

DL 303 — Government Contracts & Subcontracting

The vehicles and teams course. You will learn the shapes a government contract takes, how a firm enters them alone or with partners, and how delivery — the post-award world — becomes the past performance that wins the next pursuit.

Course number: DL 303 · **Credit hours:** 3 · **Term:** 14 weeks, one 75-minute session per week (plus independent reading and assignments) · **Audience:** junior undergraduates · **Prerequisites:** DL 210 · **Tier:** upper-division elective (Year 3) · **Texts:** this repository — the doctrine, the literacy maps, and the Ravonics case · **Tools:** none required beyond a web browser for SAM.gov. Stack-agnostic by design (doctrine/08).

Doctrine spine

`doctrine/01` (the vehicles and the small-business universe), `doctrine/03` (the delivery stage), and `doctrine/07` (the lifecycle and the post-award world) form the spine. The course teaches the *discipline* of teaming and contract structure — prime/sub postures, capability-gap analysis, partner selection, the limits on subcontracting, and contract administration — at concept altitude, the way a professional capture organization encodes it.

Where this course sits in the program

This is the **structure** elective: how a pursuit becomes a contract and how a firm enters it alone or with partners. It is the natural companion to DL 302 (Proposal Production & Compliance) and the capstone, where teaming and vehicle reasoning appear in the ORBITAL's transport and logistics axes.

Ladder: DL 210. Recommended pairing: DL 302. Feeds the capstone.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, a student can:

- Name the shapes of a government contract — firm-fixed-price, time-and-materials, cost-plus — and the risk each carries.
- Explain the standing vehicles: GSA Schedules, IDIQ contracts, task orders, BPAs — and when each is the right doorway.
- Decide a teaming posture for a pursuit: prime solo, prime with subcontractors, subcontractor, joint venture, or mentor-protégé — with the reasoning.
- Run a capability-gap analysis and score a prospective partner against a rubric.
- Explain the limits on subcontracting and the small-business subcontracting plan — the statutory floors that shape every team.

- Describe the post-award world: contract administration, deliverables, invoicing, and compliance.
- Explain how delivery creates the past-performance asset that wins the next pursuit — the lifecycle in action.

How the course works

The course reads the market through the Ravonics case and real, published, *closed* solicitations. Each week adds a layer of the contract-and-team story: the shapes, the vehicles, the teaming decision, the post-award world. The midterm is a teaming plan; the final is a full teaming-and-delivery plan for a real solicitation.

Weekly schedule

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
1	What a contract is	The agreement shape: price, scope, performance, and the risk of each.	doctrine/01	One-page “what a contract is” with three real contract shapes
2	The shapes and the risk	Firm-fixed-price, time-and-materials, cost-plus. Who carries the risk, and what that means for pricing.	doctrine/01; doctrine/05	A one-page risk table: contract type, risk bearer, pricing implications
3	The standing vehicles	GSA Schedules, IDIQ, task orders, BPAs. Winning the doorway once, then competing for the orders.	doctrine/01; literacy/glossary	A one-page vehicle map: which vehicles Ravonics could hold, and why

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
4	Primes and subs	The teaming postures. Why no pursuit is an island.	doctrine/03	A one-page posture chart: five postures, when each fits
5	The teaming decision	Capability gaps, partner selection, and the rubric that scores a partner.	doctrine/03	Score a prospective partner for Ravonics against a partner rubric
6	Joint ventures and mentor-protégé	The formal team shapes: JVs and mentor-protégé agreements. When size and risk force them.	doctrine/01	A one-page brief on JVs and mentor-protégé, with a real example
7	Midterm	In class: present a teaming plan for a real pursuit — posture, partner, reasoning.	(review week)	Midterm submission
8	The limits on subcontracting	The statutory floors: who must do the work, and how much. Set-aside rules for teams.	doctrine/01	A one-page compliance brief: the floors a team must respect

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
9	Small-business subcontracting plans	The other-than-small prime's obligation. Participation goals as a legal design.	doctrine/01	Draft a small-business participation plan for a fictional prime
10	Contract administration	The post-award world: deliverables, invoicing, compliance, and the file that proves the work.	doctrine/07	A one-page post-award plan for a delivered contract
11	Past performance as an asset	Delivery as the seed of the next pursuit. The published record as the proof.	doctrine/07; doctrine/03	A one-page past-performance map: what a firm's delivered work would prove
12	Disputes, terminations, and the learning loop	When delivery goes wrong: disputes, terminations, and the honest retrospective.	doctrine/04; doctrine/07	A one-page case analysis of a terminated or troubled contract (public record)
13	From prime to world	Growing through delivery: how a firm becomes a trusted supplier, one contract at a time.	doctrine/07	A one-page lifecycle map for Ravonics: its next three contracts and what each would prove

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
14	Final: teaming-and-delivery plan	Present a full teaming-and-delivery plan for a real solicitation — posture, partners, floors, post-award plan.	(review week)	Final submission

Assessment summary

- **Weekly assignments** — 30% (each a concrete artifact: a map, a rubric score, a plan).
- **Midterm** — 25% (teaming plan, presented and defended).
- **Final teaming-and-delivery plan** — 30%.
- **Participation and peer review** — 15%.

Rubric per `course/assessments-and-rubric.md`. The additional standard in this course is **the reasoning must survive**: a teaming decision is judged on the reasoning, not the posture — a well-argued “subcontractor” beats an unjustified “prime.”

The midterm

In class, present a teaming plan for a real pursuit: the posture chosen, the capability-gap analysis, the partner scored against a rubric, and the floors respected. The panel’s job: *“Why this posture? What does the partner actually bring? What happens if the partner falls through?”* The gap between a justified team and a hopeful team is the whole grade.

The final

The full teaming-and-delivery plan for a real solicitation: posture, partners, set-aside floors, vehicle fit, post-award plan, and the past-performance narrative the delivery would create. Presented and defended.

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 and the public award record. 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.** Teaming runs on commitments. Do not fabricate a partner's capability or a firm's past performance; the market checks, and so does this course.

The course in one sentence

By Week 14 you will be able to look at any pursuit and answer the structural questions — what shape of contract, what vehicle, what team, what floors, what post-award plan — and you will have seen how delivery turns a winning pursuit into the evidence that wins the next one.