

## BSIS Program Review

Being an Information Science major with a concentration in web development at USF has allowed me to have a fantastic academic journey through the BSIS program. This program has granted me theoretical foundations in software and data security as well as practical skills that will be highly important in my future career as a software engineer. When originally deciding upon a major, I was stuck between a traditional Computer Science program and the Information Science program that I ended up deciding on. While most people in my field tend to graduate from the former program, I decided to take a risk and follow a different path. After nearing my completion of this program, I believe that not only did I make a great choice, I also believe it was the optimal choice in the current state of the software development market. Throughout my job search for post-graduation jobs, having an education in Information Science has given me an edge in the field of information and data which has become increasingly important throughout my time in the program. The BSIS program's blend of coursework in information technology, design, and data security has allowed me to explore multiple aspects of the information science field while also allowing me to have hands-on coursework building secure and user-centered web applications. While I do have lots of positive opinions on the BSIS program, I do wish there were more options to apply the information centric coursework in more traditional software development classes. Additionally, through my focus in web development I wish that there had been more opportunities to take classes that target modern web development practices with frameworks such as React or Angular.

### LIS 3361 – WWW Page Design and Management

This course was the foundation for learning basic web development practices through HTML, CSS, and basic JavaScript. We also used an FTP client to host our assignments on an internal web-server which is a great skill to learn while working with web applications. While this course was pretty foundational, I was surprised that there were not any courses past this one that honed in more on modern web design practices. The standards and practices taught in this class are foundational, but not particularly applicable to professional web development positions. I believe that this could be easily solved by having some more advanced courses that work with modern web frameworks.

### LIS 3352 – Interaction Design

This Interaction Design course was actually one of the courses where I learned the most applicable skills out of any other. This course focused on how the design of applications should be centered around the end-user and how we can design platforms that are responsive and usable. Much of the information that I learned from this class I have implemented in personal portfolio projects.

### LIS 3783 – Information Architecture

This course was very similar to my Interaction Design course in that it focused on how information is categorized and how it can be properly presented for human access. This was much more of a “theoretical” course and benefitted me more by being so, as it allowed me to use the information I learned in a number of different settings.

### LIS 3353 – IT Concepts for Information Professionals

The IT Concepts for Information Professionals was a broad course that discussed a lot of the history and modern states of hardware, software, and web-based technologies. This was a pretty foundational course for understanding the real landscape in this profession.

### CIS 3360 – Principles of Information Security

This course, though outside of the LIS scope, was one of the most valuable courses I took. It provided me with essential knowledge about securing information systems and data. I believe that this is a very important course to include in the Information Science program and has been one that has given me a leg up in understanding data protection and risk management in information systems.

### LIS 4482 – Networks and Communication

Networks and Communication is by far one of the most difficult, but also one of the most important courses in the LIS program. Understanding how networks operate is so important with the current focus on cloud computing and interconnected systems in tech, so it has helped me grasp topics that I struggled significantly with prior to taking this course.

### LIS 4273 – Advanced Statistics and Analytics

While the statistics side of this course was not too difficult to grasp, the analytics side was interesting and provided some pretty valuable insights into data analysis techniques. We also learned the R programming language, which while I do not believe I will find myself using it in my career, it was valuable to learn its capabilities. For my final project in this class, I wrote a study on the analytical correlation of google search terms for "recession" and actual economic downturns. In this study, I made the observation that the patterns showed that we were possibly heading into an economic downturn, so the recent fears of recession have in a weird way felt pretty validating in my study.

### LIS 4204 – Information Behaviors

This course was another that was much more grounded in theory rather than practical application. This course mostly centered on the information seeking behaviors of individuals and

organizations, and how information systems are used. This course taught me quite a bit about the various ways people seek and use information.

#### LIS 4414 – Information Policy and Ethics

Information Policy and Ethics is a course that I am currently in the process of taking, and it has been incredibly insightful in the legal and ethical considerations surrounding information use. The discussions on privacy, intellectual freedom, and access to information have been particularly interesting to me and have given me insights into creating software that is ethically responsible and respects user privacy.

#### LIS 4671 – Introduction to Intelligence Studies

Intelligence Studies was an interesting course regarding our country's intelligence community and its inner-workings. I found the coursework here to be very interesting and even made me consider pursuing a career in the field. This course also gave me the opportunity to research intelligence historical figures and understand the evolution of intelligence practices.

#### LIS 4930 – GIS for Information Professionals

Originally when taking this course I did not believe I would ever use the ArcGIS and GIS software in my career. However, I have found a number of job opportunities that require knowledge of these tools, so I'm glad I took the time to learn them. I had never really heard of GIS before taking the course but now I see companies all over that require knowledge of this technology.

#### ENC 3250 – Professional Writing

When I first registered for this course I figured that it would just be a typical writing class, but it turned out to be so much more useful than I expected. The course focused more on the practical and business side of writing, where we had interactive assignments showing us how to write proposals, professional emails, and informative reports. The skills I gained in this course have changed how I approach communication in my job and life in general.

#### LIS 4934 – BSIS Senior Capstone

This course has been a great experience overall so far, its use in creating a portfolio and material that will be used in future job hunts is something I really enjoyed getting out of this program. While I will touch on this in my conclusion, my biggest problem with the BSIS program was how much I had to do outside of schooling (individual personal projects, certifications, individual learning of technical skills) in order to become competitive in the job market. While I had already started a web-portfolio before starting this class, it was really nice to be given an opportunity to vastly improve, iterate, and receive feedback from my peers in a course setting.

This class was definitely one of the most significant times where I felt I was working towards my goals outside of University.

The BSIS program has provided me with a great education in the theoretical aspects of information science. Courses in web development, security, architecture, and user experience have directly supported my goal of becoming a software engineer, while others in ethics, writing, and data analysis have allowed me to work towards becoming a more thoughtful and effective communicator and designer. However, I do wish that there were more options to explore coursework that dealt with more real-world technologies that would likely be found through a path in Computer Science. Despite having a concentration in web development technologies, I did not feel that there was enough coursework that would prepare me on it's own for a career in web development or software development. Despite this, I made an effort throughout my time in the program to pursue this education on my own. This process was significantly assisted through the theoretical education I gained through this program, so it is a bit surprising to me that there didn't seem to be more technical courses to really apply these skills. That being said, I would not change anything if I had to go back and decide upon picking this program again. The knowledge and skills that I have learned throughout my time in this program has been invaluable.