DROP POLICY

If unforeseen circumstances happen where a drop is necessary, students are responsible for initiating any course drop. It is the student's responsibility to determine how dropping courses may affect financial aid. **Students are limited to dropping no more than 6 courses over their entire academic career, including all courses taken at any public college or university in Texas.**

- A. Students who drop a course before the "official census date," the course will not appear on the transcript, and doesn't count toward the 6-course drop limit.
- B. Dropping a course after the official census date, but before the "course drop date" will generate a "W" in the course—although the drop shows on your transcript, a "W" does not lower your GPA. However, a "W" counts against your 6-drop limit.
- C. If the course is dropped after the "course drop date" or if the student just stops participating, taking tests, etc., UTEP requires the instructor to issue an "F" in the course that permanently remains on the transcript.
- D. UTEP also allows instructors to administratively drop any student because of too many times the student fails to submit assignments, discussion questions, or because of disciplinary reasons. In this case, the student will be notified of the course drop through their UTEP student email account. A "W" or an "F" will be issued. A "W" for these reasons counts against the 6-drop limit.

## XI. CLASS CALENDAR\*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Week 1: January 19	Welcome/Syllabus/Picking a Topic	Syllabus
Week 2: January 26	Academic and Intelligence Research	
Week 3: February 2	Careers in Intelligence and National Security	Topic Proposal due at midnight
Week 4: February 9	Planning a project	
Week 5: February 16	Literature Reviews and Knowing Your Intellectual Community	
Week 6: February 23	Peer Writing Group	Outline due at start of class
Week 7: March 2	Research Methods in Social Sciences and Intelligence	
Week 8: March 6-12	Peer Writing Group	
March 13-19	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>	
Week 9: March 20-26	Peer Writing Group	Rough (1st) draft due at 11:59pm
Week 10: March 27-April 2	Independent writing time (No class)	
Week 11: April 3-9	Meetings about project	Second draft due at 11:59pm
Week 12: April 10-16	Peer Writing Group/Meetings about project	
Week 13: April 17-23	Public speaking exercises	
Week 14: April 24-30	Independent writing time (No class)	Projects due at 11:59pm
Week 15: May 1-4	Project Presentations	Presentations to Class

<sup>i</sup> This section is a reproduced and modified version provided by the Elderly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University:  
<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/design/teach/design/syllabus/samples-policiesexpectations/>