Course Syllabus: v10, Last Updated September 30, 2020

I. Course Information

Foundations of Information Security Management
RIAS 102
October 7 - December 16, 2020
Distance Learning Course Week: Wednesday through Tuesday

Instructor Information
Derek E. Brink, BS, MBA, CISSP
Adjunct Faculty, Brandeis University
Division of Graduate Professional Studies, Rabb School of Continuing Studies
Email: dbrink@brandeis.edu
Office Phone: 603-594-9454 (note: this is my home office landline; email is always the best and fastest way to communicate with me — and to schedule a specific date and time for an office hours appointment)
Office Hours: most weekdays by appointment, or other times by appointment

Document Overview
This syllabus contains relevant information about the course: its objectives and outcomes, grading criteria, texts, outline of weekly topics, assignments, and due dates. Please read through the syllabus carefully, and feel free to ask any questions that you may have.

Note however that the course content is subject to change, e.g., to adapt to our discussions, current events, or other learning opportunities that may present themselves during the 10-week course period. Please consider any information posted in LATTE during the time of our course to be the most current.

Course Description
This introductory course exposes students to the higher-level aspects of information technology and information security, in areas such as management and governance; assessing and communicating risk; law (compliance) and ethics; establishing and communicating policies; planning (strategy and operations); contingency planning (disaster recovery and incident response); and testing. These concepts are applied and discussed in the context of common enterprise scenarios. This course, together with RIAS 101, provides a foundation for the remaining curriculum in the Information Security Leadership program.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe and evaluate approaches for managing and governing the business function of information security
- Understand key parameters for assessing information security-related risks, perform basic risk analysis and trade-offs, and communicate more effectively about risk with business decision-makers
- Assess how laws, regulations, compliance, standards of business conduct, and ethics play a role in making business decisions about risk and allocating resources in the information security function
- Describe and evaluate selected security policies and controls
- Explain the core concepts of contingency planning, and the distinctions between disaster recovery and incident response
Welcome Message

Over the next ten weeks, we will explore the fundamentals of managing the business function called **information security**, in the context of “enterprise” IT infrastructure, applications, and data. We’ll do this together, through our course’s online discussions and assignments, all of which are designed to lay the foundation for you to learn more about your own organization’s information security strategies and capabilities — whether past, current, or future.

For the past 14 years, in my day job as an analyst, I have conducted primary research on the drivers, inhibitors, strategies, capabilities, and technologies that define “best practices” for a wide range of the challenges we face today in information security. For many years prior to that, I managed and marketed a wide range of commercial information security products and services, at companies such as RSA, Sun Microsystems, IBM, and HP.

The online method of course delivery here at Brandeis provides a rich, flexible platform for discussing these topics with our fellow students as we explore the course content together, learning from each other while developing and refining our own organization-specific perspectives. I look forward to many open and mutually enriching discussions!

Here are three important things you should know about this course, and about me:

- **Flipped Classroom.** For most of us, the traditional model for courses has been that an instructor presents the material to the students (e.g., “lecture”), and the students then work independently (e.g., do “homework”) to master the material. The model we are using in this program turns that traditional model on its head. Here, students are asked to familiarize themselves with the material on their own (e.g., through the assigned readings and other preparation, done at their own pace), and then we work together to discuss and apply the concepts in the online forums and assignments. I am always happy to help explain and clarify information and concepts whenever needed — but please understand that this program “flips” the traditional model that you may be used to. (Some people have described the instructor’s role in the traditional model as “the sage on the stage” — but in the new model, it is commonly described as “the guide on the side.”)

- **Emphasis on Communication.** I place a great deal of emphasis on your ability to communicate effectively about information security matters to a senior, business-level audience. This means that I am trying to help you communicate effectively about technical topics, in a non-technical way — and this implies that your communications are well-organized, free of acronyms and jargon, connected to a relevant business context, and so on. As InfoSec leaders you will be in the role of both the “subject matter expert” and the “trusted advisor,” and you will frequently be giving your best recommendations and judgments to the person(s) who ultimately must make a business decision about the topic at hand. I will push you very hard in this area to try to improve your effectiveness at communicating (mostly written, plus some verbal), so please try to have a “thick skin” about my feedback, especially in the early days of the course. The goal is simple: to get even better.

- **Research and Analysis.** My “day job” as an analyst is doing research on, writing about, and speaking about a wide range of topics in information security, and I will make available selected research, analysis, reports, blogs, videos, and other content that I have personally created as resources for you in this course. On rare occasion, a student has objected to the notion that an instructor would actually use their own material as a reference. Personally, I don’t understand this objection, i.e., this is one of the primary reasons that I am qualified to teach this course in the first place! However, if it bothers you in any way, please consider any such resources to be purely optional, and feel free to find and use relevant, supplemental reference materials on your own. Moreover, this course is not about following a textbook — it is about helping you to think more clearly about the important topic of managing information security.

This syllabus is intended to be the baseline reference for information about the course, supported and updated by the information posted in LATTE. Please familiarize yourself with this content, and please let me know if you have questions or need clarification.
Related Programs: Required course for Master of Science in Information Security Leadership

Prerequisites: None  (Note: many students take RIAS 101 before taking RIAS 102, but the two courses have traditionally been designed such that they could be taken in either order.)

Materials of Instruction


b. Required Software - None, other than a browser to access LATTE or other online resources (discussed further in part d below).

c. Recommended Resources — Other materials (such as content from my own research, or from selected third parties) may be provided via our LATTE course site. Students will be provided with PDF copies of additional course material and links to relevant material, as appropriate.

d. Online Course Content

- This course will be conducted completely online using Brandeis’ LATTE site, available at [http://latte.brandeis.edu](http://latte.brandeis.edu). The LATTE site contains the syllabus, assignments, discussion forums, links to course-related resources, and weekly checklists, objectives, outcomes, topic notes, self-tests and discussion questions. Access information is emailed to enrolled participants before the start of the course.
- To begin participating in the course, review the Welcome Message, the Week 1 Checklist, and the first Course Announcement.

Overall Objectives

Upon completion of this course, participants will:

- Understand the higher-level aspects of information security management (as opposed to the underlying technology “building blocks”, which are the primary focus of RIAS 101) in the context of common enterprise scenarios
- Understand the relevance and application of the following, in the context of their own information and IT infrastructure, based on their own current or previous experience:
  - Management and governance
  - Assessing security-related risks, and communicating effectively about security-related risks to business leaders
  - Law (compliance) and ethics
  - Policies
  - Planning (strategy and operations)
  - Contingency planning (disaster recovery and incident response)
  - Testing

Overall Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be prepared to:

- Take other courses in the Information Security Leadership program at Brandeis
- Apply the concepts and vocabulary of IT and information security, in the context of their own organizations (past, current and future)
- (After also taking RIAS 101) Begin studying for the Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) certification [Note: not “take the CISSP exam” ... but “begin studying” for the CISSP exam.]
Grading Criteria and Rubric

The components of the overall grade and the associated percentages for each are summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Discussions / on-line participation (5% per week)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each week, respond to both of the two (2) Discussion Questions by Saturday at midnight (Eastern). The expectation is that you will read through the background materials that are provided (along with any other supplemental materials provided, and other appropriate materials of your own choosing), and respond to the best of your ability based on your own analysis and experience.</td>
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<td>• Each week, post at least two (2) other substantive comments to the responses your classmates have made to the Discussion Questions by Tuesday at midnight (Eastern). The expectation is that you will read through the posts of your classmates to enhance your own learning, and respond to those posts of your choice based upon your own experiences, insights, and ability to extend and add value to the discussion.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Post on at least three (3) different days of the course week.</td>
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<td>• I will award points and give feedback at the end of Weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4 to establish a baseline, help you figure out how the class works, and understand what I am looking for. After that, I prefer to award points and give feedback at the end of every two-week period (i.e., at the end of Weeks 6, 8, and 10).</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Bi-weekly quizzes and / or written projects (10% every two weeks)</td>
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<td>• These will be due at the end of Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 unless otherwise noted.</td>
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<td>• Quizzes are generally available by mid-day on Saturday, and must be completed by the end of the day on Tuesday (unless you have made other arrangements with me, in advance).</td>
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<td>• Assignment details (as appropriate) will be provided in LATTE.</td>
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I try to keep grading extremely simple. **There are 100 points total:** 50 for weekly participation, and 50 for bi-weekly quizzes and / or written projects. On occasion, I may decide to offer an optional assignment for 1 or 2 points of extra credit, which you may decide to pursue or not pursue, as you choose.

The allocation of points is spread out evenly throughout the 10-week period. This means that having an “off week” (e.g., because of personal matters, travel for your day job, etc.) should not spoil your entire grade. It also means that you should always have a good idea of how you are tracking against your personal goal for the grade you want to earn in the class — there should be no “surprises.”

Participation grades are about *actively participating* in the course, more than they are about being “right.” If you participate only at the minimum requirements for the entire 10 weeks, the highest grade you can earn will be **90 out of 100** (40 out of 50 for participation, and up to 50 out of 50 for quizzes and / or written assignments). For more specifics, see the participation rubric on the next page.

Quizzes are primarily about assessing that you know the proper vocabulary, and about asking you to apply the principles from our weekly discussions in some specific context.

You will very quickly adjust to the weekly rhythm, and I look forward to many rich and informative discussions!
Guidelines and examples of evaluation criteria for discussions and on-line participation are summarized in the following table. **Note carefully that meeting only the minimum requirements as stated below will earn only 4 out of the 5 possible points per week. Full points (5 out of 5) for each week will be earned only by contributing above and beyond these minimum requirements.** This is an essential point for everyone to understand! If you’d like additional clarification on any aspect of this information, please reach out to me directly!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>No Work</th>
<th>Less 1 to 3 points</th>
<th>Minimum Requirements</th>
<th>More</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency and Timing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I did not participate at all during the course week.</td>
<td>I did not make the minimum number of posts during the course week.</td>
<td>Each course week, I responded to both of the two (2) Discussion Questions, by Saturday at midnight (Eastern).</td>
<td>I made more than the minimum number of substantive posts during the course week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I did not post on time.</td>
<td>I did not post on time.</td>
<td>Each course week, I posted at least two (2) other substantive comments to the responses my classmates or instructor made to the Discussion Questions, by Tuesday at midnight (Eastern).</td>
<td>My posts were on time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My posts were “bunched up” at the proverbial last minute before the posting deadlines (e.g., late Saturday, late Tuesday).</td>
<td>My posts were “bunched up” at the proverbial last minute before the posting deadlines (e.g., late Saturday, late Tuesday).</td>
<td>I posted on at least three (3) different days of the course week.</td>
<td>My posts contributed to a more active level of engagement, interaction, and discussion among myself, the other students, and the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Substance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I did not participate at all during the course week.</td>
<td>I did not completely address the question(s) that were posed in the Discussion Questions.</td>
<td>I gave a complete answer to the question(s) that were posed in the Discussion Questions.</td>
<td>I made posts that went above and beyond the minimum guidelines in terms of substance, insight, and / or engagement with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My posts did not reference or incorporate relevant information from the background materials, supplemental materials of my own choosing, or insights based on my own analysis and experience.</td>
<td>My posts did not reference or incorporate relevant information from the background materials, supplemental materials of my own choosing, or insights based on my own analysis and experience.</td>
<td>I read through the background materials (along with any other supplemental materials of my own choosing), and responded to the best of my ability based on my own analysis and experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My responses to the posts of others were not substantive (e.g., “I agree with Susan”) or “That’s a great point,”</td>
<td>My responses to the posts of others were not substantive (e.g., “I agree with Susan”) or “That’s a great point,”</td>
<td>I read through the posts of my classmates and instructor to enhance my own learning, and responded to those of my choice based upon my own experiences, insights, and ability to extend and add value to the discussion.</td>
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</table>

1 Although technically these would be considered “on time,” if everyone posted at the last possible minute we would all miss out on the substantial value from interaction and discussion. Hence, mere compliance with the minimum requirement of being “on time” earns just 4 out of 5 points, while posting in a way that helps to foster engagement is being encouraged and rewarded.
John” are encouraged, but they are not examples of a substantive response).

- The follow-up questions I asked of others did not serve to extend the conversation (e.g., I asked questions in the final minutes of the course week), or hijacked the conversation in a completely different direction (e.g., “what does everyone think about Vendor X?”).

I provided my own insights into the topics being discussed, sharing my professional or personal experiences as appropriate, and drawing my own conclusions.

- I made substantive responses to the posts of others (e.g., more than “I agree”), including follow-on points from readings or from my related experiences.

- I asked follow-up questions of others that had the effect of genuinely extending the conversation about the topics being discussed.

• I did not participate at all during the course week.

- My posts were very short, or excessively long.

- My posts were poorly written, unclear, or full of unexplained technical jargon.

- My posts had many spelling or grammatical errors.

- My posts were monolithic blocks of text.

- I did not include appropriate references to weekly required readings or other external sources.

- I did not cite sources appropriately.

- I kept my posts to a reasonable length (e.g., at least 200-300 words, but not excessively long either)\(^2\).

- My posts were well-written, clear and concise, absent of unexplained technical jargon, with no spelling or grammatical errors.

- I included references, as appropriate, to weekly required readings and/or other external sources, cited appropriately.

- My posts were notably easier for others to consume and comprehend, e.g., through the use of appropriate formatting, bullets, white space, tables, charts, and so on.

Keep in mind that our collective experience with online responses and postings will be as rich as we choose to make it. Because we are not using a traditional classroom setting to discuss topics face-to-face, our online responses and posts are a primary means for driving interesting discussions and sharing our experiences with one another throughout the ten-week period. These discussions are required, to encourage you to share your own knowledge and ideas while simultaneously benefiting from the experiences of your peers.

For this reason, please note carefully again that meeting only the minimum weekly on-line participation requirements (i.e., 2 original posts, 2 substantive replies to the posts of others, 3 different days of the course week) will earn just 4 out of 5 possible points. Full marks (5 out of 5 possible points) will only be earned by weekly evidence of your commitment beyond the minimum to make the distance learning format “work.”

\(^2\) Please try to apply the “Goldilocks principle” – not too short, not too long, but just right.
## II. Weekly Information (subject to change - weekly topics are always as shown in LATTE!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>October 7 - 13, 2020</td>
<td>The Business Function Known as Information Security, and What We Do, Versus What Value We Provide&lt;br&gt;Introductory Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>October 14 – 20, 2020</td>
<td>The Big Picture: A Strategy Map for Security Leaders&lt;br&gt;Quiz #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>October 21 – 27, 2020</td>
<td>What is Risk?</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>October 28 – November 3, 2020</td>
<td>Decision-Making in InfoSec: Law (Compliance) and Ethics&lt;br&gt;Quiz #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>November 4 – November 10, 2020</td>
<td>Policies and Other Controls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>November 11 – November 17, 2020</td>
<td>Management Models and Frameworks&lt;br&gt;Quiz #3</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>November 18 – November 24, 2020</td>
<td>InfoSec Planning (strategy and operations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>November 25 – December 1, 2020</td>
<td>Contingency Planning (disaster recovery and incident response)&lt;br&gt;Quiz #4</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>December 2 - December 8, 2020</td>
<td>Testing Your Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>December 9 – December 15, 2020</td>
<td>Course Review&lt;br&gt;Quiz #5 / Final Assignment</td>
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III. Course Policies and Procedures

Asynchronous Work

All required work for the course may be done asynchronously; i.e., participants can login to the course, read/download materials, post to the Discussions, and submit assignments throughout the course week. Please carefully follow the Course Syllabus and the weekly checklists to help manage your time throughout each course week.

At one or more points throughout the course, I may make myself available for synchronous Chat sessions using the course site’s Chat Room. These optional sessions will be open Q&A. I will post a log of each such chat session so that those participants who did not participate can view the recorded synchronous discussions.

Late Policies

Participants are encouraged to complete all posts, responses and project assignments by the due dates provided. This will help ensure that everyone stays in synch with the pace of the course, and realizes the designed outcomes for the course. (Likewise, please do not work ahead! The topics and Discussion Questions for upcoming weeks may be modified and adjusted by the instructor, based on the discussions for current and previous weeks.)

If you find that you will not be able to complete something for a given week by the due date, please contact the instructor in advance. Unless previously arranged, credit will be deducted for work that is submitted late, out of fairness to other students.

Keep in mind that all course deadlines reflect the Eastern time zone, which may not be the same as your local time zone. (Note: an appropriate grace period will be provided to accommodate students in different time zones.)

Written projects generally should be submitted through the designated assignment drop box in LATTE (e.g., do not submit directly to the instructor via email) unless otherwise requested, or unless otherwise arranged in advance.

Work Expectations

Participants are responsible for exploring each week’s materials and submitting all required work by its respective due date. On average, a participant can expect to spend approximately 1-2 hours per week reading and approximately 2-3 hours per week completing assignments and participating in online discussions. The calendar of assignments and due dates is outlined in this Course Syllabus.

Grading Standards and Feedback

Feedback will be provided on all assignments within seven (7) days of the due date, unless otherwise noted. Participants will receive weekly feedback within seven (7) days of the close of the first four weeks, which will include a breakdown of grades earned to date along with instructor narratives evaluating work and discussions submitted to date. Subsequently, participants will receive similar bi-weekly feedback within seven (7) days of the close of each two-week period.

Total points (which in this case are the same as percentages) equate to final letter grades as follows:

- 93-100  A
- 90-93  A-
- 87-90  B+
- 83-87  B
- 80-83  B-
- 77-80  C+
- 73-77  C
- 70-73  C-
Often, students receive tuition reimbursement from their employers that varies based on final grades. Instructors have no control over these policies and cannot take them into account when determining grades. Students are responsible for knowing about their employer’s reimbursement policy.

Confidentiality

We can draw on the wealth of experience and examples from our own organizations in class discussions and in our written work. However, it is imperative that we not share information that is confidential, privileged or proprietary in nature. All of us must be mindful of any agreements we have made with our respective companies. In addition, we should respect our fellow classmates and work under the assumption that what is discussed here (as it pertains to the workings of particular organizations) stays within the confines of the course.

Members of the University’s technical staff have access to all course sites, to aid in course setup and technical troubleshooting. Program Chairs and a small number of Graduate Professional Studies (GPS) staff also have access to all GPS courses, for oversight purposes. Students enrolled in GPS courses can expect that individuals other than their fellow classmates and the course instructor(s) may visit their course for various purposes. Their intentions are to aid in technical troubleshooting and to ensure that quality course delivery standards are met. Strict confidentiality of student information is maintained.

Class Schedule

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IV. University and Division of Graduate Professional Studies Standards

Please review the policies and procedures of Graduate Professional Studies, found at http://www.brandeis.edu/gps/students/studentresources/policiesprocedures/index.html. We would like to highlight the following.

Learning Disabilities

Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who wishes to have reasonable accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please communicate with your instructor directly via email as soon as possible and present your letter of accommodation. The letter is needed no less than 48 hours in advance; accommodations cannot be provided retroactively.

If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

Academic Honesty and Student Integrity

Academic honesty and student integrity are of fundamental importance at Brandeis University and we want students to understand this clearly at the start of the term. As stated in the Brandeis Rights and Responsibilities handbook, “Every member of the University Community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. A student shall not receive credit for work that is not the product of the student’s own effort. A student’s name on any written exercise constitutes a statement that the work is the result of the student’s own thought and study, stated in the student’s own words, and produced without the assistance of others, except in quotes, footnotes or references with appropriate acknowledgement of the source.” In particular, students must be aware that material (including ideas, phrases, sentences, etc.) taken from the Internet and other sources MUST be appropriately cited if quoted, and footnoted in any written work turned in for this, or any, Brandeis class. Also, students will not be allowed to collaborate on work except by the specific permission of the instructor. Failure to cite resources properly may result in a referral being made to the Office of Student Development and Judicial Education. The outcome of this action may involve academic and disciplinary sanctions, which could include (but are not limited to) such penalties as receiving no credit for the assignment in question, receiving no credit for the related course, or suspension or dismissal from the University.

Further information regarding academic integrity may be found in the following publications: “In Pursuit of Excellence - A Guide to Academic Integrity for the Brandeis Community”, “(Students’) Rights and Responsibilities Handbook” AND “Graduate Professional Studies Student Handbook”. You should read these publications, which all can be accessed from the Graduate Professional Studies Web site. A student that is in doubt about standards of academic honesty (regarding plagiarism, multiple submissions of written work, unacknowledged or unauthorized collaborative effort, false citation or false data) should consult either the course instructor or other staff of the Rabb School Graduate Professional Studies.

University Caveat

The above schedule, content, and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.