

DEPARTMENT OF SECURITY STUDIES

About

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Mission

Homeland Security (HS) is an emerging and evolving discipline that continues to have a significant impact on the public and private sectors. Terrorism, natural disasters, cyber-attacks against critical infrastructures, public health emergencies, and large-scale organized crime, and similar issues all present challenges in terms of the ability of society, the economy, and the government to function when such events occur. Moreover, despite the fact that these are very different types of threats, they will require many of the same tools in order to cope with them. For example, prevention of terrorism and prevention of cyber-attacks require that law enforcement and intelligence agencies cooperate, share information, and design integrated strategies to track down and apprehend such threats domestically (or in concert with the military when the threat is based overseas). Similarly, critical infrastructure targets and industries must share information and engage in joint planning across their respective industries, with governmental authorities. This same type of information-sharing and joint planning is important in preparing for, and responding to, natural disasters such as Hurricane Harvey and environmental disasters such as Deepwater Horizon. Another example of the importance of information-sharing and strategic integration can be found in the interplay between law enforcement, fire, civil defense, emergency medical services, hospitals, and the public health system. These must share information, train together and integrate their strategies because they will all be brought into play, not only in the event of terrorism (with the public health system being a key part of the picture in chemical, biological, or nuclear terrorism scenarios), but also in the case of natural disasters, disease outbreak, and other crisis scenarios. Additionally, the strategic integration, information-sharing, and common planning mentioned in the examples above must not only be horizontal across practitioner areas, but also vertical in bringing together federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and international partners, as well as the all-important private sector (which, as noted, plays a key role in critical infrastructure protection but is also crucial for disaster response and recovery).

The Bachelor's of Science and Bachelor's of Arts programs are designed to provide students with a broad overview of the homeland security field and allow them to develop basic knowledge and competency in a wide range of areas within the larger discipline. Accordingly, the program will help students:

- Examine the phenomena of terrorism and counterterrorism.
- Comprehend the role of emergency management in the homeland security enterprise.
- Apply intelligence approaches and methodologies to understand homeland security challenges.
- Discuss the role of critical infrastructures in homeland security.
- Interpret legal and ethical issues in the homeland security context.
- Identify strategic planning and communications challenges and tools.
- Recognize transportation and border security challenges and policy options.
- Identify key public health challenges and methods of operation in the homeland security context.
- Understand the role of interoperability, information-sharing, and multi-agency coordination within the homeland security enterprise.

Upon completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Gather and assess data in support of policy measures in homeland security-related agencies or private sector entities engaged in some aspect of homeland security.
- Produce effective written products in support of policy measures in homeland security-related agencies or private sector entities engaged in some aspect of homeland security.
- Apply a broad homeland security knowledge base to enhancing communication and coordination between governmental agencies and between governmental agencies and the private sector.

The program can be completed 100% online. Students will also have the option to take some courses face-to-face at the university's main campus.

- Bachelor of Arts in Homeland Security Studies (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/criminal-justice/security-studies/ba-homeland-security-studies/>)
- Bachelor of Science in Homeland Security Studies (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/criminal-justice/security-studies/bs-homeland-security-studies/>)
- Undergraduate Certificate in Biosecurity and Pandemics (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/criminal-justice/security-studies/undergraduate-certificate-biosecurity-and-pandemics/>)

- Undergraduate Certificate in Security and Resilience in the Chemical and Energy Sectors (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/criminal-justice/security-studies/undergraduate-certificate-security-resilience-chemical-energy-sectors/>)
- Undergraduate Certificate in Security and Resilience in the Healthcare Sector (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/criminal-justice/security-studies/undergraduate-certificate-security-resilience-healthcare-sector/>)
- Undergraduate Certificate in Security and Resilience in the Transportation Sector (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/criminal-justice/security-studies/undergraduate-certificate-security-resilience-transportation-sector/>)
- Minor in Homeland Security Studies (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/criminal-justice/security-studies/minor-homeland-security-studies/>)

Student Organizations and Activities

- Order of the Sword & Shield National Honor Society

The College of Criminal Justice hosts a variety of events for students, including special guest lecturers at Real Talk with CJ, a career fair, an undergraduate conference, and mock courtroom trials.

SCST 2363. Introduction to Homeland Security. 3 Hours.

This introductory course is designed to familiarize students with the field of security studies. Topics include Surveys, threats, and challenges from terrorist attacks, to pandemics to climate change.

SCST 2364. Homeland Security Research Methods. 3 Hours.

Students gain knowledge about research design and methodology. Students develop the ability to analyze and critically evaluate data, ideas, arguments, and policy. Students also hone critical thinking skills and enhance their ability to be effective consumers of data.

SCST 2365. Introduction to Emergency Management. 3 Hours.

Students study the evolution of emergency management in the United States from early community-based response practices to the current robust national system focused on risk analysis, communications, risk prevention and mitigation, and social and economic recovery. Students examine benchmark policies, regulations, and directives that form the basis of the emergency management field. Students engage in case study research and gain exposure to current and emerging trends in emergency management domestically and internationally.

SCST 2366. Introduction to Cybersecurity. 3 Hours.

Students examine the problem of cybersecurity from a homeland security perspective. Students explore the diversity of threats and security measures in cyberspace from a non-technical perspective and with a focus on laws, strategies, and policies. Security issues, from crime to espionage to cyberwar, will be considered on both the micro and macro-level.

SCST 2368. Transportation Security. 3 Hours.

Students examine a wide range of facets that comprise the field of transportation security. As part of this course students assess the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the transportation network as well as explore the agencies and governance issues impacting transportation security. Students gain an understanding of the various transportation systems (road, rail, maritime, and aviation). Students also explore the layers of security and understanding the role of government and the private sector in securing the transportation system.

SCST 3380. Law and Ethics in Homeland Security. 3 Hours.

Students examine key legal and ethical challenges facing the homeland security enterprise. Constitutional questions relating to the separation of powers at the federal level, questions of federalism, the balance between security and civil liberties, and the impact of technology (drones, cameras, facial recognition, etc.) on homeland security law and ethics are also analyzed.

SCST 3381. Climate and Security. 3 Hours.

Students explore national security and homeland security challenges associated with global climate change. Students critically examine the role of governments, the media, the scientific community, and other institutions in the conceptualization and mitigation of the multiple consequences of climate-based risks. Topics covered include the impact of mass urbanization, water conflicts, and the effects of climate change. Students also explore the impact of climate change on water security, emerging diseases, and natural disasters.

SCST 3383. Energy Security. 3 Hours.

Students study the architecture of the energy sector, one of the Department of Homeland Security's sixteen designated critical infrastructure sectors. Students examine the main energy sector nodes and their interdependencies with other sectors, evaluate insider and outsider threats and hazards, and apply proper risk assessment models to reduce the energy sector's vulnerability. Students become acquainted with alternative energy sources, renewable technologies, and best management practices of energy resources for a sustainable future.

SCST 3384. Water Security. 3 Hours.

Students explore water as a national security and homeland security issue. Topics covered include: mass migrations and civil wars caused by climate change and droughts, floods, extreme weather events, transboundary water issues, water's interdependencies with other critical infrastructure sectors, water governance systems including criminal governance in ungoverned spaces, centralized state and local non-governmental organization (NGO) network governance systems, sustainable water development, and the security implications of an aging water infrastructure.

SCST 3385. Bioterrorism and Biowarfare Preparedness and Response. 3 Hours.

Students investigate the threat posed to the United States by bioterrorism. Issues include analysis of top pathogens of concern, principles of disease weaponization, and dual-use technology, and other bioterrorism related topics.

SCST 3386. Health Access and Homeland Security. 3 Hours.

Students examine the connection between health access and US homeland security. Topics include how physical and financial barriers to health access reduce overall health security and pandemic preparedness, the impacts of state and federal-level healthcare policy on American health security, and the relationship between healthcare infrastructure preparedness and resilience to pandemic response.

SCST 3393. Public Health in Homeland Security. 3 Hours.

Students explore those aspects of the public health discipline and profession that fall under the homeland security umbrella. Students examine the nature of communicable diseases and pandemics, the role of syndromic surveillance, quarantine laws and policies, and the role of international, federal, state, and local agencies in coping with pandemics. Students also explore cases of major pandemics and the lessons learned from these events and their respective outcomes.

SCST 3394. Global Terrorism & Homeland Security. 3 Hours.

This course provides an overview of the threat of terrorism as it relates to U.S. homeland security. Using a multi-dimensional approach that draws from international relations, law, and police strategies, the course emphasizes research and analysis. Students also examine international strategies aimed at reducing terrorist incidents.

Prerequisite: SCST 2363 recommended.

SCST 4076. Independent Studies in Security Studies. 1-3 Hours.

This course is designed to give students flexibility to pursue study of a topic under the supervision of a faculty member where the topic will be studied more deeply than in a traditional course or where there are no available courses on the topic. Variable Credit (1-3).

Prerequisite: Approval of the Department Chair and the instructor directing the readings.

SCST 4301. Chemical and Energy Sector Resilience. 3 Hours.

This course will focus on specific operational issues pertaining to the chemical and energy critical infrastructure sectors, including specific vulnerabilities and unique features and stakeholders that have an impact on maintaining resilient systems and the maintenance of continuity of operations. The course will provide security professionals in the chemical and energy sectors, and those planning careers in these areas, with the tools to understand threats, conduct assessments, engage in planning and manage crises.

SCST 4302. Healthcare Sector Resilience. 3 Hours.

This course focuses on specific operational issues pertaining to the healthcare critical infrastructure sector, including specific vulnerabilities and unique features and stakeholders that have an impact on maintaining resilient healthcare systems that can provide an appropriate level of care for patients. The course provides security professionals in the healthcare sector, and those planning careers in this area, with the tools to understand threats, conduct assessments, engage in planning and manage crises.

SCST 4303. Transportation Sector Resilience. 3 Hours.

Students will explore operational issues pertaining to the transportation critical infrastructure sector. This includes identifying specific vulnerabilities and unique features and stakeholders that have an impact on maintaining resilient transportation networks and continuity of operations. Students will learn the tools to understand threats, conduct assessments, engage in planning and manage crises to develop careers as security professionals in the transportation sector.

SCST 4304. Global Health Security. 3 Hours.

Students analyze the challenges of infectious disease control globally, as well as key elements of global health security. Topics include types of diseases and disease threats, disease transmission, social and economic consequences of disease, and the homeland security implications of pandemics.

SCST 4305. Binational Health Challenges. 3 Hours.

Students examine critical binational health challenges with an emphasis on the United States-Mexico border. Issues include analysis of binational disease surveillance and prevention programs, balancing state sovereignty with disease prevention, and binational health collaborations between the United States and Mexico.

SCST 4362. United States Security Post 9/11. 3 Hours.

This course provides an overview of the evolution of issues, processes, and policies related to U.S. security and safety that evolved after the cold war era. Specifically, the course will address the spectrum of security threats and safety hazards that have emerged post 9/11 and that continue to emerge, such as Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE), pandemic, environmental, and cybersecurity as well as the policies and processes instituted to address them.

SCST 4363. Homeland Security Intelligence. 3 Hours.

This course examines the development of U.S. intelligence studies and explores the role of intelligence in supporting the formulation of homeland security policies. It positions intelligence within specific homeland security missions of Protect, Respond, and Recover, and among actors who support the Homeland Security Enterprise (HSE) under those missions. It exposes learners to complex government-private sector policies, plans, partnerships, processes, procedures, systems, and technologies for intelligence gathering as well as information sharing.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing.

SCST 4364. Homeland Security and Emergency Management. 3 Hours.

This course familiarizes students with processes, agencies, and individuals involved in the national preparedness and response to high consequence events. Students examine homeland security strategies, emergency and disaster management principles, and human, physical, and operational resilience concepts. Students are exposed to approaches to collaboration, communication, and coordination when planning for, mitigating against, responding to, and recovering from the complex safety and security problems of the twenty-first century (e.g., extreme weather, environmental incidents, health pandemics, terrorism).

Prerequisite: Junior Standing.

SCST 4365. Border Security. 3 Hours.

This course covers security issues related to U.S. air, land, subterranean, and maritime borders. The course covers an interdisciplinary range of topics including immigration, drug trafficking, contraband smuggling (tariff evasion), potential for terror plots involving the border, the political realities of border fence construction, state surveillance in the border region, concepts of borderlands, civil liberties, and issues related to the border. The course introduces students to the various agencies that cooperate to provide border security and to the foreign relations issues that arise around nation-state borders.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing.

SCST 4366. Drug Policy and Security. 3 Hours.

This course examines the problem of illegal drugs from a security perspective. Because drug profits have been identified as a major funding source of violent criminal actors and terrorist networks, students in this course explore the vertical integration of the drug trade and examine its relationship to homeland security.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing.

SCST 4367. Critical Infrastructure Security. 3 Hours.

Globalization has made society increasingly reliant on technology for every facet of human endeavors. As a result of the reliance on interdependent technology society has become more vulnerable to major disruptions. This course familiarizes students with the concept of Critical Infrastructure (CI), the risks it faces, and how to protect against them. Students explore opportunities associated with infrastructure-related public-private partnerships, information sharing, risk analysis and prioritization, risk mitigation, performance metrics, program management, incident management, and investing for the future.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing.

SCST 4368. Technology and Homeland Security. 3 Hours.

Students explore the impact of a range of technologies on homeland security decision-making. Students analyze technologies designed to provide greater security (such as CCTV - closed circuit television - and facial recognition technologies and sensors, security technologies, and computer networks). Students also examine technologically-based threats including artificial intelligence, 3D and 4D printing, nanotechnology, and synthetic biology.

SCST 4370. Intelligence Analysis. 3 Hours.

Students explore intelligence analysis and apply structured analytic techniques to eliminate cognitive biases in their writing and analysis. Topics covered include: post-mortem analysis, devil's advocacy, target-centric and network analysis, visualization techniques, avoiding politicization of intelligence, Delphi method, and Red Hat analysis. Students will apply these techniques to the analyses of real world national and homeland security case studies both individually and collaboratively.

Prerequisite: SCST 4363 Homeland Security Intelligence.

SCST 4373. Homeland Defense and Civil Support. 3 Hours.

Students examine the role of the U.S. military in homeland security and homeland defense. Students gain knowledge of the role of the federal military and National Guard forces in countering terrorism as well as particular consideration of the Coast Guard, North American Aerospace Command and U.S. Northern Command in defense support to civil authorities and in the provision of homeland defense.

SCST 4376. Security Studies Internship. 3 Hours.

Students are placed in an approved homeland security or emergency management setting to apply academic learning in practical situations. See the College's Internship Coordinator for details about this program.

Prerequisite: Department approval.

SCST 4377. Special Topics in Security Studies. 3 Hours.

This course offers students the opportunities for structured coursework on emergent issues or other topics for which courses do not exist in the course catalog.

SCST 4379. Comparative Homeland Security. 3 Hours.

Students explore homeland security strategies and policies pursued by other countries. Students study other countries' experiences in coping with homeland security-related issues (such as counterterrorism, public health, and emergency management). Students also gain an understanding of the framework, approaches, restrictions, and powers under which other countries operate, as well as an understanding of the international dimension of homeland security threats.

SCST 4386. Crisis and Risk Communications in HS. 3 Hours.

Students explore the role of strategic communications in homeland security with a focus on crisis communications. Students will study theories of crises, principles of crisis communications, reputation management, ethical considerations, and other topics. Students will analyze the successes and failures of various crisis communication strategies in the context of case studies of selected disasters.

SCST 4387. Strategic Planning for Homeland Sec. 3 Hours.

Students examine characteristics of strategic planning within the Homeland Security enterprise in order to understand planning challenges and opportunities within it. Students will learn how to engage in environmental scanning evaluate and measure Homeland Security plans and programs, and gain experience in Homeland Security policy planning.

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