

Syllabus for HLS-498

HOMELAND SECURITY CAPSTONE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Homeland Security Capstone (HLS-498) provides engagement in a student-centered, content-related learning experience that serves as a summary and synthesis of courses in a student's undergraduate academic career. Students select an area of interest related to their academic studies and engage in an activity leading to a research project or applied project reflective of comprehensive knowledge gained in undergraduate studies and demonstrate their knowledge of the outcomes of the Bachelor of Arts degree. The course culminates with a capstone paper.

Note: This is a course unlike any other you have taken during your academic career. In this course you will have a great deal of latitude over the direction you wish to take when developing a capstone project. Your course mentor is the facilitator, who will direct you towards your goal. You have the opportunity to follow your passion to explore and create a product or learn something that will add to the body of knowledge in your chosen field.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

When you have successfully completed this course, you should be able to:

1. Determine an issue, problem, or information gap in your field of inquiry.
2. Demonstrate proficiency as an independent learner and critical thinker.
3. Apply research and analysis techniques to the explanation and resolution of an information gap, issue, or problem, by producing a project in your respective field.
4. Design a project based on theory and knowledge from courses in your field of study.
5. Synthesize the parts of research to produce a comprehensive, valid result in a concrete format.
6. Reach conclusions through use of external resources that reflect knowledge.
7. Apply all elements of scholarly activity to a written document, utilizing Standard Academic English and APA or MLA format.
8. Present an ethically responsible final project in an academic, professional format, as a bridge to your future work/employment.
9. Demonstrate a comprehension of globally diverse perspectives.

COURSE MATERIALS

You will need the following materials to do the work of the course. The required textbook is available from the College's textbook supplier, [MBS Direct](#).

Required Textbook

- *Keys for Writers*, 5th ed., by Ann Raimes (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008).

ISBN13: 978-0618753864

- *Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation*, 2nd ed., by Allan A. Glatthorn and Randy L. Joyner (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2005).

ISBN-13: 978-0761939610

Online References, Resources, Learning Materials

- [The OWL \(Online Writing Lab\) at Purdue University](#)
- [The Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison](#)

Recommended Resources, Learning Materials

- *Pocket Guide to APA Format*, 2nd ed., by Robert Perrin (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007).
- *Write for College: A Student Handbook* by Patrick Sebranek et al. (Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group, 2007).

Course Documents

You will find documents created specifically for this course in the Course Documents area of the course Web site.

Note: If these documents or other instructions in the course contain information that differs from that found in the readings in assigned texts or other sources, please remember to follow the course documents and instructions rather than the texts or other resources.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Homeland Security Capstone is a 3-credit online course, consisting of six (6) activity modules. Modules include learning objectives, study materials, and activities.

For your formal work in the course, you are required to participate in six (6) graded online discussions; take the ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly known as the MAPP Test); and complete six (6) written activities designed to help you incrementally prepare and submit a paper on your research project,

creative project, or applied project.

The course is divided into six (6) activity modules, each of which which contain the study activities, discussion activities, and written activities. Study activities consist primarily of readings in the course textbook(s) and in course documents and supplemental research.

For the course's six activity modules, go to the Activity Modules area of the course Web site. (See also the course Calendar.)

Module titles are listed below.

- **Module 1: Capstone Topic Selection and Draft of Chapter 1 (Introductory Chapter)**
- **Module 2: Draft of Chapter 2 (Literature Review and Annotated References)**
- **Module 3: Research Design and Draft of Chapter 3 (Methodology)**
- **Module 4: Chapter 4: Results of the Study**
- **Module 5: Chapter 5: Summary and Discussion**
- **Module 6: Putting it All Together: Finalizing and Submitting Your Capstone Project**

Consult the course Calendar for activity due dates.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

For your formal work in the course, you are required to participate in online discussion forums, complete written activities, take a proctored midterm examination, and complete a final project. See below for more details.

Consult the course Calendar for activity due dates.

Written Activities

You are required to complete five (5) written activities. The written activities are on a variety of topics associated with the courses modules. Follow the directions given for each written activity in the Activity Modules area of the course Web site.

Click this link for some techniques about how to write sentences with impact: [Working with Words](#).

Activities must be prepared electronically using whatever word processing program you have on your computer. Include your name at the top of the paper, as well as the course name and code and the semester and year in which you are enrolled.

Before submitting your first activity, check with your mentor to determine whether your word processing software is compatible with your mentor's software. If so, you can submit your work as you prepared it. If not, save your activity as a rich-text (.rtf) file, using the Save As command of your software program. Rich text retains basic formatting and can be read by any other word processing program.

Below is the rubric that will aid in the grading of written activities.

- Evaluation Rubric

For help regarding preparing and submitting activities, see the Student Handbook located within the General Information page of the course Web site.

Online Discussion Forums

Homeland Security Capstone requires you to participate in six (6) online discussion activities. These graded discussions take place in graded forums on the class Discussion Board. In addition you are required to participate in an ungraded "Introductions" forum in Module 1.

Communication with the mentor and among fellow students is a critical component of online learning. Participation in online discussions involves two distinct activities: an initial response to a posted activity and subsequent comments on classmates' responses. Meaningful participation is relevant to the content, adds value, and advances the discussion. Comments such as "I agree" and "ditto" are not considered value-adding participation. Therefore, when you agree or disagree with a classmate, the reading, or your mentor, state **and support** your agreement or disagreement. You will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of your participation. Responses and comments should be properly proofread and edited, professional, and respectful.

For additional information on online discussions, see [Online Discussions](#) in the Online Student Handbook.

Click link for an [evaluation rubric](#).

For posting guidelines and help with discussion forums, please see the Student Handbook located within the General Information page of the course Web site.

Final Project

TYPES OF CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Depending on your area of interest in your field, you may choose to produce either a Research Project or an Applied Project.

Research Project

Questions and Inquiries: You will select a gap in knowledge in your discipline created by an area that may not have been previously addressed in course content or may have served as inspiration for greater knowledge on the subject matter, idea, or concept. Through systematic inquiry, you will research, collect, organize, and produce an analysis of the information from both primary and secondary sources.

Your research project will conclude with a 25-page (minimum) scholarly report in Standard Academic English and with appropriate APA documentation, which successfully fills your gap in knowledge on the selected topic.

Applied Project

Question/Answer: If you are a student in business, education, social work, or public administration you have the option of selecting a problem within the context of your respective field of study and relating it to an organization, community, or institution.

Your attempts to answer a real problem will represent your ability to synthesize and apply concepts learned through course content.

Your applied project will conclude with a 25-page (minimum) scholarly report, appropriately documented in APA format and written in Standard Academic English, that provides answers to the project question.

CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTATION

Although it is **NOT** a requirement for the Research and Applied Projects you may wish to prepare either a PowerPoint presentation or a video (CD or DVD) presentation about your work to share with your mentor and classmates.

CAPSTONE PROJECT PAPER

As noted above, each type of project requires that you write a paper 25 pages in length which you must submit to your mentor.

Click this link for some information to help you produce a well-crafted capstone paper for this course:
[Important Information for Writing Papers.](#)

This evaluation rubric may also help you as you prepare your paper:
[Rubric for Final Project](#)

For help regarding preparing and submitting activities, see the Student Handbook located within the General Information page of the course Web site.

ETS Proficiency Profile

As part of your coursework you are required to complete an online, unproctored assessment called the ETS® Proficiency Profile (previously known as the MAPP test: Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress). This test, offered through Educational Testing Service (ETS), measures knowledge in the core areas of reading, mathematics, writing, and critical thinking. Your individual score will not be recorded but you will receive 2 percent of your overall grade for completing the assessment.

Details regarding this assessment can be accessed by clicking on the link to the ETS® Proficiency Profile area of the course Website. Consult the course Calendar for the due dates for taking this test.

In order to access the ETS® Proficiency Profile administrative and student interface, your computer must meet the following requirements:

Requirement	Student
Operating System	Windows 98, XP, NT, 2000, Vista
Internet Browser	Internet Explorer 5.5 or greater
Internet Connection	High Speed*
Screen Resolution	1024 x 768 pixels

*A dial-up connection will support the ETS® Proficiency Profile tool but you will require more time to download than with high-speed.

To receive credit for completing the ETS Proficiency Profile, post a comment about the test and your experience taking it to the ETS Proficiency Profile discussion forum, and send an e-mail to your mentor indicating the date on which you took and completed the test. Your mentor will verify your participation and will give you credit for it.

For more information on the ETS Proficiency Profile and how to access the test, see the ETS Proficiency Profile area of the course Web site.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows:

- **Online discussions (6)** - 23 percent
- **Written activities** - 45 percent
- **ETS proficiency profile** - 2 percent
- **Capstone project** - 30 percent

All activities will receive a numerical grade of 0–100. You will receive a score of 0 for any work not submitted. Your final grade in the course will be a letter grade. Letter grade equivalents for numerical grades are as follows:

A	=	93–100
A–	=	90–92
B+	=	88–89
B	=	83–87
B–	=	80–82
C+	=	78–79
C	=	73–77

C-	=	70–72
D	=	60–69
F	=	Below 60

To receive credit for the course, you must earn a letter grade of D or higher on the weighted average of all assigned course work (e.g., exams, activities, discussion postings, etc.).

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

First Steps to Success

To succeed in this course, take the following first steps:

- Read carefully the entire Syllabus, making sure that all aspects of the course are clear to you and that you have all the materials required for the course.
- Take the time to read the entire Online Student Handbook. The Handbook answers many questions about how to proceed through the course, how to schedule exams, and how to get the most from your educational experience at Thomas Edison State College.
- Arrange to take your examination(s) by following the instructions in this Syllabus and the Online Student Handbook.
- Familiarize yourself with the learning management systems environment—how to navigate it and what the various course areas contain. If you know what to expect as you navigate the course, you can better pace yourself and complete the work on time.
- If you are not familiar with Web-based learning be sure to review the processes for posting responses online and submitting activities before class begins.

Study Tips

Consider the following study tips for success:

- To stay on track throughout the course, begin each week by consulting the course Calendar. The Calendar provides an overview of the course and indicates due dates for submitting activities, posting discussions, and scheduling and taking examinations.
- Check Announcements regularly for new course information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students at Thomas Edison State College are expected to exhibit the highest level of academic citizenship. In particular, students are expected to read and follow all policies, procedures, and program information guidelines contained in publications; pursue their learning goals with honesty and integrity; demonstrate that they are progressing satisfactorily and in a timely fashion by meeting course deadlines and following outlined procedures; observe a code of mutual respect in dealing with mentors, staff, and other students; behave in a manner consistent with the standards and codes of the profession in which they are practicing; keep official records updated regarding changes in name, address, telephone number, or e-mail address; and meet financial obligations in a timely manner. Students not practicing good academic citizenship may be subject to disciplinary action including suspension, dismissal, or financial holds on records.

Academic Dishonesty

Thomas Edison State College expects all of its students to approach their education with academic integrity—the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. All mentors and administrative staff members at the College insist on strict standards of academic honesty in all courses. Academic dishonesty undermines this objective. Academic dishonesty takes the following forms:

- Cheating
- Plagiarizing (including copying and pasting from the Internet without using quotation marks and without acknowledging sources)
- Fabricating information or citations
- Facilitating acts of dishonesty by others
- Unauthorized access to examinations or the use of unauthorized materials during exam administration
- Submitting the work of another person or work previously used without informing the mentor
- Tampering with the academic work of other students

Academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the College. Students who submit papers that are found to be plagiarized will receive an F on the plagiarized activity, may receive a grade of F for the course, and may face dismissal from the College.

A student who is charged with academic dishonesty will be given oral or written notice of the charge. If a mentor or College official believes the infraction is serious enough to warrant referral of the case to the academic dean, or if the mentor awards a final grade of F in the course because of the infraction, the student and the mentor will be afforded formal due process.

If a student is found cheating or using unauthorized materials on an examination, he or she will automatically receive a grade of F on that examination. Students who believe they have been falsely accused of academic dishonesty should seek redress through informal discussions with the mentor, through the office of the dean, or through an executive officer of Thomas Edison State College.

Plagiarism

Using someone else's work as your own is plagiarism. Although it may seem like simple dishonesty, plagiarism is against the law. Thomas Edison State College takes a strong stance against plagiarism, and students found to be plagiarizing will be severely penalized. If you copy phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or whole documents word-for-word—or if you paraphrase by changing a word here and there—without

identifying the author, then you are plagiarizing. Please keep in mind that this type of identification applies to Internet sources as well as to print-based sources. Copying and pasting from the Internet, without using quotation marks and without acknowledging sources, constitutes plagiarism. (For information about how to cite Internet sources, see Online Student Handbook > Academic Standards > "Citing Sources.")

Accidentally copying the words and ideas of another writer does not excuse the charge of plagiarism. It is easy to jot down notes and ideas from many sources and then write your own paper without knowing which words are your own and which are someone else's. It is more difficult to keep track of each and every source. However, the conscientious writer who wishes to avoid plagiarizing never fails to keep careful track of sources.

Always be aware that if you write without acknowledging the sources of your ideas, you run the risk of being charged with plagiarism.

Clearly, plagiarism, no matter the degree of intent to deceive, defeats the purpose of education. If you plagiarize deliberately, you are not educating yourself, and you are wasting your time on courses meant to improve your skills. If you plagiarize through carelessness, you are deceiving yourself.