

GE 630 — Competitive & Market Intelligence (14-week elective syllabus)

The federal market publishes its own intelligence: award records, contract forecasts, registrations, and debriefs. The firm that reads the public record well competes with its eyes open; the firm that does not competes blind. This elective teaches competitive and market intelligence as a discipline — where the information lives, how to collect it, how to analyze it, and where the hard line between intelligence and espionage sits.

Course number: GE 630 · **Credits:** 3 · **Format:** 14 weeks, one 75-minute session per week (plus reading and a weekly deliverable). **Audience:** Graduate students in the MS program; capture managers, business developers, and analysts. **Prerequisites:** GC 510 (competitive strategy) recommended — intelligence exists to feed strategy. GC 530 (research methods) recommended — analysis is measurement. **Texts:** the doctrine and literacy folders of this repository; the course reader on competitive intelligence and the public-record substrate. The course is stack-agnostic by design (doctrine/08).

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, a student can:

- Define the ethical boundary of competitive intelligence: the public record is fair game; non-public, proprietary, or source-selection-sensitive information is off-limits — with no gray zone.
- Navigate the public-record substrate: award data, contract forecasts, registrations, published debriefs, and what each reveals.
- Segment and map a market: agencies, NAICS bands, vehicles, set-asides, and the competitors who live there.
- Identify and profile competitors from public records: who they are, what they win, where they are strong and where they are thin.
- Analyze incumbency: the holder, the source of its advantage, its churn signals, and its pressure score.
- Estimate the competitive price band from public evidence — and state the uncertainty around it.
- Read customer signals: engagement events, sources-sought responses, and the unstated preferences that become ghost themes.
- Convert intelligence into strategy: discriminators, displacement plays, and a competitive landscape that a capture team can act on.
- Produce the standard intelligence artifacts: a competitive landscape, an incumbent analysis, a price-band estimate, a market map.
- Run an intelligence program with the discipline of the public record — documented sources, dated findings, and an explicit “what we do not know.”

Weekly schedule

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading / material	Assignment due next week
1	Intelligence vs. espionage	The public-record boundary. What intelligence is (the discipline of the published), what it is not, and why the line is absolute.	doctrine/04; the course reader on CI ethics	Boundary memo: state your personal intelligence boundary — what you will collect, what you will not, and why.
2	The public-record substrate	Award data, forecasts, registries, debriefs, bid-protest decisions. What each source reveals and its blind spots.	literacy/where-the-money-flows; the course reader on procurement data	Source map: for one market, list the public sources of intelligence and what each would tell you.
3	Market segmentation and mapping	Agencies, NAICS bands, vehicles, set-asides. Drawing the market so the competitive set becomes visible.	doctrine/01; the market-map canon at concept altitude	Market map: draw the structure of a chosen market segment with the players positioned.

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4	Competitor identification	Who actually competes. Distinguishing the real field from the registered universe.	the competitor-profiling canon at concept altitude	Competitor list: identify and rank the real competitors in your chosen segment.
5	Competitor profiling	Building a competitor file: wins, focus, strengths, weaknesses, and the pattern of its behavior.	the competitor-profiling canon at concept altitude	Competitor profile: build a one-page profile for your top competitor.
6	Incumbent analysis	The holder, the source of its advantage, its churn, and its vulnerability. Incumbency pressure from the facts.	the incumbent-analysis and incumbency-pressure canon at concept altitude	Incumbent file: profile the holder in your segment and rate its pressure band.
7	Price intelligence	Estimating the competitor band from public evidence. What the record shows, what it does not, and how to be honest about the gap.	the price-intelligence canon at concept altitude	Price-band memo: estimate the competitive price band for a case pursuit with sources and uncertainty stated.

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8	Customer intelligence	Engagement, signals, and the ghost theme. Reading the customer from the public record and from legitimate engagement.	doctrine/02; the customer-intelligence canon at concept altitude	Customer-signal memo: collect three public signals about a customer and convert them into ghost-theme candidates.
9	Midterm	In-class: build the intelligence picture of a real market — map, competitors, incumbent, price band — in 75 minutes.	(review weeks 1–8)	Midterm submission.
10	The intelligence collection plan	A plan that names the questions, the sources, the cadence, and the owner. Intelligence as a production system, not a scramble.	the collection-plan canon at concept altitude	Collection plan: write the plan for your market — questions, sources, cadence, owners.

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading / material	Assignment due next week
11	Analysis and synthesis	From raw facts to a defensible picture. Corroboration, the confidence label, and “what we do not know” as a first-class output.	doctrine/05; the course reader on analysis	Intelligence brief: synthesize your collected facts into a one-page brief with confidence labels.
12	The intelligence artifact set	The competitive landscape, the incumbent analysis, the price band, the market map. What each is for and who consumes it.	the intelligence-artifact canon at concept altitude	Artifact set: produce the standard intelligence artifacts for your segment.
13	Intelligence into strategy	Converting the picture into discriminators, displacement plays, and a capture plan. Where intelligence ends and strategy begins.	doctrine/05; doctrine/07	Strategy memo: translate your intelligence into two discriminators and one displacement play.

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading / material	Assignment due next week
14	Synthesis	The intelligence discipline in one frame. Final defense of the market intelligence package.	(course synthesis)	Final package: a complete market-intelligence dossier for your segment, defended before a panel.

Assessment summary

- **Weekly deliverables — 40%.** A cumulative intelligence dossier built across the term.
- **Midterm — 20%.** In-class market-intelligence build.
- **Final intelligence package + defense — 30%.** A complete dossier, defended.
- **Participation and peer review — 10%.**

The graduate rubric

Criterion	Excellent	Proficient	Developing
Boundary discipline	Every source is public record; non-public data never used	Mostly clean	Boundary unclear or crossed
Source rigor	Every finding cites a source and a date	Most findings sourced	Unsupported assertions
Analytic honesty	Confidence labels and “what we do not know” are explicit	Partial honesty	Overclaims certainty
Strategic use	Intelligence feeds a defensible strategy	Strategy loosely connected	Intelligence unused

Policies

- **The public-record line is absolute.** An assignment that proposes or uses non-public, proprietary, or source-selection-sensitive information fails outright and is reported per the host institution's policy.
- **Real markets, safe exercises.** All analysis is on published markets and records.
- **Late work.** An honest early warning beats a silent late submission.

The market tells you everything it is allowed to tell you. The disciplined firm reads it; the undisciplined firm guesses.