

IDS 493 Course Reflection

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Introduction

My time at Old Dominion University has been defined by the intersection of rigorous academic study and real-world entrepreneurial experience. As a Cybersecurity major I have achieved a 3.78 GPA, I transferred to ODU from Tidewater Community College and took on coursework that challenged me to think beyond the technical surface of cybersecurity.

Simultaneously, I have been building Argent Marketing, a digital marketing agency serving over one hundred clients with a team of five. The skills I value the most from my degree program are the technical and analytical abilities that I developed through CYSE 201S, CYSE 425W. The system security coursework taught me vulnerability assessment, malware analysis, intrusion detection, and policy analysis.

Program Reflection

The most valuable learning experiences at ODU came from courses that connected cybersecurity to broader contexts. In CYSE 201S, I explored how social science frameworks like Rational Choice Theory apply to understanding cybercriminal motivations. In CYSE 425W, I wrote an ethical analysis of ransomware payment bans in hospitals. This opened my mind up to evaluating policy through multiple stakeholder perspectives. These experiences which I documented on my portfolio's CYSE 201S and CYSE 425W pages, pushed me to see cybersecurity as deeply embedded in human behavior and societal impact.

My primary obstacle was balancing coursework with running a growing business and serving as VP of Communications for Sigma Phi Epsilon. I addressed this by becoming diligent

about time-blocking my calendar and treating every hour as a decision. This allowed me to maintain my GPA while scaling my agency and facilitating the largest new member class in our chapter's history. The analytical thinking from my cybersecurity coursework also helped in reinforcing discipline. It provided a good framework on how to manage the operational challenges in my business.

IDS 493 Reflection

IDS 493 is an online asynchronous course that guided me through creating an electronic portfolio integrating academic work, professional experiences, and skills. The course focused on digital composition, audience awareness, and building a professional online presence beyond graduation. The most valuable aspect was curating my academic work into a cohesive narrative, this forced me to evaluate which experiences genuinely shaped my development. I am most proud of my CYSE 425W page showcasing my ethical analysis of ransomware payment bans. I spent an extensive amount of time on this piece. If someone could look at only one piece, I would direct them there because it demonstrates my ability to compile technical knowledge and policy reasoning into clear communication.

The most challenging aspect of IDS 493 was the reflection process itself. As someone who is action oriented, slowing down to articulate the meaning behind my academic experiences required a different kind of effort. I addressed this by treating each reflection as a business analysis where I identified the key takeaway and supported it with evidence. If I had more time, I would enhance the visual design and multimedia elements of my portfolio. My previous coursework made completing IDS 493 easier. The writing skills from CYSE 425W and the interdisciplinary thinking from CYSE 201S gave me the content and analytical lens needed to build a meaningful portfolio.

Conclusion

My coursework at ODU has provided me with a great interdisciplinary framework that shapes how I think about business and the world. CYSE 201S taught me that cybersecurity is inseparable from social science, CYSE 425W showed me how to analyze policy with ethical rigor, and system security coursework grounded me in technical fundamentals. Interdisciplinary thinking matters because threats emerge from human behavior, economic incentives, and culture, not technical isolation. This is one of the biggest developments in my thinking since starting at ODU. After college, I plan to relocate and scale my business while looking to pursue technology ventures that leverage the perspectives I developed.