

DS 6110: Immersion

Course Overview

Welcome to DS 6110, Immersion. The objective of this course is to introduce students to the Master of Science in Data Science program, Southern Methodist University, the field of data science, and your fellow students.

The Master of Science in Data Science (MSDS) program provides a rigorous education comprising the foundation of data science. The MSDS program also provides an opportunity to meet and work with a diverse range of current and future data scientists, primarily your fellow students, MSDS alumni, and your instructors. The friendships and connections that you make during your time in the MSDS program are just as valuable as the technical knowledge that you will gain. The Immersion course is intended to foster relationships through face-to-face and online interactions. The primary course activity requires attendance at a conference, typically held at a hotel near SMU. Additional course activities include live online course sessions and web based interactions throughout the term, and completion of the SMU required ethical research training that will facilitate your future academic research in the Capstone course

A student taking DS 6110 must be enrolled in the Master of Science in Data Science program at SMU and be taking/have taken at least one other DS course

The objective of this course syllabus document is to acquaint you with the administration, procedures, and policies of this course. Refer to this document throughout the course, and save it for future reference.

Textbooks and Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. Assigned readings vary by term and are listed or made available on the Learning Management System used for this course.

Learning Objectives

Learning outcomes, or learning goals, are what you are able to do as a result of the activities that you participate in and complete during this course. The primary learning outcomes of this course are:

1. The learner will be able to navigate the MSDS curriculum.
2. The learner will be able to navigate the SMU campus.
3. The learner will be able to connect with fellow students, alumni, and faculty.
4. The learner will be able to appropriately follow ethical research protocols and requirements.
5. The learner will understand expectations and norms for graduate study

This course supports, through its various synchronous, asynchronous, and other activities, broad general learning outcomes that are supported by the Master of Science in Data Science program, including:

1. An ability to function on teams using data science tools and technologies.
2. An ability to communicate effectively both in oral and written form.
3. Knowledge of the broad foundational data science education necessary to understand the impact of data science solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and social context.
4. Knowledge of contemporary issues in data science.

Course Instruction Using Synchronous and Asynchronous Sessions

The course uses a combination of online, asynchronous content, online, synchronous class meetings, and in person activities at the Immersion Conference to teach students the course material and guide them through the learning process. Scheduled synchronous class sessions occur at least 2 times during the term. Additional lectures are promoted as available.

Grading

This course is graded based on completion of the assignments and participating in events as required and providing evidence of completion of each. It is expected that all students will put forth the effort required to earn an “A” letter grade for this course. Assignment grades will be determined using the evaluation rubrics that follow. You are responsible for reviewing the rubrics and raising questions or concerns related to the assignments, their rubrics, and their grading prior to the submission of each assignment. Questions regarding the grading of any assignment should be directed to the course instructor as soon as possible.

The final grade for the course will be calculated on the basis of the grade received for each of the components. This course is not graded on a curve. The required cumulative percentage needed to earn each letter grade is given below.

Cumulative Percentage	Earned Grade
100 – 93	A
92 – 90	A-
89 – 87	B+
86 – 83	B
82 – 80	B-
79 – 77	C+
76 – 73	C
72 – 70	C-
69 – 60	D
< 60	F

The cumulative percentage for the course is determined by the course assignment components with their corresponding percentages defined below.

Portion of Grade	Component
65%	Attend and Participate in the MSDS Immersion Conference
25%	Complete 2 of the online “CITI training” courses offered by SMU Office of Research Compliance: (Human Subjects and Responsible Conduct of Research)
5%	Class Participation : Respond to discussion board / wall posts / attend and engage in both live sessions
5%	Update the student portfolio in 2DS

1. Attendance and Participation at the MSDS Immersion Conference (65%):

The Immersion Conference is held sometime between weeks 8-12 of each term and is scheduled in advance of the start of the semester. Dates vary by term and are listed or made available on the Learning Management System used for this course

Students are responsible for arranging travel to be present for the full weekend as scheduled / documented on the event agenda. Arriving late or leaving early is not permitted and will result in loss of points. Attendance is taken each day full points will be awarded to students who have daily attendance documented for all components.

Hotel accommodations are reserved and paid for by SMU for Friday night for all students – regardless of travel required. Students who require overnight accommodations for the Thursday night before the event starts due to travel needs will be provided rooms upon request. End times are set such that travel and overnight stay on Sunday night should not be required, but can be requested if necessary. **If students elect to arrive early or stay late beyond the required days they must make their own hotel arrangements.**

Students are expected to attend all activities scheduled for the entire weekend and submit the survey following the event to receive full credit .

2. Complete the Human Subjects and Responsible Conduct Trainings online (24%)

CITI Human Subjects Research training and the Responsible Conduct of Research training is offered through SMU. SMU Research Compliance Training information may be found at:

<https://www.smu.edu/Research/ResearchServices/ResearchCompliance/ComplianceTraining> (or by searching for “research compliance training” in the search box on the SMU website if this link has been changed)

Follow the links on this page to learn how to create a [CITI](#) account and select your courses

- [Responsible Conduct of Research online training](#) : The online training, which is available through [CITI](#), consists of 11 required modules, and should take about 2 hours to complete.
- [Human Subjects Research Training](#) - Human Subjects Research training is offered via the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI Program\)](#). It consists of 10 - 16 required modules, depending on your situation, and should take about 3 hours to complete. You may stop and resume the course at your convenience. To begin the training, you may either log in to your existing account or create a new account.

Please note that CITI lists names of the courses you are required to take somewhat differently than the SMU titles. They are listed in CITI as:

1. Responsible Conduct = **Graduate Research Assistants**
2. Human Subjects = **Social and Behavioral Research Investigators**.

You may take all or part of any additional CITI course that you wish (and there are several!); however, all of the required modules for the two courses above must be completed for DS 6110. Other CITI courses will not be accepted in place of the assigned certificate courses.

To submit this assignment, please download your certificate of completion from CITI and attached it on the appropriate assignment tab in 2DS

This self-paced work can be done at any point during the term, but both courses must be completed *with certificates verifying proof of completion submitted on 2DS* before the last day of class as publicized in the academic calendar. (*Actual due dates will be posted in the LMS)

This is a completion grade. Full points will be awarded for uploading the certificates of completion. Zero points will be awarded for failing to upload proof of completion before the end of the term.

3. Class Participation (5%)

There will be 2 scheduled live sessions and the instructor will post questions and make requests via the course wall at various points throughout the term. Students will attend live session and will demonstrate that they are following the asynchronous content by responding as requested. A participation grade will be assigned based on student response to these engagement opportunities

4. Complete Student Profile (5%)

The LMS provides a way for students and faculty to learn more about the other people in the class. Students will learn to navigate the LMS by locating this feature (using the help desk if necessary) and updating their profile. Students must upload a picture to receive credit. A student may choose to provide only the smu email address under contact information for reasons of privacy

Weekly Schedule

DS 6110 meets for a scheduled live online sessions twice, apart from the sessions held at the immersion conference. The schedule for these meetings will be updated and posted to the course wall and meetings scheduled in the LMS at the start of the term.

Additionally, optional seminars are sometimes held jointly with three courses, DS 6110: Immersion, DS 6120: Capstone A, and DS 6130: Capstone B. Invited speakers, Café Talks, and other activities are planned and publicized as available on an ongoing basis. These live sessions are not graded.

The immersion is scheduled in advance of each term and the event dates are publicized the course wall and in supporting documents.

The units break down as follows:

Unit	Topic	Synchronous Topic
1	Live session 1.	Welcome and Introduction: Covers expectations and timelines for the course.
2 - 14	Immersion weekend	Conference event with various speakers and activities
15	Live Session 2	Covers communication and time management skills essential for graduate school success and/or Career services

Technology Requirements

All Datascience@smu courses are taught online with Synchronous and Asynchronous portions requiring the transfer of video. with. Students are expected to have access to a computer with a web camera with the computer capable of running the required software to access the Learning Management System, to read online documents, to watch course videos, and to participate in the Synchronous classes (including being on camera). Students are also expected to have access to reliable, high-speed Internet and a reliable phone connection in order to participate in the Synchronous classes.

All students enrolled in SMU have an SMU email account. Notifications from the Learning Management System and from the course instructor utilize your SMU email account. Students are encouraged to check this email regularly.

Course Access

This course is accessible to registered students in the SMU MSDS program only. Course delivery occurs through the 2DS Learning Management System. Access to the 2DS Learning Management System is available at <https://2ds.datascience.smu.edu/>. Students that experience technical issues with contact technical support as described in the following section.

Students will have access to only those course sections in which they are currently enrolled or have been enrolled in previous terms. Access to other sections is at the discretion of the section instructor. Access to recordings of synchronous sections where the student did not participate or was not an enrolled student are prohibited to protect the privacy of the students that do attend and participate.

Communication and Technical Support

Direct communications with the instructor should be made via email. General questions that are relevant to multiple students and do not involve private information should be posted on the course wall.

Technical support for the Learning Management System and the online classroom may be reached 24 hours a day, seven days a week via:

- *Chat Support:* Click on 'Live Support' in the lower right-hand corner of the 2DS screen after logging into the system to chat with a technical support representative. Chat support generally responds and engages in five minutes or less.
- *Phone:* Students should call 1-844-768-5637 (Toll Free) to speak with a Technical Support Representative.
- *Email:* studentsupport@datascience.smu.edu to initiate a support request with a Technical Support Representative.

For other questions or concerns, please contact the instructor or send an email to datascience@smu.edu.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all communications are received or acted upon.

Course Procedures and Policies

The following sections present the general SMU course policies and procedures that students must follow. Additional policies and procedures may be given by the instructor. Please discuss as early in the term as possible with the instructor any questions or concerns that you may have regarding the course procedures and policies as defined herein or any additions made by the instructor to the course procedures and policies.

Attendance Policy: Attendance and on-camera participation at the synchronous sessions in this course is expected but not graded. Students are encouraged to attend as many optional seminars as possible. Attendance at the full immersion event (all 4 days, Thursday - Sunday) is required. Attendance is taken daily and missing any one of the 4 days will cause a student to not fulfill the attendance requirement for this course.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.).

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

Grade Grievance Policy: Students are responsible for saving all graded materials as evidence in case of a discrepancy with the assigned grades. Students are responsible for ensuring that all grades are correctly reflected. Any identified discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the instructor as soon as the discrepancy is found. Refer to the university catalogue for the university policy and process for grade grievances.

Assignment and Collaboration Policy: Data Science is an inherently collaborative subject, and learning often occurs best when subjects are taught both to and from peers. Collaboration is expected to occur both in learning the course material and in performing the course work. However, each student must hand in their own work performed by themselves unless explicitly allowed by written directions given by the instructor. ***(*Grades in DS 6110 are based on individual participation, so there are no collaborative assignments in this course)***

Scholarly Expectations: Work submitted at the graduate level is expected to demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills and be of significantly higher quality than work produced at the undergraduate level. To achieve this expectation, all students are responsible for giving and receiving peer feedback of their work. Students are also expected to resolve technical issues, be active problem solvers, and embrace challenges as positive learning opportunities. Data Science professionals must be able to teach themselves and teach others to fill in any gaps in their knowledge or to find a way of learning new material that is most conducive to their learning style. Data Science professionals must also be able to work cooperatively and collaboratively with others – skills that students are expected to practice in this course. Students are expected to ask questions and ask for help when they need it and to offer help when others are in need.

Absent questions or requests for assistance, instructors must assume that students understand the material being covered and are able to complete the assignments. It is primarily through your questions that the instructor learns where the students are struggling to understand and on which topics more time needs to be spent for the students' benefit.

Timeliness: Because a 15-week term goes by quickly, assignments must be submitted by the designated due dates. Full credit cannot be earned by late or incomplete assignments. You will have advance notification of course assignments. If you know you are going to be out of town, involved in a special event/project, or unable to access a computer, please plan ahead. Also ensure that you have a backup plan ready in the event you might lose power, Internet access, or your available technology.

Time Commitment: In a typical graduate level course, it is expected that students will spend between three and four hours *beyond course instruction time* for each hour spent in “instruction” (whether live or asynchronous).

Most MS in Data Science courses are standard 3 credit-hour courses and so are designed to have approximately three hours of course instruction, or “contact hours”, per week of the course (including asynchronous materials in the platform and live online sessions). Students should expect a total of 45 “contact hours” required in the 15 week term and each class will also require 12-15 hours per week of additional outside time for homework or self study on average.

This course is a 1.5 credit hour course. (22 hours of instruction) The expected minimum time commitment is the four days of attendance at the Immersion Conference (15-20 hours of participation, plus breaks, travel, and optional activities outside of “class”), 2 synchronous sessions totaling approximately 3 hours, and approximately 5 hours of asynchronous class time required to complete the online certification training courses. Additional time to attend or attend seminars and to complete additional readings is encouraged.

Drop Policy: Refer to the university drop policy for a complete description of the drop and withdrawal policies for this course.

Campus Concealed Carry: Concealed handguns are prohibited on the Southern Methodist University campus. Pursuant to section 30.06, Penal Code (Trespass by License Holder with a Concealed Handgun), a person licensed under subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (Handgun License Law), may not enter SMU property with a concealed handgun. Report violations to the Southern Methodist University Police Department by dialing 9-1-1 or 214-768-3388 (non-emergency) or 214-768-3333 (emergency).

Students with Disabilities

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214- 768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)

Academic Integrity

It is the philosophy of Southern Methodist University that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Students caught being academically dishonest shall receive a grade of F for this course.

University Honor Code: When you signed your letter of intent to enroll in the MSDS program, you initialed the following statement: "I have read and agree to abide by the SMU Honor Code available online at:

<https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentLife/StudentHandbook/HonorCode>"

The Honor Code is taken seriously at all levels within the university. Students that are found to have violated the honor code will be disciplined which often includes expulsion from the university.

This syllabus is only a guideline and is not a legal contract. The professor of record for the course has final say on any policies, due dates, etc.