



Course Syllabus: Independent Study in Computer Science –
Topics in Computer and Network Security
Department of Computer Science,
McCoy College of Science, Mathematics & Engineering
CMPS 4993 Section 201
Spring 2026 January 20 - May 16, 2026

Contact Information

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Classroom: Martin 106
Class Times: MW 3:30 pm – 4:50 pm

Course Description

This seminar-style course provides an in-depth look at the security risks and threats to an organization's electronic assets, and an overview of components used in an enterprise security infrastructure. The course focuses on the topics of threat environment, security policy and planning, cryptography, secure networks, access control, application security and data protection. The course provides demonstrations and exercises on various offensive and defensive security concepts. Topics will include theoretical background, as well as practical techniques to secure an enterprise network.

Course Prerequisites

None.

Student Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of network security terminology and concepts,
2. Demonstrate understanding of security technology and devices, acquired by hands-on experience on threats to computers and networks, and measures of security defense,
3. Discuss current ethical issues involved in network and computer security,
4. Research topics, solve problems and create solutions in a seminar environment,
5. Deliver a team project that will allow the student to study some aspects of the “real world” computer and network security in detail beyond what is covered in class.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Randall J. Boyle, Raymond Panko, Corporate Computer Security, 5th ed., Prentice Hall, 2021.
e-Book subscription: ISBN-13 9780135823248. Follow this [link](#).

Please bring laptop (preferably Windows) to class. We will work on hands-on assignments in class.

Grading

Table 1: Course Grade

Grading Criteria	Dates	Weights	Objectives Assessed
Assignments	Daily/Weekly/biweekly	35%	1-4
Project		30%	5
Midterm Exam	Mon 3/2/26	15%	1-4
Final Exam	Wed 5/6/26	20%	1-4

Table 2: Grading Criteria

Grade	Percentage
A	90 or above
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

Table 3: Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Starting	Topics
1	1/20	Module 1: The Threat Environment
2	1/26	Module 1: The Threat Environment cont. Project topics of interest list due – 1/28
3	2/2	Module 2: Networking Basics;
4	2/9	Module 2: Networking Basics cont., Write up on topics of interest due- 2/9
5	2/16	Module 3: Planning and Policy; Project topic selection per team – 2/16
6	2/23	Module 4: Offensive Security – Reconnaissance; Project subtopic selection per team – 2/23
7	3/2	Midterm Exam on 3/2; Module 4: Reconnaissance cont.
	3/9	Spring Break
8	3/16	Module 5: Offensive Security – Denial of Service
9	3/23	Project proposal presentations – 3/23, Module 6: Defensive Security at Transport and Application Layers, Cryptographic Systems
10	3/30	Module 6: Cryptographic Systems cont.
11	4/6	Module 7: Access Control; Module 8: Defensive Security at Network Layer, Firewalls
12	4/13	Module 8: Firewalls cont.
13	4/20	Module 9: Offense and Defense at Link Layer, Switch Security;
14	4/27	Module 9: Offense and Defense at Link Layer, Switch Security cont.;
15	5/4	Final Exam on 5/6
16	5/11	Project presentations: Mon 5/11/26 3:30-5:30 pm, Individual Project Reports due on 5/11/26 11:59 pm

Class Policies

Teams

Students will form teams of 2 or 3. The teams will be chosen on the first day of class and will be maintained till the end of semester. You will get to work together in your team on in-class assignments and team projects.

Flipped Classroom

Readings from the textbook and/or other sources will be announced prior to class sessions. You will complete the reading *before* class. We will work on many kinds of assignments in class based on this material.

Assignments

These fall under following categories.

Quizzes: We will work on quizzes that will validate the readings. The grade from the quizzes will constitute 20% of the total assignment grade.

Short Presentations: You may research announced topics individually or in your team and present your findings. You will also submit a PowerPoint presentation. The grade from the presentation assignments will constitute 10% of the total assignment grade.

In-class Assignments: We will discuss topics in class and work on assignments. You will be able to collaborate with your fellow students to complete these. Assignments that cannot be completed in class will be taken out-of-class and turned in. The grade from these assignments will constitute 30% of the total Assignment grade.

Homework Assignments: The purpose of the homework assignments is to give you individual out-of-class practice on the topics that you are learning, and to explore some ideas more deeply. The grade from the homework assignments will constitute 40% of the total assignment grade.

Exams

We will have two exams – midterm and final. All students must take both exams at the scheduled times.

For planned absences: Exam may be taken early by prior arrangement.

For unplanned absences: Students need a valid university excuse (e.g., excuse from the doctor, death in the immediate family, etc.). The missed exam will be replaced with the final exam grade. **The final exam must be taken on its assigned date and time.**

Team Projects

After conducting a survey and preliminary research, each team will select an overall topic that will allow the group to investigate some aspects of a “real world” security area in detail beyond what is covered in class. Each member will select two subtopics under the main topic. The outcome of the project will be a project report as well as a class presentation in the final week. Each team member will submit their own report that clearly shows their individual contributions to the project. Each team will prepare a 15-to-20-minute joint presentation and answer related questions.

General Policies

Computer Requirements

Taking this class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to access course material. Personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered a reason for extra time to submit assignments, tests, or online discussion postings. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings, as well as the Academic Success Center. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the

course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The university cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations, however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into D2L.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments, unless otherwise specified, must be submitted to D2L containing the student's name, course name, the title of the assignment, the due date and the date the assignment was turned in. *No e-mail or in-person submission is accepted.*

No late assignment will be accepted. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken each day. **Anyone missing more than 25% of classes will get an automatic F.** *Attendance will be taken within the first 10 minutes of class. A student will be marked absent if not there when roll is taken.* If a student is absent more than 2 classes without an excuse and is not performing well in class, a report will be submitted to the Dean of Students and the student may be dropped from the class. Classes will not be streamed for absent students, whether it is excused or not.

Behavior in the classroom

Students are to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. This means that the presence of electronic devices other than your laptop are not to be seen, heard, or implied, ever. Questions are encouraged and discussion is acceptable, provided it is pertinent and does not distract from the lesson.

Policy on Testing Process

The Department of Computer Science has adopted the following policy related to testing.

- All bags, purses, electronics (turned off), books, etc. will be placed in the front of the room during exams, or in an area designated by the instructor.
- Unless otherwise announced by the instructor, nothing is allowed on the desk but pen/pencil/eraser and test papers.
- A student who leaves the room during an exam must turn in the test and will not be allowed to return.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic misconduct is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism: it is the act of using either published or unpublished source material of other students, persons, or generative AI (unless there are instructions that allow it) that do not follow accepted techniques of crediting. The Department of Computer Science has adopted the following policy related to academic misconduct. The policy will be applied to all submission of work for credit as determined by the instructor of the course, e.g., assignments, quizzes, and exams. (See below for link to MSU definitions.)

- 1st instance of cheating in the program: The student will be assigned a non-replaceable grade of zero for the assignment, project, or exam. If the final grade in the course does not result in a one letter grade reduction, the student will receive a one letter grade reduction in course.

- Further instances of cheating in any course within the program: The student will receive a grade of F in the course & be removed from the course.
- All instances of cheating will be reported to the Department Chair, the MCOSME Dean, the Dean of Graduate Students, if a graduate student, and the Office of Rights and Responsibilities, who may decide at their own discretion to impose a stiffer sanction based on knowledge of other instances of cheating at MSU Texas.

Note: Letting a student look at your work is collusion and is academic misconduct!

Also see [MSU Student Handbook](#): page 66: Academic Dishonesty Policy & Procedures.

University Policies and Procedures

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester. See Important Dates section below.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. Two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Student with Disabilities

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students should present appropriate verification from the Disability Support Office during the instructor's office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification has been provided. For additional information, contact the Disability Support Office in Clark Student Center 168 - Phone: (940) 397-4140. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Policy on Concealed Handguns on Campus

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Please note, open carry of handguns, whether licensed or not, and the carrying of all other firearms, whether open or concealed, are prohibited on campus. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [MSU Campus Carry Policy](#). If you have questions or concerns, please contact Interim MSU Chief of Police at steven.callarman@msutexas.edu.

Recording of Class Lectures

Permission must be requested in writing and obtained from the instructor before recording of class lectures. If permission is granted, the recording may only be used by the student making the recording. Recordings (or any class materials) may NOT be posted on any internet source without written permission of the instructor. Failure to adhere to the policy may result in removal from the course with a grade of F or other appropriate punishment.

Midterm Progress Report

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, the instructor for this class will provide a Midterm Progress Report for all students in the course. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should a) schedule a meeting with the professor and b) Seek out tutoring.

Important Dates

Visit [MSU important dates](#) from the Registrar's website.

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.