

DL 305 — Negotiations

The human course. You will learn negotiation as a discipline, not a personality: prepare a position, understand the other side's interests, and bargain inside the rules — in the federal acquisition process, in teaming, and in the post-award world.

Course number: DL 305 · **Credit hours:** 3 · **Term:** 14 weeks, one 75-minute session per week (plus independent reading and assignments) · **Audience:** junior undergraduates · **Prerequisites:** DL 220 (may be co-requisite) · **Tier:** upper-division elective (Year 3) · **Texts:** this repository — the doctrine, the literacy maps, and real published solicitations · **Tools:** none required beyond paper and a role-play partner. Stack-agnostic by design (doctrine/08).

Doctrine spine

`doctrine/04` (the gate as a decision) and `doctrine/05` (price-to-win as a position) form the spine, supported by `doctrine/02` (the discussions and final-proposal-revision phase of a competition) and `doctrine/07` (the post-submission world of debriefs and negotiation). The course teaches negotiation *concepts* — positions vs. interests, BATNA, the zone of possible agreement, concessions, and integrity — at altitude, applicable to federal acquisition, teaming, and any commercial negotiation.

Where this course sits in the program

This is the **human** elective: the place where the doctrine's arithmetic (DL 220) meets actual people. It serves students heading into capture, pricing, contracts, or business development — and it is the most transferable course in the catalog, because negotiation is a life skill the doctrine happens to sharpen.

Ladder: DL 220 (or co-req). Recommended pairing: DL 303. Feeds the capstone's defense and any post-award work.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, a student can:

- Explain negotiation as a prepared discipline, not an improvisation.
- Distinguish positions from interests and use interests to find a zone of possible agreement.
- Prepare a negotiation plan: objectives, BATNA, the zone, the concessions, the walk-away.
- Explain how negotiation appears inside a federal competition: written discussions, final proposal revisions, and the rules that bind the agency.
- Price a negotiation: where the price-to-win position leaves room to move, and where the floor is.

- Negotiate a teaming agreement: aligning on scope, share, risk, and commitment.
- Make and read concessions deliberately, and hold a position without burning the relationship.
- Apply the ethics of negotiation: honesty, no fabrication, no gaming the rules.
- Run a post-negotiation debrief and connect it to the learning loop.

How the course works

The course alternates between concept and practice. Every other week is a role-play: a federal discussions scenario, a teaming negotiation, a price negotiation, a post-award dispute. Each role-play is prepared in writing (the negotiation plan) and debriefed after. The midterm is a prepared role-play; the final is a full-case negotiation with a written plan and a reflection.

Weekly schedule

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
1	Negotiation as a discipline	Not a personality — a prepared process. What the doctrine already teaches about decisions.	doctrine/04	One-page “what I think negotiation is” (pre-test, not graded)
2	Positions vs. interests	The position is what people say; the interest is why. The interests are where the deal lives.	doctrine/04	A one-page interests map for a scenario you choose
3	BATNA and the zone	Best alternative to a negotiated agreement. The zone of possible agreement.	doctrine/04	A one-page BATNA + ZOPA analysis for a given scenario

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
4	The negotiation plan	Objectives, BATNA, the zone, concessions, walk-away. Prepared before the room.	doctrine/04	A written negotiation plan for a given scenario
5	Negotiation in a federal competition	Written discussions and final proposal revisions. The rules that bind the agency and the offeror.	doctrine/02; doctrine/04	A one-page brief: how a federal competition negotiates, and the rules that govern it
6	Price negotiation	Where the price-to-win position leaves room to move, and where the floor is.	doctrine/05	A one-page price-negotiation frame: the position, the floor, the room
7	Midterm	In class: a prepared role-play — federal discussions or a price negotiation — with a written plan and a debrief.	(review week)	Midterm submission
8	Teaming negotiation	Aligning scope, share, risk, and commitment with a partner.	doctrine/03	A one-page teaming-negotiation plan: what each side wants, what each can give

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
9	Concessions and trade-offs	The deliberate concession: what to give, what to get, and in what order.	doctrine/04	A one-page concession strategy for a scenario
10	Communication and influence	Listening, questioning, and the substance of credibility.	doctrine/08	A one-page “what makes a negotiator credible” analysis
11	Ethics of negotiation	Honesty, no fabrication, no gaming. Why integrity is the winning long-run strategy.	doctrine/04	A one-page ethics analysis of a realistic negotiation dilemma
12	The debrief and the learning loop	After the negotiation: the debrief, the lesson, the next round.	doctrine/07	A one-page debrief plan for a negotiation you ran
13	Negotiation in the pipeline	Where negotiation appears across the pursuit: teaming, discussions, award, delivery.	doctrine/03	A one-page map: negotiation moments in the pursuit pipeline

Week	Theme	In-session (75 min)	Reading (doctrine / literacy)	Assignment due next week
14	Final: full-case negotiation	A full prepared negotiation — plan, role-play, and reflection — presented and defended.	(review week)	Final submission

Assessment summary

- **Weekly assignments** — 30% (plans, analyses, and briefs).
- **Midterm** — 25% (prepared role-play with a written plan and debrief).
- **Final full-case negotiation** — 30% (plan + role-play + reflection).
- **Participation and peer review** — 15%.

Rubric per `course/assessments-and-rubric.md`, with the additional standard that **the plan matters as much as the performance**: a well-prepared negotiator who holds the line earns more than a smooth talker who winging it.

The midterm

In class, a prepared role-play — a federal-discussions or price-negotiation scenario. You submit your negotiation plan in advance (objectives, BATNA, the zone, the concessions, the walk-away) and you are assessed on the plan, the performance, and the debrief. The panel plays the counterpart and pushes: *“Why should I give you that? What is your walk-away? Prove your number.”*

The final

A full-case negotiation: a written plan, a role-play against the panel, and a written reflection connecting the outcome to the doctrine — where the gate discipline helped, where the interests were, and what the learning loop would capture. 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 contexts, safe exercises.** Scenarios are drawn from the real federal process but are exercises; nothing is live.

- **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.** Negotiation is where integrity is tested most. No fabricated authority, no invented numbers, no gaming of the scenario — the course grades the honest negotiator higher than the clever one.

The course in one sentence

By Week 14 you will be able to walk into any negotiation — a federal discussion, a teaming call, a price talk — with a plan, a floor, and a walk-away, and you will have learned that the strongest negotiating position in the federal market is a reputation for honesty.