

DL 210 — The Capture & Pursuit Pipeline

The heart of the major. You will stop reading about the pipeline and start running one: the nine stages, the gates between them, the seven-gate capture lifecycle, the ORBITAL as the pursuit skeleton, and the color-team discipline that keeps a pursuit honest.

Course number: DL 210 · **Credit hours:** 3 · **Term:** 14 weeks, one 75-minute session per week (plus independent reading and assignments) · **Audience:** sophomore undergraduates · **Prerequisites:** DL 101 and DL 102 · **Tier:** core (Year 2, Fall) · **Texts:** this repository — the doctrine, the literacy maps, and the Ravonics case · **Tools:** none required beyond a web browser for SAM.gov and Grants.gov. Stack-agnostic by design (doctrine/08).

Doctrine spine

doctrine/03 (the pursuit pipeline) and doctrine/04 (gates and governance) are the spine, supported by doctrine/06 (the ORBITAL) and doctrine/07 (the lifecycle and the GROWTH accent). The course draws the discipline of capture — the seven-gate lifecycle, the capture phases, the bid/no-bid rubric, and the color-team sequence — at *concept altitude*: the same ideas a professional capture organization encodes in its playbooks, taught here without any software.

Where this course sits in the program

This is the **machine** course of the major: the place where the market (DL 101) and the documents (DL 102) become a *discipline* — a repeatable, gated way of deciding what to chase and how to chase it. Every elective assumes you can build a gate charter, a capture plan, and an ORBITAL by hand.

Ladder: DL 101 + DL 102. Prerequisite for the upper-division electives DL 302, DL 303, and DL 304; co-requisite for DL 220; prerequisite for the capstone DL 480.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, a student can:

- Draw the pursuit pipeline from memory and explain the job of every stage and gate.
- Design a gate with all four parts — trigger, criteria, decision, owner — and write criteria *before* the work begins.
- Explain the seven-gate capture lifecycle (market segmentation → opportunity identification → pursuit decision → capture planning → proposal production → submission → post-submission) and place any real activity on it.

- Run a bid/no-bid gate: score the five dimensions, check the hard knockouts, and record a defensible BID / BID WITH CONDITIONS / NO BID disposition.
- Build a capture plan: win strategy, customer engagement, competitive intelligence, teaming direction, and a readiness review.
- Build a seven-axis ORBITAL for a real opportunity and explain how the proposal is built off it.
- Use the GROWTH stages (Gauge → Research → Organize → Write → Target → Health) as the work plan of a pursuit.
- Run the color-team sequence (pink → red → gold → white-glove) as quality gates with defined criteria and pass/fail.
- Name the governance ladder of a pursuit and who owns each rung.
- Connect the learning loop (post-submission, debrief, retrospective) to the compounding of the next pursuit.

How the course works

The course is a 14-week simulation of a capture organization. Each student works one real, published, *closed* opportunity for the duration of the term (with the Ravonics case as the default company). Every week produces a capture artifact:

1. **Weeks 1–7 — The shape.** The pipeline, the gates, the seven-gate lifecycle, the bid/no-bid rubric, capture planning, the ORBITAL. Midterm: a gate charter + capture plan.
2. **Weeks 8–13 — The production arc.** GROWTH as the work plan, the color teams, the readiness review, portfolio thinking, the learning loop.
3. **Week 14 — Final.** A full pursuit plan for the term's opportunity, presented and defended.

This is a *doing* course: by the end, the student has produced the same artifacts a junior capture professional produces — by hand, stack-free.

Weekly schedule

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
1	The pipeline is a pipeline, not a lottery	The nine stages and the gates between them. Activity vs. progress.	doctrine/03	Choose your term opportunity (a real, closed solicitation) with instructor approval; a one-page pipeline placement of it
2	What a gate is	Trigger, criteria, decision, owner. Why criteria must be written before the work begins.	doctrine/04	Write the criteria for one gate on your opportunity — bid/no-bid or threshold
3	The seven-gate capture lifecycle	Market segmentation → opportunity → pursuit decision → capture → proposal → submission → post-submission. One pipeline, seven gates.	doctrine/03; doctrine/04	A one-page map of your opportunity across the seven gates

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
4	The bid/no-bid gate	The five dimensions (customer relationship, capability fit, opportunity attractiveness, win probability, financial impact) and the hard knockouts.	doctrine/05; doctrine/04	A scored bid/no-bid sheet for your opportunity: five dimensions, knockouts, disposition
5	Capture planning	Win strategy and themes, customer engagement, competitive intelligence, teaming direction, staffing.	doctrine/03	Draft capture plan for your opportunity (win strategy + customer map)
6	The ORBITAL as the pursuit skeleton	The seven axes as the single reference the whole pursuit points at. Structure first, document second.	doctrine/06	A one-page ORBITAL for your opportunity — all seven axes

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
7	Midterm	In class: present your gate charter + capture plan for the term opportunity. Panel Q&A on the gate criteria and the win strategy.	(review week)	Midterm submission
8	GROWTH as the work plan	Gauge → Research → Organize → Write → Target → Health. The pipeline as a shape; GROWTH as the week-by-week plan.	doctrine/07	A GROWTH work plan for your opportunity: what happens each stage, by when
9	The readiness review	The pre-proposal gate: win strategy defined, customer understood, teaming in progress, key personnel identified, pWin defended.	doctrine/04	A readiness-review checklist for your opportunity, honestly scored

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
10	The color teams	Pink (compliance), red (persuasiveness), gold (executive alignment), white-glove (production). Quality gates, not meetings.	doctrine/04	Design the color-team plan for your opportunity: who reviews, when, against what criteria
11	Competitive intelligence	Reading incumbents, partners, and the field from public records. Where a small firm's edge lives.	doctrine/03; case-study/ravonics.m	A one-page competitive landscape for your opportunity
12	Portfolio thinking	Running many pursuits through one pipeline. Capacity as the scarce resource; the portfolio as the strategy.	doctrine/04; doctrine/05	A one-page portfolio for Ravonics: three opportunities, a capacity budget, an allocation
13	The learning loop	Post-submission, debrief, retrospective. Losing as data; the loop that compounds.	doctrine/03; doctrine/07	A one-page post-mortem plan for your opportunity (win or lose)

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
14	Final: full pursuit plan	Present the complete pursuit plan — gate charter, capture plan, ORBITAL, readiness review, color-team plan, post-mortem — and defend it.	(review week)	Final submission

Assessment summary

- **Weekly artifacts** — 30% (the capture sheets, gate charters, and plans built week by week).
- **Midterm** — 25% (gate charter + capture plan, presented and defended).
- **Final pursuit plan** — 30% (the complete package for the term opportunity, presented and defended).
- **Participation and peer review** — 15%.

Rubric per course/assessments-and-rubric.md: correctness, completeness, doctrine use, clarity — the 4-point scale, applied to capture artifacts.

The midterm

In class, present the two artifacts you have built for your term opportunity:

1. **The gate charter** — the four parts written out for the bid/no-bid gate and the threshold gate.
2. **The capture plan** — win strategy, customer map, competitive direction, teaming direction.

The panel (instructor + peers) pushes on the criteria: “*Why this threshold? Who owns this call? What would change your disposition?*” A defensible gate beats a pretty one.

The final

The complete pursuit plan for your term opportunity: gate charter, capture plan, ORBITAL, readiness review, color-team plan, and post-mortem plan —

presented in 15 minutes and defended against a skeptical panel. The panel's job is to find the gate that would fail first and ask why it is not already written.

Policies worth stating plainly

- **The doctrine is the course.** Every assignment tests the concept, never a tool. If an assignment ever seems to require knowledge of a specific product or system, that is a bug in the assignment — flag it.
- **Real documents, safe exercises.** We work real, published, *closed* solicitations. You never submit anything live in this course.
- **Late work.** The pipeline has deadlines; so does the course. The one professional grace: an honest early warning beats a silent late submission.
- **Academic integrity.** The federal market runs on trust in a fair, documented process. This course models that. Cite your sources; do not fabricate evidence; be the person the market can trust.

The course in one sentence

By Week 14 you will have run one real pursuit the way a capture organization runs it — gated, structured, and honest — and you will have discovered that the discipline of the gate is the difference between an organization that chases everything and an organization that wins.