DL 220 — Pricing & Price-to-Win Fundamentals

The arithmetic course. You will turn hope into numbers: the score (pWin × value), the threshold that keeps the pipeline honest, and the price-to-win position that decides what to bid — above your floor, inside the competitive range, priced to your story.

Course number: DL 220 · **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; applied statistics (may be co-requisite) · **Tier:** core (Year 2, Spring) · **Texts:** this repository — the doctrine, the literacy maps, and the Ravonics case · **Tools:** a spreadsheet or paper and a calculator. No specific product is taught or required. Stack-agnostic by design (doctrine/08).

Doctrine spine

`doctrine/05` (scoring and price-to-win) is the spine, supported by `doctrine/06` (the ORBITAL's budget axis) and `doctrine/03`/`doctrine/04` (where the score and the threshold live in the pipeline and its gates). The course teaches the *discipline* of pricing — cost floors, margin floors by contract type, prohibited price actions, escalation to a pricing authority, and the basis of estimate — at concept altitude, the way a professional pricing organization encodes it.

Where this course sits in the program

This is the **money** course of the major: where the business analysis lives. DL 210 taught you what to chase; DL 220 teaches you what to bid and how to know what a win is worth. It is the natural companion to DL 210 — many students take them in the same year. It is the prerequisite for DL 305 (Negotiations) and feeds the pricing volume of the capstone.

Ladder: DL 101 + DL 102. Co-requisite with DL 210 (recommended). Prerequisite for DL 305. Feeds DL 480.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, a student can:

- Compute a pursuit score as pWin × value and explain why multiplying the two matters.
- Break a pWin estimate into weighted factors and defend each factor with evidence — the difference between an opinion and a guess.
- Apply a threshold gate: state the line in advance, pass or fail honestly, and park a below-threshold pursuit without drama.
- Explain price-to-win as a *position* — the intersection of your cost floor, the competitive range, and what the evaluation rewards.

- Distinguish LPTA (lowest price technically acceptable) from best-value evaluation and price each one differently.
- Name the cost structure of a bid: direct labor, fringe, overhead, G&A, fee — and what "fully burdened" means.
- Apply margin floors by contract type (firm-fixed-price, time-and-materials, cost-plus, IDIQ, grant) and explain why a too-low bid is a business risk, not just lost profit.
- Identify prohibited pricing actions (below-floor without authority, rate below cost, bait-and-switch, undisclosed price drop, predatory pricing) and the escalation that protects against them.
- Build a basis of estimate (BOE): each cost element, its quantity, its unit cost, and its source.
- Read incumbency and competitive pressure into a price decision.
- Produce a full price-to-win recommendation for a real pursuit, with the arithmetic shown.

How the course works

The course alternates between the score and the price. Weeks 1–7 build the scoring discipline; weeks 8–13 build the pricing discipline; week 14 brings both together in a full recommendation. Every week uses real (published, closed) solicitations and real published award data where visible — and the Ravonics case as the default company, so everyone prices the same small firm through the same market.

Weekly schedule

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
1	The score is pWin × value	Turn hope into arithmetic. Two numbers, one decision. Why the arithmetic makes the conversation honest.	doctrine/05	A one-page "what is a score" explainer with a worked example

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
2	pWin as a defensible opinion	The factor rubric: customer, past performance, pricing, team, strategy. Weighted, auditable, argued with evidence.	doctrine/05	Build a pWin rubric for your term opportunity and score each factor with evidence
3	Threshold discipline	The pass/fail line. Why the discipline matters more than the exact number. The courage to say no.	doctrine/05; doctrine/04	A one-page threshold charter for your term opportunity: the line, the evidence, the owner
4	Value: what is it worth?	Expected value grounded in the solicitation's own numbers. The budget axis as the reality check.	doctrine/06	A value estimate for your opportunity, with two independent anchors (solicitation + published award)
5	Composite and the call	pWin × value, the composite, the disposition. The score informs the gate; the human makes the call.	doctrine/05	A scored-and-decided pursuit sheet for your opportunity

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
6	From score to price	The score decides whether to pursue; price-to-win decides what to bid. Two disciplines, one pursuit.	doctrine/05	A one-page bridge: your score, and the three price-to-win inputs you will need
7	**Midterm**	In class: present your scored-and-decided pursuit sheet — pWin factors, value, composite, threshold call — and defend it.	(review week)	Midterm submission
8	Price-to-win as a position	Cost floor, competitive range, evaluation reward. The right bid is low enough to compete and high enough to be real.	doctrine/05	A one-page price-to-win frame for your opportunity: the three inputs, named
9	LPTA vs. best-value	Lowest price technically acceptable vs. best value. When a higher price is the winning move.	doctrine/05; literacy/how-to-read-an-rfp.md	A one-page evaluation-posture brief for your opportunity: which game is the agency playing?

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
10	The cost structure	Direct labor, fringe, overhead, G&A, fee. What "fully burdened" means, and why the floor is the floor.	doctrine/06; doctrine/05	Build a simple cost model for your opportunity: five cost elements, a burdened rate
11	Margin floors by contract type	FFP, T&M, cost-plus, IDIQ, grant — the floor and target for each, and the risk each carries.	doctrine/05	A margin-floor sheet for your opportunity: contract type, floor, target, and the risk note
12	Pricing discipline and escalation	Prohibited actions (below-floor, rate-below-cost, bait-and-switch, undisclosed drop, predatory). Escalation to the pricing authority.	doctrine/05; doctrine/04	A one-page pricing-discipline checklist and an escalation plan for your opportunity
13	The basis of estimate	Every cost element justified: quantity, unit cost, source. The BOE as the evidence the price stands on.	doctrine/05	A BOE for your opportunity: five elements, each with a source of estimate

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
14	**Final: price-to-win recommendation**	Present the full recommendation — score, value, cost floor, competitive range, recommended price, and the story that justifies it.	(review week)	Final submission

Assessment summary

- **Weekly artifacts** — 30% (the scoring sheets, cost models, and pricing briefs built week by week).
- **Midterm** — 25% (scored-and-decided pursuit sheet, presented and defended).
- **Final price-to-win recommendation** — 30% (the complete pricing package, presented and defended).
- **Participation and peer review** — 15%.

Rubric per `course/assessments-and-rubric.md`, with the additional standard that *the arithmetic must be shown.* A price without a visible cost model is a guess.

The midterm

In class, present the scored-and-decided pursuit sheet for your term opportunity: the pWin rubric with factor-by-factor evidence, the value estimate with two anchors, the composite, the threshold, and the call. The panel's job: *"Why is your pWin that high? Where does that value come from? Who owns the threshold?"* An honest number beats a hopeful one.

The final

The full price-to-win recommendation for your term opportunity: score, value, cost floor, competitive range, evaluation posture, recommended price, and the basis of estimate that supports it. Presented in 15 minutes and defended against a panel that includes a skeptical "pricing authority" role whose only job is to find the element without a source.

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 price 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. Do not fabricate cost evidence; a fake BOE is the pricing-world equivalent of plagiarism.

The course in one sentence

By Week 14 you will be able to look at any pursuit and answer the two questions that decide its fate — how likely are we to win, and what is it worth if we do — and you will have turned "this feels good" into arithmetic, and arithmetic into a price you can defend.