

ISP 388L PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PROJECT

Unique number 28050

Spring 2022

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Office Hours

Doty: By appointment

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The three synchronous class meetings will be convened by Zoom, while other class periods will be used for students' group work, individual research and writing, and individual recitation/office hours meetings with one or both of the instructors.

Friday	January 21	1:00 – 5:00 PM – synchronous class meeting
Saturday	January 22	1:00 – 5:00 PM
Friday	February 18	1:00 – 5:00 PM
Saturday	February 19	1:00 – 5:00 PM
Friday	March 11	1:00 – 5:00 PM – synchronous class meeting
Saturday	March 12	1:00 – 5:00 PM
Friday	April 8	1:00 – 5:00 PM
Saturday	April 9	1:00 – 5:00 PM
Friday	May 6	1:00 – 5:00 PM – synchronous class meeting
Saturday	May 7	1:00 – 5:00 PM

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to Professor Loriene Roy of the UT iSchool for the following. Dr. Roy introduces herself as Anishinabe, enrolled on the White Earth Reservation, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Her father was Mississippi Band, her mother is Pembina Band, and, in her words, “we are mukwa, bear clan”:

We acknowledge that the iSchool sits on indigenous land. The Tonkawa lived in central Texas and the Comanche and Apache moved through this area. Today, various indigenous peoples from all over the globe visit Austin and/or call it home. We are grateful to be able to study and learn on this piece of Turtle Island. Since our class is online, you may be contributing from other tribal lands. Here is a map that may help you in identifying the indigenous peoples of the land on which you study: <https://native-land.ca/>

To read more about land acknowledgement, see: Stewart, Mariah, "Acknowledging Native Land is a Step Against Indigenous Erasure," Insight Into Diversity, December 19, 2020. Available at: <https://www.insightintodiversity.com/acknowledging-native-land-is-a-step-against-indigenous-erasure/>

We are grateful to Dr. Roy for this acknowledgement and permission to quote her identification statement.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

All students in the MS in Information Security and Privacy program at the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin must complete an exit requirement, what we term a capstone, graded on a Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) basis. This course is ISP 388L Professional Experience and Project (PEP).

Students' final semesters are good times to contextualize the capstones and students' complete master's study at the iSchool. Our field of information studies, whether at the undergraduate, master's, or doctoral level, is a professional discipline. What that means is that we aim to excel both in the academy, by meeting every criterion of intellectual rigor appropriate, and in the wider world, by achieving excellence in clinical practice. This double responsibility and opportunity for accomplishment is common to the professions writ large, e.g., architecture, nursing, education, law, social work, engineering, medicine, and so on.

In their widely read and influential book *The Social Life of Information* (2000) published by the Harvard Business School, scholars John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid discuss the processes of education, especially graduate education, and integration into an epistemic community of practice (pp. 220-221):

Over the course of an undergraduate degree and through encounters with an extensive range of different disciplines students . . . progress from learning about to learning to be, from, that is learning about a group of different communities toward learning to be a member of one. . . . Graduate education completes this process, shifting more completely from learning about to learning to be. As their graduate education proceeds, students enter and progress further and further into a particular community. Consequently . . . graduate education usually ends in a form of apprenticeship.

It is quite useful for you to imagine the PEP as a form of apprenticeship, a kind of consultancy, in which you produce a white paper of professional quality about a topic related to information security and privacy. That is the professional community you are either joining or reaffirming your membership thereof, as well as the community of information studies practitioners, researchers, and scholars. As we discuss in class and elsewhere, the goal of a white paper is to identify a problem or question of professional importance, review existing knowledge about that question, and conclude with recommendations or guidance about how to address the problem that animates the white paper.

While many fields use white papers to attract clients, e.g., marketing and business consultancy, the goal of the MS ISP white paper in the Capstone course is different. The Capstone gives students the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned in MS ISP coursework, to mobilize that learning in application to a significant professional problem in information security and privacy, to conceptualize how to describe and investigate that problem, and to communicate effectively what we know about and should do about the question that drives the white paper. Some MS ISP white papers address a question generally, while others focus on a particular question and course of action relevant to a particular organization.

Even more broadly, we can consider some of the ways that education, including professional education, matters. We want to mention just a few of these important ways from our perspective:

1. For each of us, education, most especially in a professional field, offers us the opportunity to become the kind of persons we want to be, as noted by Brown and Duguid

- above. While this sense of personhood has wide variation, it is essential to education, as is the sense of constant becoming.
2. Professional education also offers us the opportunity to change how we are in the world not just what we “know.” Disciplines such as chemistry, literary studies, or history do not ask students explicitly to change how they see themselves. Professional disciplines do.
 3. Finally, we here at the iSchool and in most other professional schools unabashedly admit that we want to make the world better through professional practice. Certainly, there is wide variation and much disagreement about what “better” may mean. The impulse to operationalize and embody our knowing to improve the world around us, however, is at the heart of professional practice.

These three ways of thinking about the value of education should infuse the capstone course and play important roles in each student’s own reflection throughout the semester. Thus, by the end of the course, students will have:

- Conceptualized a professional-level white paper related to information security and privacy as culmination of their MS ISP programs at UT-Austin
- Communicated about that white paper and progress toward completing it in a number of ways, e.g., in a reflection paper, face to face in class, in the final white paper delivered to the instructors, and in a final presentation about the white paper in class.

How do the principles of professional education come to fruition in a Professional Experience and Project or other iSchool capstone? In fall 2001, the iSchool faculty adopted the PEP as an exit requirement at the suggestion of graduated students, employers, current students, and the faculty itself. The intention was and remains to give students a culminating experience that allows them to integrate what they have learned at the iSchool and elsewhere in a focused way. Some faculty members refer to the PEP as a consultancy that a student completes; in the case of the MS in Information Security and Privacy, that consultancy culminates in a professional-level white paper. The course offers students the opportunity to practice sharing what they have learned and how they think about that work, as well as to offer advice to classmates about how to improve their work.

A Philosophic Aside

It is also useful to consider one of the philosophic traditions of particular value to information studies: the work of the American pragmatists. Their work, particularly the so-called pragmatist maxim, is also of special import to the professional-level experience of the capstone. That maxim is expressed in many ways; one way is that the value of an idea is determined by its utility in making the kind of world that one wishes to inhabit.

The great troika of pragmatism (Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey) as well as others have much to offer us as we complete the capstone course and consider professional practice and education together. For example, in 1905 Peirce, who might be considered the founder of pragmatism, said, “To ascertain the meaning of an intellectual conception one should consider what practical consequences might result from the truth of that conception.” Throughout his career, John Dewey consistently emphasized that the root purpose of education and inquiry generally is to make changes in the world. As Cheryl Misak notes in her introduction to her 2009

edited collection *The New Pragmatists*, both Peirce and Dewey asserted that “we are always immersed in a context of inquiry, where the decision to be made is a decision about what to believe from here, not what to believe were we able to start from scratch” (p. 3). William James, in turn, is often credited with saying that truth is “what works.” These ideas are significant resources in our on-going journey to define our work and ourselves, and the iSchool MS ISP capstones are places where such opportunities for work and reflection are of paramount importance.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

Students are expected to be involved, creative, and vigorous participants in class discussions and in the overall conduct of the class. In addition, students are expected to:

- Attend all three (3) synchronous course meetings for the entire class period.
- Attend all individual conference meetings with the instructor(s) as negotiated in the context of mutual convenience.
- Educate themselves and their peers. Successful completion of graduate programs and participation in professional life depend upon a willingness to demonstrate initiative and creativity. Participation in the professional and personal growth of colleagues is essential to one's own success as well as theirs. Completion of a formal peer review of another student's draft of a white paper, status updates about each student's capstone, subsequent discussions, and other in-class activities will serve as the most obvious forms of collaboration in this course.
- Complete all assignments on time. The instructors will not accept late assignments. Failure to complete any assignment on time will result in a grade of No Credit (NC) for the course and requires taking the course again in a later semester.
- Ask for help from the instructors either in class, during office hours, on the telephone, through email, or in any other appropriate way. Email is especially appropriate for information questions, and the instructors will ordinarily respond to email messages within twenty-four hours, forty-eight hours on weekends.

Academic integrity is paramount in the academy and professional life. The UT Dean of Students has an excellent, brief summary of means for ensuring academic integrity at (<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>); see the three links there.

Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, cheating, or academic fraud is intolerable and will incur severe penalties, including failure for the course. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to both the iSchool administration and the UT Dean of Students. If there is concern about behavior that may be academically dishonest, students should consult the instructors.

The instructors are happy to provide all appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The University's Office of the Dean of Students at 471.6259, 471.4641 TTY, can provide further information and referrals as necessary.

GRADING

All students complete their capstones on a Credit/No Credit (C/NC) basis. To receive credit for the course, a student must attend all synchronous course meetings, schedule and meet with the instructor(s) individually as appropriate, and complete all assignments satisfactorily and on time.

This class will use a slightly different grading rubric than you may be used to in order to better facilitate communication about your progress throughout the semester.

A = Very good, full speed ahead. On track to CR

B = Good, but needs some work. On track to CR

C = Only fair, needs significant revision. Not sufficient for CR yet.

Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by 1:00 PM in Canvas on the dates noted. The instructors will issue a course grade of NC (no credit) if **ANY** assignment is not completed and will not accept late assignments except by prior arrangement as noted below.

LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Date Due
Group reflection paper in Canvas (750 words + 250 words for each student)	Friday, February 4, 2022
Literature review and draft of capstone white paper (2500 words + 250-word abstract) in Canvas	Friday, March 4
Telling the “story” of the white paper in class (3-4 minutes)	Friday, March 11
Peer review of another student's draft white paper (750 words) in Canvas	Friday, March 18
Final version of capstone white paper in Canvas (2500-3750 words)	Friday, April 22
In-class presentation on white paper (8-10 minutes)	Friday, May 6

All assignments must be handed in on time. The instructors reserve the right to issue an assignment grade of No credit (NC) if **ANY** assignment is late and will not accept late assignments unless three criteria are met:

1. At least 24 hours before the date due, the instructors give explicit permission to the student to hand the assignment in late. This criterion can be met only in the most serious of health, family, or personal situations.
2. At the same time, a specific date and time are agreed upon for the late submission.
3. The assignment is submitted on or before the agreed-upon date and time.

Further, all assignments should adhere to professional standards for written work; should be clear, succinct, and specific; and should be explicitly grounded in the MS ISP course readings, class discussions, and other sources as appropriate. Writing multiple drafts of papers is particularly useful.

CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

The instructors will provide more guidance about assignments as the semester progresses. This schedule may vary slightly as circumstances dictate, and class time not scheduled synchronously for the class as a whole is reserved for group work and individual consultation of students with the instructors.

Date	Time	Topic	Assignment(s) Due
* Friday January 21	1:00 – 5:00 PM Central time Synchronous class meeting in Zoom	Introduction to each other, white paper topics, and the course How to write a reflective paper about the MS ISP program	In-class work on white paper outline and list of potential resources
Friday February 4	1:00 PM		Group reflection paper in Canvas (750 words + 250 words/student)
Friday March 4	1:00 PM		Literature review and draft of capstone white paper in Canvas (2500 words + 250-word abstract)
* Friday March 11	1:00 – 5:00 PM Central time Synchronous class meeting in Zoom	Draft white papers and discussion of how to write a useful peer review	Students tell the “story” of their white paper in class (informal presentation of 3-4 minutes)
Friday March 18	1:00 PM		Peer review of another student’s draft white paper in Canvas (750 words)
Friday April 22	1:00 PM		Final version of capstone white paper in Canvas (2500- 3750 words + 250-word abstract)
* Friday May 6	1:00 – 5:00 PM Central time Synchronous class meeting in Zoom	Final white papers and in- class presentations	In-class presentation on white paper (8-10 minutes) Completion celebration

ASSIGNMENTS DESCRIPTION

To earn credit for this Credit/No credit (C/NC) course, students must complete and submit all assignments on time and to the specifications of the assignment descriptions and the instructors' directions. These directions and specifications will be shared in class, in individual and group conferences, by email, Canvas Announcements or messages, and other appropriate media.

As Dr. Blaha noted in his earlier email message to you all on December 7, 2021, here is a brief introduction to the course and the paragraph you must have submitted by no later than Wednesday January 19, 2022.

The Professional Experience Project class is an opportunity for you to select a practical problem, current phenomenon, or professional concern to write about in a thoroughly researched and well-crafted, 2500- to 3750-word paper. This "project" could simply be the paper, or you may choose to work with an existing organization, group, or individual to examine a practical matter, and then write your paper on that particular topic.

For example, your current employer may be considering moving a suite of applications, such as the financial system, to the cloud. You might work with your employer to articulate the CIA, PPT, and GRC implicated in the current system, articulate the risks involved with the move to the cloud, and offer a strategic plan to complete the migration securely. Your paper must still adhere to the 2500 to 3750-word requirement.

In a paragraph of 100 – 200 words, please describe your current thoughts on the project you would like to complete during the spring semester. If you plan to write a paper, please discuss the topic and how it relates to information security and privacy. If you are considering a more involved project, please articulate how you plan to establish your connection with the group or organization, including the timeline for getting the project started in the early part of the Spring semester. You should plan to be fully engaged in the writing process of the final white paper by the third meeting of the semester.

There are six other assignments for the capstone white paper spread throughout the spring 2022 semester, plus some in-class activities. These cumulatively provide a series of scaffolds to help students conceptualize, articulate a plan for, investigate, write about, and report orally on a problem of interest to them in information security and privacy. These assignments are also designed to help students reflect on and express how ideas, works, and authors encountered in the MS ISP program illuminate the problem of interest focused on in the capstone white paper.

- **Group reflection Paper (750 words common material, plus c. 250 words for each student's individual white paper)**

Due 1:00 PM Friday February 4 in Canvas

Working in groups of three or four determined by the instructors in reaction to the submitted paragraphs by Wednesday January 19 describing the white papers, students will produce a group reflection paper due on **February 4** in Canvas.

The paper will be based on the in-class work that the groups begin on Friday January 21 and together during class time on Saturday January 22.

The paper will review pertinent elements of the various literatures students have read as part of the MS ISP program. The reflective paper itself will consist of these elements:

- 750 words **specifically** describing particular sources from the ISP courses of value to the various students' white papers and **explicitly identifying HOW these sources are of value**
- 250 words from each student in the group on their particular topics and sources of value for them beyond those identified in the common part of the reflection paper
- A full bibliography of the sources identified in the multiple parts of the paper in APA format.

- **Draft of White Paper with literature review (≥ 2500 words)**

Due 1:00 PM Friday March 4 in Canvas

Each student will submit an initial draft of the capstone white paper on **Friday March 4** to the appropriate site in Canvas. The draft will be at least **2500 words** long, will have a **250-word abstract**, will indicate how the rest of the paper will develop, and will have a substantial part of the bibliography identified and complete in American Psychological Association (APA) format.

- **“Telling the Story” of the White Paper in Class (3-4 minutes)**

Due 1:00 PM Friday March 11 in class

Every student will have the opportunity to tell their classmates and the instructors about progress on their white paper on Friday March 11. This will be an informal presentation, with **no PowerPoint slides** or other presentation software. It will, instead, depend upon each student's ability to talk about their evolving white papers informally but clearly and specifically.

Topics to include are:

1. The specific problem or question related to information security and privacy the white paper engages
2. Whether the white paper is a project linked to a specific organizational question or program or is rather more conceptual
3. What the working title and structure of the white paper are

4. How the student will investigate the problem
5. What important works inform the paper, whether topically, methodologically, or in any other important way
6. Obstacles and strategies to overcome them that the student has encountered and developed thus far
7. Preliminary findings or conclusions, if possible.

To address these all in the three to four minutes allotted for the informal presentation means that students must be well organized and able to express themselves clearly in an abbreviated fashion. The instructors will be strict time keepers.

- **Peer Review of Another Student's Draft (750 words)**

Due 1:00 PM Friday March 18 in Canvas

The instructors will assign peer reviewers by random selection. Each student will review the draft of another student's paper and submit a **750-word, double-spaced** peer review of the paper to the appropriate site in Canvas by **1:00 PM March 18**. Be specific in the review – what works in the draft? What does not? Why or why not? What specific suggestions can you offer for improvement to the paper, whether about the topic, the argument, definitions, sources, composition, citations, lay-out, and so on? The major criterion the instructors will use to evaluate these reviews will be how valuable each one is in helping the author to improve their work.

- **Final Version of Capstone White Paper (2500-3750 words)**

Due 1:00 PM Friday April 22 in Canvas

This is a final white paper of **2500-3750 words** that engages a “practical problem, current phenomenon, or professional concern to write about in a thoroughly researched and well-crafted . . . paper.” Whether one writes a paper or completes a more organization-specific project, the white paper must make plain how the topic relates to information security and privacy. Also be certain that the white paper is clear in how the material in classes in the MS ISP program and beyond has contributed to the paper.

This final version, like the first draft, will have a **250-word abstract** outlining the topic, methods of discussion and analysis used in the paper, and other pertinent elements of the paper. This final version is due in Canvas **Friday April 22 at 1:00 PM**.

- **In-Class Presentation on White Paper (8-10 minutes)**

Due in class 1:00 PM Friday May 6

Each student will make an **8-10-minute oral presentation** related to the final version of their white paper. Students may use PowerPoint or other appropriate presentation program, but be sure to focus on helping their classmates and instructors understand the white paper, **not focus on reading PowerPoint or other slides**. Remember, we can read; what we need instead is to hear you describe what you have studied and done, how you did it, and why it matters to information security and privacy.

As with the informal telling the story of the white paper due on March 11 as described above, topics to include in the presentation are:

1. The specific problem or question related to information security and privacy the white paper engages
2. Whether the white paper is a project linked to a specific organizational question or program or is rather more conceptual
3. The working title and structure of the white paper
4. How the student investigated the problem
5. What important works inform the paper, topically, methodologically, or in any other important way
6. Obstacles and strategies to overcome them that the student encountered and developed
7. Findings, conclusions, and, as appropriate, recommendations.

There will be time for students to respond to each other's papers, and the instructors will choose individual respondents to each paper in real time. We also encourage students to add comments and reactions to each classmate's presentation in a document in Canvas.

The presentations will occur on **Friday May 6**. The instructors will be strict timekeepers to ensure that all students have adequate time to present and get substantial reactions from their classmates and the instructors.