

Department of Engineering and Society
School of Engineering and Applied Science
University of Virginia

STS 5620-001
Government Contracting Opportunities
What technologists should know about government procurement

Fall 2018

Instructor: James Cheng, Lecturer, jimcheng@virginia.edu

Location and Time: Material Sciences Bldg 171, Tu 330-445PM

Credits: 1

Overview

Have you ever considered working for one of the largest and most influential employers in the world? Are you interested in increasing funding for your research project? Or are you considering an entrepreneurial path and want to learn about how to access one of world's largest buyers of technology and technical services? The US federal government is the country's largest employer and is generally considered the country's (if not the world's) largest source of research funding and contracts.

This course will provide an introductory overview of the federal government procurement system, including the basics of government contracting. Working with the Government is very different than working with commercial industry or academia; and to the uninitiated, this system is dense, opaque and often difficult to navigate. This course will provide the student with a basic guide to unlocking and accessing these potential opportunities.

With our proximity to the Washington DC region, many of our students will either be working for federal contractors or for the federal government. Some of our graduates may become technology entrepreneurs and found or lead government contracting companies. Even those not directly connected with government procurement may be asked to provide technical expertise for a proposal responses, or lead a technical team in performance of a contract or grant.

The class will cover the terminology, basic regulations and ethics, and the people, processes and procedures of government contracting. We will discuss how the government determines, develops and communicates their requirements, and how they evaluate potential solutions and contractors. The students will learn the basics

of how to read and interpret the goals and objectives of government solicitations, and how to form a strategy for providing a responsive proposal and gain competitive advantage over their competitors.

The class will be taught with a mix of lecture and cases. Real world examples, news stories and current events in the industry will be used for interactive class discussions. When possible (subject to availability), guest speakers and expert panels will be invited to speak to the class on relevant topics.

The students will be assigned a semester project or paper, which will tie together the concepts learned in this class. For example, possible projects would include: a paper on how to obtain funding for a student's research concept, or developing a proposal strategy for a real-world technology procurement.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the class, students will be able to:

- Explain the basic differences between Government contracting and doing business with academia and commercial industry.
- Understand basic Government contracting jargon and terminology.
- Locate and evaluate opportunities to bid on projects of interest, including being able find key contacts with challenging problems to solve and funds for research.
- Understand the structure and organization of a typical Government Solicitation and be able to analyze/evaluate the goals and objectives of the solicitation.
- Navigate the basic rules and regulations of Government Contracting, and be aware of the industry's basic ethical issues.
- Understand how the Government evaluates proposals
- Understand the basics of pricing a government proposal
- Understand what the government expects once a contract is awarded

Format

Most classes will be a combination of lecture and case method. Guest speakers will be invited to speak on specific topics. Students are encouraged to participate, contribute their thoughts and ask questions in class.

Readings

Along with a number of websites, reports and articles available on Collab, we will be drawing on the following books: Text: Getting Started in Federal Contracting, McVay

Assignments and Grading

The final grade for this class will be awarded on a S/U basis. Each grade component/assignment for the semester will be graded on a UVA's standard default grading system, and at the end of the semester, the grade will be converted to an S/U in accordance with UVA's standard grading guidelines for the graduate school students.

Individual

Class participation	40%
FedBizOpps and other Assignments	25%
Final Paper	35%

Most assignments will have instructions distributed as a handout or posted on the course webpage on Collab under Resources in the Assignments Folder. We will discuss each assignment in depth on the days indicated on the schedule below. All written assignments must be submitted in class or uploaded to the student's Collab File Drop folder.

The due date for each assignment is listed in bold. All assignments are due either at class time or by 5 PM on the due date. .

Ground Rules

Communications throughout the course generally involve **emails** sent to all the students. Any official message about the course will have "STS 5620" at the start of the subject line.

Written assignments should be typed on one side of the paper. Assignments should be double-spaced, using a **12 point Cambria font** and one-inch margins (this document is in the Cambria font). In assignments involving illustrations and visual materials, you will be permitted more flexibility in terms of layout, though you will need to make sure that you make effective use of white space [a topic which will be discussed in lab]. All diagrams, charts, and tables must be appropriately labeled. Your name, course number, date, and name of the assignment should appear on each paper. Please **number the pages**.

All papers must be carefully **proofread**. You may use a spell-checker on your papers, provided that the program does not automatically change misspelled words. Please be sure to read your papers over prior to submission to make sure that you have the right word in the right place; spell-checkers often correct words, but they cannot tell whether you are using the proper word. **Any paper with more than three misspelled words will receive one point off for each subsequent misspelling.**

All work submitted for a grade must include UVA's Honor pledge: "On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment/examination. The University of Virginia has an honor code, formally known as the Honor System." Followed by the student's signature and date. **Papers that are not pledged will not be graded and will be returned to the student for pledging.**

To protect yourself from computer crashes, **always make and keep a hard copy of each assignment.**

With regard to **reading assignments**, we assume that you will read the articles or pages listed for a particular week **prior** to your lab section.

In the unlikely situation that we are delayed in coming to lecture or the lab sessions, we ask that you wait a full **20 minutes** before leaving the classroom.

The schedule below shows the order in which we will take up various topics and tasks, but it is subject to change based on our assessment of how the majority of students are doing in the class. On some occasions, we may change the due date of some assignments, but if we do so, we will give the class ample notice.

Laptop and Cell Phone Policy

Most sessions will be **screen-free**; this means no laptop computers, cell phones, iPhones, or other electronic devices. All devices should be stowed in your backpack or handbag during class. The reason for this policy is that during sessions you should focus on listening and discussing the issues with your classmates. You should plan on taking notes in a paper notebook. Depending on the work scheduled, laptops may be required for some sessions.

Class Attendance

We expect students to behave like the professionals they are becoming. Consequently, we assume you will make every effort to attend all of the sessions. However, we also know that you have other professional and personal obligations that may prevent you from attending every class. Recognizing this, you are permitted to miss **one session** during the semester, and you will not be required to explain this absence. If you need to be absent more than once, then you need to give us a note explaining any absence. We will penalize students who have an unreasonable number of absences.