

CSS 262: Linux Administration

*nix Systems for Cybersecurity

Lecture 1: Course Introduction & The Shell



Welcome to CSS 262

- **What this course is about:** Linux Administration with a security-first approach
- **Who this course is for:** Future cybersecurity professionals
- **What you'll learn:** How to deploy, maintain, and secure Linux environments
- **Why it matters:** Essential skills for DevSecOps and Security Operations roles

 **Key Philosophy:** We focus on the "why" and "how" of system internals, not just commands to memorize.

Course Details

Course Code: CSS 262

Duration: 15 Weeks

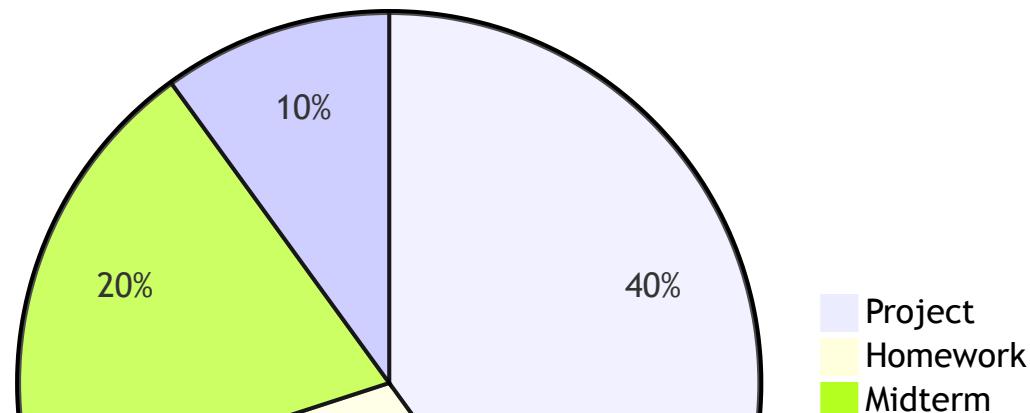
Credits: 5-6 ECTS

Level: Undergraduate

🎯 Workload

📈 Grading Breakdown

Assessment Distribution





Course Learning Outcomes

1. **Administer** fundamental Linux components (users, permissions, storage, systemd)
2. **Develop** automated solutions using Bash scripting
3. **Configure** robust network settings and package management
4. **Harden** server security (SSH, firewalls, service management)
5. **Analyze** system logs and audit trails for security incidents
6. **Construct** production-ready infrastructure using IaC principles

JUL
17

Course Journey

Weeks 1-7: Foundations

- **Week 1:** Shell & VM Setup 
- **Week 2:** Users & Permissions 
- **Week 3:** Processes & Systemd 
- **Week 4:** Storage & Filesystems 
- **Week 5:** Bash Scripting 
- **Week 6:** Networking Basics 
- **Week 7:** Package Management 

Weeks 8-15: Security Focus

- **Week 8:** 🔥 Midterm Exam
- **Week 9:** SSH Hardening 
- **Week 10:** Firewalls 
- **Week 11:** SELinux/MAC 
- **Week 12:** Logging & Auditing 
- **Week 13:** Docker Security 
- **Week 14:** Vuln Scanning 
- **Week 15:** 🎓 Capstone Project

Skills You'll Acquire

Academic Skills

-  Problem-solving & troubleshooting
-  Critical thinking & root cause analysis
-  Research skills & documentation
-  Practical coding in Bash/Shell
-  Self-directed learning
-  Security-first mindset

Technical Skills

- Filesystem & permission management
- Security auditing scripts
- Firewall configuration
- Mandatory Access Control (SELinux)
- Log analysis & forensics
- Systemd & LVM administration



Required Resources



Textbooks

1. **The Linux Command Line (2nd Edition)** - William Shotts
2. **UNIX and Linux System Administration Handbook (5th Edition)** - Evi Nemeth et al.
3. **PicoCTF Learning Primer** - For CTF-style challenges



Hardware & Software

- **Laptop:** Minimum 8GB RAM
- **Virtualization:** VirtualBox or VMware
- **Tools:** Git, VS Code
- **Accounts:** GitHub (Free Educational Account)

 **Important:** You MUST have a working VM environment by next week's lab!

Part 2: The Shell



Understanding the command-line interface

What is a Shell?

Definition

The **shell** is a command-line interpreter that provides a user interface for accessing operating system services.

Why Command Line?

-  **Power & Efficiency:** Automate repetitive tasks
-  **Precision:** Fine-grained control over system
-  **Reproducibility:** Script your actions
-  **Remote Access:** Manage systems over SSH
-  **Professional Standard:** Industry-standard for sysadmin

Shell Types

Common Shells

- **bash** - Bourne Again Shell (Most common)
- **zsh** - Z Shell (Modern, feature-rich)
- **sh** - Original Bourne Shell
- **fish** - Friendly Interactive Shell

Check Your Shell

```
1 # See current shell
2 echo $SHELL
3
4 # List available shells
5 cat /etc/shells
6
7 # Change shell
8 chsh -s /bin/bash
```

Ctrl+D to exit!

The Command Prompt

```
1 user@hostname:~/directory$ command [options] [arguments]
```

Prompt Components

- `user` - Your username
- `hostname` - Computer name
- `~/directory` - Current location
- `$` - Regular user
- `#` - Root/superuser

Special Paths

- `~` - Home directory
- `/` - Root directory
- `.` - Current directory
- `..` - Parent directory
- `-` - Previous directory



Pro Tip: The prompt can be customized via the `PS1` environment variable!

Essential Navigation Commands

Moving Around

```
1 # Print working directory
2 pwd
3
4 # List contents
5 ls
6 ls -l    # Long format
7 ls -a    # Show hidden files
8 ls -lah  # All options combined
9
10 # Change directory
11 cd /etc
12 cd ~    # Go home
13 cd ..   # Go up one level
14 cd -    # Go to previous directory
```

File Operations

```
1 # Create file
2 touch file.txt
3
4 # Copy files
5 cp source.txt dest.txt
6
7 # Move/rename
8 mv old.txt new.txt
9
10 # Delete
11 rm file.txt
12 rm -r directory/ # Recursive
13
14 # Create directory
15 mkdir new_folder
16 mkdir -p path/to/folder # Parents
```

Getting Help

1. Manual Pages (man)

```
1 man ls          # Read the manual for ls  
2 man man        # Learn about man itself!
```

2. Command Help

```
1 ls --help       # Quick help  
2 help cd         # For built-in commands
```

3. Type and Which

```
1 type ls         # Show command type  
2 which python    # Show command location
```

4. Info Pages

```
1 info coreutils  # GNU info system
```

 **Learning Skill:** Reading man pages is a critical skill you'll use throughout your career!

File System Hierarchy

1	/	Root directory
2	bin/	Essential user binaries
3	boot/	Boot loader files
4	dev/	Device files
5	etc/	System configuration
6	home/	User home directories
7	root/	Root user's home
8	tmp/	Temporary files
9	usr/	User programs
10	bin/	User binaries
11	local/	Locally installed
12	var/	Variable data (logs, etc.)

 **Everything in Linux is a file!** Including devices, processes, and network sockets.

Command Structure & Syntax

Basic Anatomy

```
1 command [options] [arguments]
```

- **Command:** The program to run (e.g., `ls`, `cat`, `grep`)
- **Options:** Modify behavior (e.g., `-l`, `--all`, `-R`)
- **Arguments:** What to operate on (e.g., files, directories)

Examples

```
1 ls -l /home/user          # List in long format
2 cp -r source/ destination/ # Copy recursively
3 grep -i "error" /var/log/syslog # Case-insensitive
```

⚠ **Remember:** Options can be combined: `ls -lah` = `ls -l -a -h`

Keyboard Shortcuts

Navigation & Editing

- `Ctrl + A / Ctrl + E` - Line start/end
- `Ctrl + ←/→` - Jump by word
- `Ctrl + K` - Cut to end of line
- `Ctrl + U` - Cut to start of line
- `Ctrl + W` - Delete previous word

Control

- `Ctrl + C` - Interrupt command
- `Ctrl + D` - Exit/logout
- `Ctrl + Z` - Suspend process
- `Ctrl + L` - Clear screen

History Navigation

- `↑/↓` - Browse history
- `Ctrl + R` - Reverse search
- `history` - Show all commands
- `!!` - Repeat last command
- `!n` - Run command #n

Pro Tips

- Press `Tab` for autocomplete
- Double `Tab` for all options
- `Esc + .` - Last argument

Viewing File Contents

Basic Viewing

```
1 cat file.txt          # Display entire file
2 less file.txt         # Paginated viewer (q to quit)
3 head file.txt         # First 10 lines
4 head -n 20 file.txt   # First 20 lines
5 tail file.txt         # Last 10 lines
6 tail -f /var/log/syslog # Follow in real-time
```

Text Search

```
1 grep "pattern" file.txt      # Search for pattern
2 grep -r "error" /var/log/     # Recursive search
3 grep -i "warning" file.txt    # Case-insensitive
```

Pipes and Redirection

Redirection Operators

```
1 command > file.txt      # Redirect output (overwrite)
2 command >> file.txt    # Redirect output (append)
3 command < file.txt      # Redirect input
4 command 2> errors.txt   # Redirect stderr
5 command &> all.txt      # Redirect stdout + stderr
```

Pipes (|)

```
1 ls -l | grep ".txt"          # List only .txt files
2 cat /var/log/syslog | grep error | less # Chain commands
3 ps aux | grep apache | wc -l       # Count processes
```

 ****Unix Philosophy:**** Write programs that do one thing well and work together via pipes.

Wildcards & Pattern Matching

Glob Patterns

```
1  *          # Matches any characters  
2  ?          # Matches single character  
3  [abc]      # Matches a, b, or c  
4  [a-z]      # Matches any lowercase letter  
5  [!abc]     # Matches anything except a, b, or c
```

Examples

```
1  ls *.txt        # All .txt files  
2  ls file?.txt    # file1.txt, fileA.txt, etc.  
3  ls [a-c]*       # Files starting with a, b, or c  
4  rm *~           # Delete backup files  
5  cp /etc/*.conf ./  # Copy all .conf files
```

⚠ **Warning:** Be careful with `rm *` - it deletes everything!

Environment Variables

What are they?

Variables that affect how processes run on your system.

```
1 # View variables
2 env                      # View all
3 echo $HOME                # View specific
4
5 # Set variable
6 MY_VAR="Hello"
7 export MY_VAR="Hello"    # Export for child processes
```

Common Variables

- `$HOME` - Home directory
- `$USER` - Username
- `$PATH` - Command search path
- `$SHELL` - Current shell
- `$PWD` - Current directory

More Variables

- `$HOSTNAME` - Computer name
- `$LANG` - Language setting
- `$EDITOR` - Default editor
- `$PS1` - Prompt string

The PATH Variable

What is PATH?

A colon-separated list of directories where the shell looks for commands.

```
1 echo $PATH  
2 # /usr/local/bin:/usr/bin:/bin:/usr/sbin:/sbin
```

How it works

When you type `ls`, the shell searches directories in PATH order until found.

Modifying PATH

```
1 # Add directory to PATH (at end)  
2 export PATH=$PATH:/home/user/bin  
3  
4 # Add to beginning (higher priority)  
5 export PATH=/home/user/bin:$PATH
```

File Permissions Preview

```
1 $ ls -l myfile.txt
2 -rw-r--r-- 1 user group 1234 Jan 28 10:00 myfile.txt
```

Permission Breakdown

```
1 - rW- r-- r--
2 | |
3 |   |
4 |   |
5 |   |
6 |   File type (- = regular file)
```

Others: read only
Group: read only
Owner: read + write



Note: We'll dive deep into permissions in Week 2!

Lab 1 Preview: VM Setup

What you'll do:

1. **Install VirtualBox/VMware** on your laptop
2. **Download Linux distribution** (Ubuntu Server recommended)
3. **Create and configure VM** (minimum specs provided)
4. **First boot and initial setup**
5. **Practice shell navigation commands**

Deliverables:

- Screenshot of successful VM boot
- Output of basic commands (`pwd` , `ls` , `whoami`)
- Create a directory structure using `mkdir`

Time Estimate: 2 hours

Goal: Have a working Linux environment ready for Week 2!

Tips for Success

Learning Strategies

- Read error messages carefully
- Use `man` pages before Googling
- Practice daily, even 15 minutes
- Type commands, don't copy-paste
- Keep a command journal
- Form study groups

Common Pitfalls

- Ignoring case sensitivity
- Forgetting `sudo` when needed
- Not reading documentation
- Running `rm -rf` carelessly
- Hardcoding values in scripts
- Not testing before submission

Remember: The goal isn't memorization—it's understanding how the system works!

Automated Grading System

How It Works

- All assignments submitted via **GitHub**
- **GitHub Actions** runs automated tests
- Tests use **dynamic inputs** (no hardcoding!)
- You'll see results instantly:  or 

Grading Philosophy

- 1  Green Checkmark = Full Points
- 2  Red Cross = Zero Points (but you can resubmit!)

Key Rule: Code must work on the grading environment, not just "on your machine"

 **Anti-Cheat:** Midterm flags are cryptographically tied to YOUR GitHub username!

Important Dates & Deadlines

Homework Deadlines

- **Homework 1:** Week 3
- **Homework 2:** Week 6
- **Homework 3:** Week 11
- **Homework 4:** Week 14

Quizzes

- **Quiz 1:** Week 7
- **Quiz 2:** Week 12

Major Assessments

- **Midterm Exam:** Week 8
 - "Broken VM" Challenge
 - 4 hours
 - 20% of grade

- **Capstone Project:** Week 15

- Infrastructure deployment
- Defense presentation
- 40% of grade



No Extensions: Late work not accepted. Plan accordingly!

Resources & Support

Course Materials

- **LMS:** All lectures, labs, and assignments
- **GitHub Org:** Starter code and submissions
- **Discussion Forum:** Ask questions, help peers

Getting Help

1. **Office Hours:** TBD (to be announced)
2. **Lab Sessions:** Hands-on assistance during lab time
3. **Discussion Forum:** Community support
4. **Documentation:** Man pages, official docs

Useful Links

- Course GitHub: github.com/your-org/css262
- Linux docs: linux.die.net
- Bash guide: mywiki.wooledge.org/BashGuide

Week 1 Action Items

Before Next Lecture:

1. Read **Chapter 1-3** of "The Linux Command Line"
2. Set up **GitHub account** (if you don't have one)
3. Join course **GitHub Organization** (link on LMS)
4. Review VM requirements (8GB RAM minimum)

For Lab This Week:

1. Install **VirtualBox** or VMware
2. Download **Ubuntu Server ISO** (link provided)
3. Bring laptop with **at least 20GB free space**
4. Complete **Lab 1: VM Setup & Shell Navigation**



Optional:

- Explore `man` pages for basic commands
- Try shell navigation on your own

Questions?



Remember: There are no stupid questions!

The shell can be intimidating at first, but you'll be comfortable in no time.

Next Week: Users, Groups & Permissions A small icon containing two user profile icons and a padlock icon, representing security and user management.

Thank You!



See you in the lab!

Start your Linux journey today 

CSS 262 - Linux Administration & *nix Systems for Cybersecurity