

LIS 7511

Competitive Intelligence

Summer 2019

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Catalog Description

Introduction to basic concepts and methods of competitive intelligence; fundamental skills and techniques to collect, analyze and distribute information about competitors and competitive environment.

Course Description

This course will expose students to the basic concepts, techniques and principles of competitive intelligence from an information professional perspective. It aims to address three fundamental questions:

- What is competitive intelligence?
- Why is it important to all organizations, regardless of size or whether they are for-profit, nonprofit, or public sector entities?
- What are basic methods for practicing competitive intelligence?

Through various class activities, students will focus on some basic notions and skills of competitive intelligence gathering and analysis.

Course Goals

When students walk out of the class at the end of the semester, they are expected to reach the following goals:

- To be aware of and understand threshold concepts and principles of competitive intelligence (CI), including ethical codes of CI professionals;
- To learn to use some basic techniques in collecting competitive data and managing various information sources;
- To learn to use some basic techniques in processing and analyzing competitive data collected to crystalize and develop CI product(s) and service(s);
- To understand the intelligence cycle and some counterintelligence processes.

Office Hours & Meet with the Instructor Program

- By appointment
- All students are welcome to set up face-to-face meetings or stop by the instructor's office.
- If the student is not located in Baton Rouge area, he or she can virtually meet with the instructor through Skype. Additional arrangements will be needed prior to the meeting.

Required Text

This course does not have a required textbook. Instead, reading materials (e.g., book chapters, journal/magazine articles, and/or other assigned publications) will be provided online through the Moodle course website.

Course Delivery

This course will be totally **online** and **asynchronous**. There will be **no** meetings or synchronous web conferencing sessions arranged during the entire semester. All course materials, including assignments, will be posted on Moodle (<http://moodle3.lsu.edu>), the online course management system used by LSU. Students will also be required to submit their completed assignments through the Moodle system.

The course is structured on a semi-weekly basis, meaning that for each week, the student will have two sessions. The instructor will post new course materials each **Tuesday** and **Thursday** morning.

The student can ask questions to the instructor through the sessional Q & A forum posted on the course website or via his email address listed on the previous page. The instructor will check the course website several times on most working days, but may not be online every day. The student should expect to hear back from him quickly Monday through Friday during normal working hours. But during the weekends he may take longer to respond. In general, if students contact the instructor with questions via email or the Q & A forum, please allow at least 24 hours for him to react.

Due Time of an Assignment and Late Submission

For all assignments, there will be a due time set up by the instructor. If the student encounters a situation and foresees that he/she may not be able to submit the assignment on time, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will assess the situation, determine the validity of the student's reason(s) for a late submission, and will assist those students who have valid reasons. The instructor will accommodate those students with valid reasons in such a way that they retain an equal opportunity for success in class and are not penalized for having a late submission. The student is responsible for providing reasonable advance notification and appropriate documentation of the reason for the late submission. For those students who have valid reasons, the instructor may consider alternative options for the student, including granting a reasonable extension of the assignment deadline.

If the instructor is not notified in advance with a valid reason, the student's work that is submitted late will be downgraded, and a late submission deduction of **one (1) point per day** will be assessed up to **four (4) days**. Those assignments that are submitted late more than **four (4) days** without an advanced

notification of valid reasons will be graded as a permanent zero. [Note: The total numerical grade of this course is 100 points.]

Course Requirements

This course combines theories with practical cases, so that students will understand the general management and process flow of CI practices. Methods of instruction used in the course include lectures, class discussions/exercises, assigned readings, case studies, and projects. In order for students to succeed, the following conditions of the course should be satisfied:

- Read all assigned materials
- Engage in all class activities
- Successfully complete six (6) gradable online class discussions/exercises
- Successfully complete one (1) CI Dossier Project
- Successfully complete one (1) CI Research Project

Expected Time Commitment

LSU's general policy states that for each credit hour, the student should plan to spend at least three hours working on course related activities, including attendance. Because this course is for three (3) credit hours and is online, students are expected to spend a minimum of **nine (9)** hours each week on some combination of class participation, readings, homework, and other assignments as specified in the syllabus.

Grading Weights

• Class discussions/exercises (6 x 10%)	60% [60 points]
• CI Dossier Project (1 x 15%)	15% [15 points]
• <u>CI Research Project (1 x 25%)</u>	<u>25% [25 points]</u>
Total:	100% [100 points]

Grading Scheme:

LSU letter grades will be assigned according to this table.

- 97-100% A+
- 93-96.99% A
- 90-92.99% A-
- 87-89.99% B+
- 83-86.99% B
- 80-82.99% B-
- 77-79.99% C+
- 73-76.99% C
- 70-72.99% C-
- 67-69.99% D+
- 63-66.99% D

- 60-62.99% D-
- 0-59.99% F

Class Discussion/Exercise

Class participation is essential for this course. Given the asynchronous nature of the course, it may be difficult for the students to know exactly what they can expect from the instructor, because they may not have opportunities to frequently meet with the instructor face-to-face. Therefore, *class discussions/exercises* through various online forums come into play and will help form the bond not only between the student and the instructor, but also among students themselves.

The instructor will design and post a series of class discussion or exercise forums based on the contents taught. It can be a discussion about a real incident of competitive intelligence, a case study, or an exercise of a CI analytical method that we just taught. Thus, the student should finish their assigned readings prior to engaging in these class activities.

In some classes students will be required to complete these class discussions or exercises **individually**. In other classes the instructor may break the class into **groups**, and students will be asked to finish the task in a collaborative manner. If a group setting is required, students will be asked to fill a **Peer Evaluation** form to assess their collaboration experience with other group members.

Class discussions/exercises are a highly interactive component of this course. Students will have chances to make any comments about the instructor's postings, and fellow classmates' ideas and work. Disagreement and challenge can be useful, but the instructor would like that if a controversy arises, all parties involved should proceed nicely. To maintain a healthy and professional discussion atmosphere, everybody is expected to keep the conversations civil, constructive and respectful of all class members at all times.

In many, if not most cases, a good discussion post will address the discussion prompt/topic fully, draw on relevant literature, and incorporate personal reflections, experiences and constructive suggestions if applicable. Such a post would be **at least 350 words**. Short comments, such as "*this looks great*", "*I agree*", or "*me too*", do not count as a fully fleshed out post/response. If, within one post, the 350 words requirement cannot be fulfilled, the student can make multiple responses to meet the minimum.

A student is **not required** to respond to other students' post(s). The discussion grading will primarily be based on the student's original post(s). But responses to other students' posts are encouraged and will be seen as positive contribution to this class, which may possibly deserve bonus points awarded to the final grade of the course.

Usually a class discussion or exercise will be distributed on a **Tuesday** morning, and will be due at **11:55 pm (Central Time) of the coming Monday**, so that the student will have almost an entire week to finish it.

Overall, the instructor is more interested in the **quality** than the quantity of the postings. When the instructor assesses a student's performance on a specific class discussion/exercise, he will use the following **criteria**:

- Coverage of the elements required by the discussion/exercise prompt:
 - Have all the required elements in the prompt been addressed?

- Synthesis of ideas:
 - Has the student referred to any relevant literature, such as assigned readings (including readings from previous weeks)?
 - Has the student demonstrated her or his comprehensive understanding about the topic(s) she or he was talking about?

- Critical thinking:
 - Has the student showed her or his evaluations on the merits and flaws of an idea?
 - Has the student challenged any ideas, theories, or hypotheses that get involved in that discussion or exercise?
 - To what extent has she or he presented her or his points logically and coherently?

Altogether there will be **six (6)** gradable class discussions/exercises for the entire semester. Each of them will worth **10** points. They will take up **60%** of the whole final grade of the course.

Competitive Intelligence Dossier Project

A dossier is a collection of documents regarding a particular person, organization, event, or subject. Research demonstrates that one of major deliverable products or services in the field of competitive intelligence is a dossier (or to establish and maintain a dossier) for, quite often, monitoring purposes. In this class, students will be required to prepare and present a competitive intelligence dossier about an entity selected from a predetermined list provided by the instructor. Additional information about this assignment will be available in the Moodle course website.

The CI Dossier Project will be due on June 28, 2019. It takes up **15%** of the whole final grade of the course.

Competitive Intelligence Research Project

Students will work in groups of 2-3 individuals to conduct this competitive intelligence research project. They will first be given a scenario. Then, they will be required to assess the scenario using different analytical approaches taught in this class and develop recommendations to address the scenario. Finally, students will be required to complete a group report and present it to the class online. Similarly, additional information about this project will be available in the Moodle course website.

The CI Research Project will be due on July 25, 2019. It takes up **25%** of the whole final grade of the course.

Class Schedule

June 4: Introduction and Class Overview

Readings:

Fleisher, C. (2001). An introduction to the management and practice of competitive intelligence (CI). In C. Fleisher and D. Blenkhorn (Eds.), *Managing frontiers in competitive intelligence*, Westport, CT: Quorum Books, pp. 2-18.

Jin, T., & Bouthillier, F. (2012). The Integration of Intelligence Analysis into LIS Education. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 53(2): 130-148.

Jin, T. (2017). The Role of Information Professionals in Competitive Intelligence (CI) Practices. *Information Outlook*, 21(3): 8-10, 18.

June 6: CI Threshold Concepts (I): Competition, Intelligence, and Information Professionals' Role in CI

Readings:

Warner, M. (2009). Intelligence as risk shifting. In P. Gill, S. Marrin, & M. Phythian (Eds.), *Intelligence Theory: Key Questions and Debates*, New York: Routledge, pp. 16-32.

Fahey, L. (1999). Outwitting, outmaneuvering, and outperforming competitors. In *Competitors: Outwitting, Outmaneuvering, and Outperforming*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 3-24.

Jin, T., & Ju, B. (2014). "Toward understanding the perceptions of information professionals about competitive intelligence work." *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 13 (2):1450011, DOI: 10.1142/s02196492150017.

June 11: CI Threshold Concepts (II): KIT/KIQ and CI Cycle

Readings:

Jin, T., & Ju, B. (2014). "The Corporate Information Agency: Do Competitive Intelligence Practitioners Utilize It?" *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 65(3): 589-608. DOI: 10.1002/asi.22993

Herring, J. (2001). Key intelligence topics: A process to identify and define intelligence needs. In J. Prescott and S. Miller (Eds.), *Proven Strategies in Competitive Intelligence: Lessons from the Trenches*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 240-258.

Bouthillier, F., & Shearer, K. (2005). The competitive intelligence processes. In *Assessing Competitive Intelligence Software: A Guide to Evaluating CI Technology*, Medford, NJ: Information Today, pp. 37 -56.

Assignment:

Class Discussion/Exercise #1 distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of June 17

June 13: Building and Maintaining a CI Dossier

Readings:

Murphy, C. (2012). Describing companies (Chapter 20). In *Competitive Intelligence: Gathering, Analysing and Putting it to Work*, Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing, pp. 193-208.

Eder, J., et al. (2012). A sample CI Dossier

Assignment:

CI Dossier Project distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of June 28

June 18: Sourcing for CI

Readings:

Murphy, C. (2012). Systematic sources – One-off corporate filings (Chapter 11). In *Competitive Intelligence: Gathering, Analysing and Putting it to Work*, Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing, pp. 93-102.

Murphy, C. (2012). Human source intelligence (Chapter 13). In *Competitive Intelligence: Gathering, Analysing and Putting it to Work*, Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing, pp. 113-120.

Windle, G. (2003). How can competitive intelligence practitioners avoid over-relying on the internet. In C. Fleisher and D. Blenkhorn (Eds.), *Controversies in competitive intelligence: the enduring issues*, Westport, CT: Praeger, pp. 85-97.

Assignment:

Class Discussion/Exercise #2 distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of June 24

June 20: Primary and Secondary Research, CI Gathering Techniques, and Ethical Guidelines

Readings:

Kassler, H., & Sandman, M. (2001). Information resources for intelligence. In J. Miller (Ed.), *Millennium intelligence: understanding and conducting competitive intelligence in the digital age*, Medford, NJ: CyberAge Books, pp. 97-131.

Pooley, J., & Halligan, R. (2001). Intelligence and the law. In J. Miller (Ed.), *Millennium intelligence: understanding and conducting competitive intelligence in the digital age*, Medford, NJ: CyberAge Books, pp. 171-187.

Kalb, C. (2001). Conducting intelligence ethically. In J. Miller (Ed.), *Millennium intelligence: understanding and conducting competitive intelligence in the digital age*, Medford, NJ: CyberAge Books, pp. 189-201.

June 25: Overview of CI Analysis

Readings:

Fleisher, C. (2001). Analysis in competitive intelligence: Processes, progress, and pitfalls. In C. Fleisher and D. Blenkhorn (Eds.), *Managing frontiers in competitive intelligence*, Westport, CT: Quorum Books, pp. 77-89.

Fleisher, C., & Bensoussan, B. (2003). Why is analysis performed so poorly and what can be done to improve. In C. Fleisher and D. Blenkhorn (Eds.), *Controversies in competitive intelligence: the enduring issues*, Westport, CT: Praeger, pp. 110-122.

Assignment:

Class Discussion/Exercise #3 distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of July 1

June 27: No class - Students prepare their CI Dossier, which will be due at 11:55 pm of June 28

- July 2: Strategic Analytical Techniques: SWOT Analysis and Industry Analysis
- Readings:
 Bensoussan, B., & Fleisher, C. (2013). *Analysis without paralysis* – Chapter 12 SWOT Analysis, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. pp. 199-222.
- Fleisher, C., & Bensoussan, B. (2007). *Business and competitive analysis* – Chapter 6 Industry analysis (the 9 forces), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. pp. 87-102.
- Assignment:
 Class Discussion/Exercise #4 distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of July 8
- CI Research Project distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of July 24
- July 4: Independence Day – No Class
- July 9: Competitive and Customer Analysis Techniques: Benchmarking Analysis and Win/Loss Analysis
- Readings:
 Fleisher, C., & Bensoussan, B. (2007). *Business and competitive analysis* – Chapter 6 Benchmarking analysis, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. pp. 171-190.
- Bensoussan, B., & Fleisher, C. (2013). *Analysis without paralysis* – Chapter 14 Win/Loss analysis, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. pp. 249-260.
- Assignment:
 Class Discussion/Exercise #5 distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of July 15
- July 11: Environmental Analysis Techniques: Scenario Analysis and War Gaming
- Readings:
 Bensoussan, B., & Fleisher, C. (2013). *Analysis without paralysis* – Chapter 10 Scenario analysis, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. pp. 167-184.
- Fleisher, C., & Bensoussan, B. (2007). *Business and competitive analysis* – Chapter 23 War gaming, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. pp. 377-390.
- July 16: Counterintelligence
- Readings:
 Quinn, J. (2001). Intelligence and security. In J. Miller (Ed.), *Millennium intelligence: understanding and conducting competitive intelligence in the digital age*, Medford, NJ: CyberAge Books, pp. 203-224.
- Murphy, C. (2012). Intelligence countersteps (Chapter 24). In *Competitive Intelligence: Gathering, Analysing and Putting it to Work*, Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing.
- Assignment:
 Class Discussion/Exercise #6 distributed and to be due at 11:55 pm of July 22

- July 18: Course Wrap-up
- July 23: Students prepare their CI Research Project – No class
- July 25: CI Research Project due by 11:55 pm

LSU student code of conduct

The LSU student code of conduct explains student rights, excused absences, and what is expected of student behavior. Students are expected to understand this code as described here: <http://students.lsu.edu/saa/students/code>. Any violations of the LSU student code will be duly reported to the Dean of Students.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted for grading must adhere to the standards for academic integrity set forth by Louisiana State University. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The work submitted for exams and assignments conducted by individuals must be your own, created without collaboration with other students. The term paper or project must be original and newly created in this current semester. Please refer to the LSU Code of Student Conduct for details of the policies and procedures regarding academic integrity.

Disabilities

Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request.

If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with Disability Services in 115 Johnston Hall. Their phone number is 225-578-5919 and website is <http://www.lsu.edu/disability>. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper Disability Services forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

Academic Success

The primary ingredients of your academic success are attending class, managing your time efficiently, taking good notes, and developing good critical thinking and communication abilities. LSU has a number of excellent resources that will assist you in developing these skills. The place to begin is the Center for Academic Success (<http://students.lsu.edu/academicssuccess>). The CAS offers guidance on what learning strategies are best suited to your talents, tutoring in the basic subjects, and workshops on a variety of topics, from note taking to time management. Communication Across the Curriculum (<http://cxc.lsu.edu>) assist students in developing the communication skills necessary for academic and professional success. Finally, with respect to professional success, the LSU Olinde Career Center (<http://students.lsu.edu/careercenter>) can assist you in choosing a major and a profession that best suits your talents and passions and help you develop a four year career plan to ensure success when you graduate from LSU.