

GE 640 — Proposal Management & Color-Team Leadership (14-week elective syllabus)

The proposal is a production system, and the review cadence is its quality gate. This elective teaches the management discipline of proposal production and the leadership discipline of the color-team system: how to run a proposal like a factory with a quality bar, how to review like an evaluator, and how to lead the color teams that decide whether a proposal is ever submitted.

Course number: GE 640 · **Credits:** 3 · **Format:** 14 weeks, one 75-minute session per week (plus reading and a weekly deliverable). **Audience:** Graduate students in the MS program; proposal managers, volume leads, and capture leaders who will own the submission decision. **Prerequisites:** GC 510 (competitive strategy) recommended — a proposal executes a strategy. GC 540 (advanced finance) recommended for the cost-technical reconciliation weeks. **Texts:** the doctrine and literacy folders of this repository; the course reader on proposal management and the review disciplines. The course is stack-agnostic by design (doctrine/08).

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, a student can:

- Run a proposal as a production system: roles, team, schedule, page budget, and the plan that turns a strategy into a compliant document.
 - Read the solicitation the way a proposal manager does: Section L (what to include) and Section M (how it will be judged), the page budget, and the deadline as a production constraint.
 - Build and maintain a compliance matrix — the contract between the solicitation and the response.
 - Use storyboarding to align the team on structure and evidence before drafting begins.
 - Lead the color-team system with discipline: the cadence (blue → pink → red → gold → white-glove), the reviewer independence rule, and finding specificity.
 - Run a pink team (compliance and outline integrity), a red team (evaluator-stance review), and a gold team (executive submission decision) with the right questions and the right discipline.
 - Reconcile the cost volume with the technical volume — the audit that proves the price is the proposal in money.
 - Manage a proposal retrospective that feeds the learning loop rather than the blame loop.
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Weekly schedule

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading / material	Assignment due next week
1	The proposal as a production system	Roles, team, schedule, page budget. The proposal as a factory with a deadline and a quality bar.	doctrine/03; the course reader on proposal management	One-page plan: the production plan for a case proposal — roles, schedule, page budget, risks.
2	Reading the solicitation as a PM	Section L (what to include), Section M (how it is judged), the page budget, the deadline. The PM's compliance-first reading.	doctrine/02; literacy/how-to-read-an-rfp	Section L/M brief: extract the instructions and evaluation factors from a real (closed) RFP.
3	The compliance matrix	Every requirement, mapped to where the response will satisfy it. The matrix as the contract with the solicitation.	the compliance-matrix canon at concept altitude	Build a compliance matrix for a real (closed) RFP, at least 30 rows.

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading / material	Assignment due next week
4	Storyboarding	Aligning the team on structure and evidence before drafting. The storyboard as the promise each section will keep.	the storyboard canon at concept altitude	Storyboard three sections of a case proposal with their evidence commitments.
5	The color-team system	The cadence, the independence rule, the finding-specificity rule, the forward-only discipline. Why the sequence exists.	the color-team canon at concept altitude; doctrine/04	Cadence memo: design the review schedule for a case proposal, with entry/exit criteria for each color.
6	Pink team	Compliance and outline integrity. Every Section L instruction addressed; every Section M factor covered; the storyboard contract kept.	the pink-team canon at concept altitude	Run a mini pink team on a case draft: produce findings classified critical/major/minor.

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading / material	Assignment due next week
7	Red team	The evaluator-stance review. Reading the proposal as the government will read it; factor scoring; the cost-technical reconciliation.	the red-team canon at concept altitude	Run a mini red team: score a case draft against Section M factors and write the findings.
8	Cost-technical reconciliation	The price is the technical proposal in money. The reconciliation memo as the auditable link.	the reconciliation canon at concept altitude; doctrine/05	Reconciliation memo: reconcile a case cost volume with its technical volume and state every mismatch.
9	Midterm	In-class: run a red-team review of a case draft in 75 minutes — factor scores, findings, and the cost-technical check.	(review weeks 1–8)	Midterm submission.

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading / material	Assignment due next week
10	Gold team	The executive submission decision. Compliance posture, pricing posture, residual risk, confidence to perform. Submit, revise, or withdraw.	the gold-team canon at concept altitude; doctrine/04	Gold-memo: for a case proposal, write the submission recommendation with the residual-risk posture.
11	White-glove and production	The final production pass: formatting, the last compliance sweep, the submission checklist. The deadline discipline.	the white-glove and submission canon at concept altitude	Production plan: the final-48-hours checklist for a case proposal.
12	Review leadership	Running a review that produces findings, not opinions. The specificity rule, the roster lock, the escalation of findings to owners.	the review-leadership canon at concept altitude	Review-leadership memo: how you would run a red team where writers push back on findings.

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13	The retrospective	The proposal post-mortem that feeds the learning loop. What to capture, what to change, and how to make the next proposal better.	doctrine/03; doctrine/07	Retrospective design: the retrospective protocol for a case proposal after submission.
14	Synthesis	The proposal leader's desk. Final defense of a complete proposal-management plan.	(course synthesis)	Final memo: "My proposal-management doctrine," from solicitation to retrospective.

Assessment summary

- **Weekly deliverables — 40%.** A cumulative proposal-management file: plan, compliance matrix, storyboards, review findings.
- **Midterm — 20%.** In-class red-team review.
- **Final proposal-management doctrine — 30%.** Defended before a panel.
- **Participation and peer review — 10%.**

The graduate rubric

Criterion	Excellent	Proficient	Developing
Production discipline	Roles, schedule, page budget, and risks are explicit and defensible	Mostly explicit	Plan vague or absent
Compliance rigor	The matrix is complete and maps to the solicitation	Mostly complete	Coverage gaps

Criterion	Excellent	Proficient	Developing
Review leadership	Findings are specific, independent, and forward-only	Sound reviews	Findings vague or captured by writers
Cost-technical honesty	Reconciliation is explicit and mismatch-free	Reconciliation present	No reconciliation

Policies

- **Real documents, safe exercises.** All reviews use real, published-and-closed solicitations and student-built case drafts; nothing touches a live competition.
- **Reviewer independence is graded.** A review that surrenders to the writers fails the relevant assessment.
- **Late work.** An honest early warning beats a silent late submission.

The proposal is a production system, and the review is its quality gate. This course teaches you to run both.