

Capstone Reflection

For the past two years, I have been enrolled in Old Dominion University's online Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity program. The experience has been nothing short of amazing. My professors made an effort to make themselves as available as possible and assignments have typically been straightforward and easy to follow. Pairing this with all of the valuable skills I have learned has made the experience in what I hope to be my last two years of school great. In my time at ODU, I have learned advanced Linux controls, Windows Security, networking, core cybersecurity concepts, writing skills, critical thinking, and how to maintain a strong work ethic in an online environment. The courses that helped me the most with these skills were Introduction to Linux, Cybersecurity and Social Sciences, Cybersecurity Technology and Society, and Windows System Management and Security.

My most valuable learning experience has definitely been the required internship I did over the summer of 2025. I was able to qualify for an internship at GFT due to my ongoing enrollment in ODU's Cybersecurity Program. I faced so many challenges and pushed myself further than I ever expected to during this internship. I learned how to navigate this professional environment and apply the skills I had been learning at ODU into the real world. Along the way I met some amazing people that I now get to refer to as coworkers. There were many times when I felt overwhelmed with the amount of work assigned to me during my internship. During this time I leaned on all the experiences I had with ODU. Situations where I had 12 assignments due on the same day and had to budget my time throughout the week gave me the wisdom to know how to approach the workload. I learned to calm down, take things one assignment at a time, and make a plan so that I would reach all of my deadlines. I can honestly attribute this to all of my courses and being a full time student for every semester I had taken in college prior to enrolling with ODU. Taking grueling classes such as Engineering Design, Calculus 3, and Physics taught me perseverance and responsibility for my own success as a student. Without those prior experiences I do not know if I would have been as successful in the program.

IDS 493 was a class made to help students build their professional profile, reflect on their experiences, and evaluate themselves as a professional. The most valuable thing I learned from IDS 493 was definitely presentation. Things I always overlooked when making PowerPoints such as color contrast, font, and consistent formatting were made incredibly important during the class. I have already noticed how I apply these concepts differently whenever I am creating something made to present. I am proud of how I was able to lay out my expertise as a cybersecurity professional in my portfolio. I think I did a great job explaining my impactful experiences and how they shaped me into the person I am today. If

I could point to one item in my portfolio, it would be my skills page. It demonstrates the skillset I offer and backs it up with artifacts.

The biggest obstacle I encountered during my learning experience with IDS 493 was having to build the actual website. I had never used WordPress before, and it was not easy to learn. I remember being incredibly frustrated with the formatting and trying to get everything to layout correctly. I addressed these issues by watching numerous videos and taking examples that the professor showed to help inspire my design. Over time, I think my portfolio can be improved through uploading more experiences and skillsets as I develop. In 5 years I hope to grow significantly, and I think it is important that my portfolio grows with me. Previous courses helped me in IDS493 by giving me experiences to write about and help me with my writing skills. The class was writing heavy, and by having years of experience writing papers and learning a professional writing format I had a significantly smoother time navigating the coursework.

The cybersecurity program at ODU has given me a core set of skills that I can branch out to have a successful career. Through various classes I have learned so much about cybersecurity, but most importantly I learned to never stop learning. The field is always developing, and I should take the foundation and expand it. Cybersecurity is rooted in interdisciplinary disciplines. Many of my classes stressed the importance of understanding human behavior, engineering, economics, and cybersecurity. The course that represents this the most was my Cybersecurity and Social Sciences class. But overall, many of the courses I took reinforced this concept and the core of my classes always leaned on keeping things secure. This was the case whether it was learning Linux, Windows, or vocabulary and terms.

After I graduate, I will be receiving a promotion from the job I have been working at since my internship. I plan to stay there for the next few years and continue to learn and grow my experience. During this time, I want to learn as much about securing operational technology and critical infrastructure. I will do this by receiving various certifications and eventually obtaining my GICSP. After this, I hope to find a job working for a large utility as a Senior OT Analyst. And from there I will continue to pursue growth and opportunities in cybersecurity.