



# American Trade Secrets

## Complete Contractor Series (SRA2579/2635 – CBA 975)

*Detailed Course Syllabus 2025-2026*

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### Contact & Course Information

**Instructor:** Dain Paul Dejong-Stothoff

**Email:** [dain@americantradesecrets.com](mailto:dain@americantradesecrets.com) - (Include “SRA2579/2635 – CBA 975” in subject)

**Campus Locations:**

- Linn-Benton Community College: 6500 Pacific Blvd SW, Albany, OR 97321
- Oregon State University: 500 SW Jefferson Way, Corvallis, OR 97331

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### Course Description & Outcomes

This course delivers the core business administration processes essential to running a successful contracting company. You’ll gain practical skills in site analysis, design, inventory, logistics, contract development, operations, accounting, law, taxation, marketing, and administration.

**Upon completion, you will:**

- Apply business principles in contracting
- Identify and contract solutions for client needs
- Draft plans and contracts

- Coordinate materials and schedules
- Incorporate productivity software
- Develop marketing content and campaigns
- Manage operations and legal employment contracts
- Prepare accounting and tax statements
- Operate under business law, manage insurance and risk
- Lead teams and delegate effectively
- Commit to ongoing professional education

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## Course Module Series (Expanded)

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### Day 1: Friday

Module 1.1 – Site Analysis (2:00pm – 3:30pm, 1.5 hrs)

- **Evaluation of Site (20 min)**

*Topic:* Visiting jobsites for the first time and evaluating client needs. Learn to use electronic tools (tablets, apps, cameras) to gather site data for the bidding process.

*Discussion:* How to sell and cross-sell services on site by identifying additional client needs. Explore real scenarios where thorough site evaluation led to upselling or prevented costly mistakes.

*Expansion:* Students will practice using checklists and digital forms to document site conditions, utilities, access, and hazards. Emphasis on building trust with clients through professional assessment.

- **Measuring and Surveying (10 min)**

*Topic:* Understanding the range of tools (laser measures, tape, total stations, digital mapping) for collecting measurements and mapping sites.

*Discussion:* Why accurate surveying is foundational for estimating, planning, and legal compliance.

*Expansion:* Demonstration of basic surveying techniques; students will compare

manual and digital methods. Discussion of common measurement errors and their impact.

- **Resource Costing (30 min)**

*Topic:* Accurate estimation of materials and logistics. Learn how to create efficient logistics plans, coordinate supplier deliveries, and factor in lead times.

*Discussion:* Weighing the benefits of in-house delivery (control, flexibility) versus outsourcing (cost, liability).

*Expansion:* Students will analyze sample logistics plans, calculate delivery costs, and discuss strategies for negotiating with suppliers.

- **Estimation (15 min)**

*Topic:* Using trade math and software to estimate material needs. Outsourcing material bids for accuracy and efficiency.

*Discussion:* The risks of under- or over-estimation, and how liability is managed through clear documentation and contracts.

*Expansion:* Hands-on exercise using an estimation app or spreadsheet. Real-world examples of estimation errors and their financial consequences.

- **Scope of Work (15 min)**

*Topic:* Submitting detailed scope of work documents based on estimation data.

*Discussion:* Writing scopes that protect against liability and fraud—what to include, what to avoid, and how to use language that is clear and enforceable.

*Expansion:* Review of sample scopes; workshop on drafting scope language for a hypothetical project.

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## Module 2.1 – Design and Engineering (3:45pm – 5:15pm, 1.5 hrs)

- **Engineering (35 min)**

*Topic:* When and how to outsource engineering for high-risk projects. Understanding how engineering impacts design, safety, and regulatory compliance.

*Discussion:* Using engineering for risk management. Identifying hazards and writing safety protocols for staff.

*Expansion:* Case studies of engineering failures versus successes. Students will outline a basic safety protocol for a sample project.

- **Plan Development (45 min)**

*Topic:* The process for plan completion—using site and engineering data to develop

operational and cost plans.

*Discussion:* Separating liability when outsourcing engineering. Ensuring proper insurance coverage for complex builds.

*Expansion:* Students will review real project plans, identify risk transfer clauses, and discuss how to verify insurance documentation.

- **Permitting (20 min)**

*Topic:* Meeting permit criteria, preparing applications, and using site/engineering data for compliance.

*Discussion:* The importance of passing inspections, building to code, and the role of permitting in project timelines.

*Expansion:* Walkthrough of a permit application process; discussion of common permit delays and how to avoid them.

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Module 3.1 – Contract Development (5:30pm – 7:00pm, 1.5 hrs)

- **Detailed Resource Cost (25 min)**

*Topic:* Using site analysis data to calculate material and operational costs. Manipulating design to meet budget goals.

*Discussion:* Material purchasing, locating suppliers, and managing warranties and product damage.

*Expansion:* Students will create a sample resource cost breakdown and discuss negotiation strategies with vendors.

- **Detailed Scope of Work (20 min)**

*Topic:* Writing operational procedures that align with the contract.

*Discussion:* The value of a detailed scope for protecting all parties.

*Expansion:* Workshop on converting estimation data into actionable contract language.

- **Payment Schedule (15 min)**

*Topic:* Creating payment schedules using logistics and site data.

*Discussion:* Choosing the right payment structure for project success.

*Expansion:* Analysis of different payment models (milestone, time-based, completion-based) and their pros/cons.

- **Clauses, Terms, and Conditions (20 min)**

*Topic:* Drafting clauses that formalize agreements and manage risk.

*Discussion:* The consequences of missing or unclear contract terms.

*Expansion:* Students will review sample contracts and identify missing or risky clauses.

- **Required Notices (10 min)**

*Topic:* Serving legal notices required by Oregon law (liens, right to cure, etc.).

*Discussion:* How to discuss notices with clients and document compliance.

*Expansion:* Mock notice drafting and role-play of client conversations.

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## Day 2: Saturday

Module 4.1 – Inventory (9:00am – 10:30am, 1.5 hrs)

- **Material Supply Chain (45 min)**

*Topic:* Scheduling and sourcing materials, understanding wholesale vs. retail strategies.

*Discussion:* How logistics and supply chain choices affect pricing and competition.

*Expansion:* Students will map out a supply chain for a sample project and identify cost-saving opportunities.

- **Storage (20 min)**

*Topic:* Leveraging storage to reduce costs through bulk purchasing.

*Discussion:* How storage access influences purchasing decisions and profits.

*Expansion:* Calculation exercise: storage costs vs. bulk savings.

- **Systems (25 min)**

*Topic:* Using inventory tracking software to improve efficiency and scale operations.

*Discussion:* Automation's impact on profit and workflow.

*Expansion:* Demo of inventory software; students will set up a basic inventory system.

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Module 5.1 – Logistics (10:45am – 12:15pm, 1.5 hrs)

- **Delivery Methods (45 min)**

*Topic:* Comparing transportation options and their impact on material costs and scheduling.

*Discussion:* Factors influencing equipment decisions and the importance of proper

scheduling.

*Expansion:* Students will evaluate delivery options for a project scenario.

- **Scheduling (25 min)**

*Topic:* Developing delivery schedules, charging for specialty services.

*Discussion:* Preventing material delays and cancellations.

*Expansion:* Scheduling exercise using a Gantt chart or project management tool.

- **Equipment (20 min)**

*Topic:* Understanding transportation liability and third-party services.

*Discussion:* Liability control methods and insurance considerations.

*Expansion:* Students will assess the risks of different equipment choices and draft risk management steps.

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Module 6.1 – Procedural Operation (1:15pm – 2:45pm, 1.5 hrs)

- **Building Processes (20 min)**

*Topic:* Assigning building operations into phases to improve productivity.

*Discussion:* Breaking operations into micro-steps for efficiency.

*Expansion:* Students will outline a phased plan for a sample build.

- **Employee Management (25 min)**

*Topic:* Creating growth-oriented work environments and benefits structures.

*Discussion:* Using employee handbooks to set expectations and policy.

*Expansion:* Drafting a section of a handbook for a contracting team.

- **Conduct and Ethics (15 min)**

*Topic:* Writing codes of conduct and ethical guidelines for staff.

*Discussion:* How clear ethics improve business performance and trust.

*Expansion:* Students will develop a code of conduct for a hypothetical company.

- **Safety (30 min)**

*Topic:* Implementing safety measures and disciplinary actions for protocol violations.

*Discussion:* The impact of safety on legal compliance and project outcomes.

*Expansion:* Safety protocol exercise and review of OSHA standards.

Module 7.1 – Managerial Accounting (3:00pm – 4:30pm, 1.5 hrs)

- **Types of Accounting (10 min)**  
*Topic:* Cash vs. accrual methods and their application to contracting.  
*Discussion:* Choosing the best method for your business.  
*Expansion:* Students will compare sample financials using both methods.
- **Revenue, Expenses, Profit (40 min)**  
*Topic:* Forecasting revenue, tracking expenses, understanding gross vs. net profit, and tax implications.  
*Discussion:* Using financial policy to scale profits and eliminate waste.  
*Expansion:* Budgeting exercise with real or sample numbers.
- **Accounts Payable/Receivable (20 min)**  
*Topic:* Systems for recording accounts for tax and reporting.  
*Discussion:* Automating administration with software.  
*Expansion:* Setup of a basic accounts tracking spreadsheet.
- **Accounting Systems (20 min)**  
*Topic:* Integrating accounting software with CRM and banking.  
*Discussion:* Ensuring compatibility for seamless reporting.  
*Expansion:* Demo of software integration and workflow mapping.

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**Day 3: Sunday**

**Module 8.1 – Business Law (9:00am – 10:30am, 1.5 hrs)**

- **Contractual Agreements (20 min)**  
*Topic:* Drafting and enforcing legal contracts, terms, and conditions.  
*Discussion:* Handling breach of contract and right to cure.  
*Expansion:* Students will review and critique sample contracts.
- **Licensing (20 min)**  
*Topic:* Charging for licensed services, legal responsibilities, and compliance.  
*Discussion:* Leveraging licensing for sales and client trust.  
*Expansion:* Students will check licensing requirements for sample projects.
- **Insurance (15 min)**  
*Topic:* Purchasing and writing business insurance policies.

*Discussion:* Customizing insurance with providers for full coverage.

*Expansion:* Insurance policy comparison and risk assessment.

- **Liens/Notices and Clauses (10 min)**

*Topic:* Issuing liens, legal notices, and custom contract clauses.

*Discussion:* Using clauses to protect both parties and sell jobs.

*Expansion:* Drafting a lien notice and a protective contract clause.

- **Warranty (15 min)**

*Topic:* Writing warranties into contracts for future project protection.

*Discussion:* Deciding when to offer warranties and understanding their impact.

*Expansion:* Warranty drafting exercise and discussion of real-world warranty claims.

- **Scope of Work (10 min)**

*Topic:* Writing scopes of work for fraud protection and clarity.

*Discussion:* The role of a well-written scope in dispute prevention.

*Expansion:* Students will refine a scope of work for a complex build.

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### Module 9.1 – Taxation (10:45am – 12:15pm, 1.5 hrs)

- **Employer and Employee Taxes (20 min)**

*Topic:* Managing wage, benefits, and tax responsibilities.

*Discussion:* Outsourcing payroll and accurate agency reporting.

*Expansion:* Payroll setup exercise using sample data.

- **Accounting and Tax Software (15 min)**

*Topic:* Selecting compatible software for accounting and tax.

*Discussion:* Integration and workflow for efficiency.

*Expansion:* Software comparison and setup demo.

- **CRM Incorporation and Management (35 min)**

*Topic:* Using CRM for client and tax management.

*Discussion:* The importance of compatibility across platforms.

*Expansion:* CRM setup walkthrough and data entry exercise.

- **State and Federal Reporting and Filing (20 min)**

*Topic:* Preparing and filing financials with IRS and State.

*Discussion:* When to outsource and how to work with CPA firms.

*Expansion:* Filing checklist creation and mock reporting.

### **Module 10.1 – Content Marketing (1:15pm – 2:45pm, 1.5 hrs)**

- **Content Development and Creation (20 min)**  
*Topic:* Using technology to create engaging company content.  
*Discussion:* Interactive content for new client acquisition.  
*Expansion:* Students will draft a blog post or video script.
  - **Website Development with Interactive Content (25 min)**  
*Topic:* Building an interactive website and integrating email marketing.  
*Discussion:* Features that drive customer acquisition and retention.  
*Expansion:* Website wireframe exercise using free tools.
  - **Social Media Management (20 min)**  
*Topic:* Leveraging social media to grow business and engage the community.  
*Discussion:* Strategies for selling goods/services and promoting events.  
*Expansion:* Social media campaign planning and content calendar setup.
  - **Content Marketing Campaigning (25 min)**  
*Topic:* Creating and managing paid marketing campaigns.  
*Discussion:* Identifying and targeting ideal clientele.  
*Expansion:* Students will plan a basic Facebook or Google Ads campaign.
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### **Module 11.1 – Business Administration (3:00pm – 4:30pm, 1.5 hrs)**

- **Human Resource Development (15 min)**  
*Topic:* Forming administration teams, screening, and hiring.  
*Discussion:* Pay structures for retention of top candidates.  
*Expansion:* Job posting and interview question workshop.
- **Operation Management (20 min)**  
*Topic:* Selecting foremen, providing incentives, and retention strategies.  
*Discussion:* Creating environments for long-term employment and planned retirement.  
*Expansion:* Management policy drafting exercise.
- **Business Payroll (15 min)**  
*Topic:* Programming payroll and outsourcing accounting.

*Discussion:* Worker's comp, unemployment insurance, and tax reporting.

*Expansion:* Payroll system demo and compliance checklist.

- **Company Finance (10 min)**

*Topic:* Exploring self-financing, credit, and fundraising.

*Discussion:* Building budgets and offering credit to clients.

*Expansion:* Budget planning and credit policy exercise.

- **Marketing (15 min)**

*Topic:* Developing marketing content for products/services.

*Discussion:* Using social media to capture target market.

*Expansion:* Marketing message and CTA writing workshop.

- **Promotion (15 min)**

*Topic:* Planning and executing promotional events.

*Discussion:* Building awareness and audience for new offerings.

*Expansion:* Event planning and outreach checklist.

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### Course Completion & Certification

- **Total CEH:** 17 Hours
- **Certificate:** Awarded for full participation and successful completion of all modules. Valid for Oregon CCB and LCB CEH requirements.

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### Additional Information

- **Breaks and Lunch:** Scheduled between modules each day
- **Attendance:** Full attendance required for CEH credit
- **Support:** Contact instructor for questions, accommodations, or additional resources

## About the Instructor:

### *Dain Paul Dejong-Stothoff, Business Administrator & Lead Builder*

Dain Paul Dejong-Stothoff brings over 20 years of hands-on experience in landscaping, hardscaping, and construction to every course he teaches. He holds a degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship and actively partners with Oregon State University on educational initiatives.

Dain is the founder of All-Phase Landscaping and Design and holds triple Oregon licenses:

**General Contractor (CCB #214247) | Landscape Contractor (LCP #16032) | LCB Business License (LCB #100051)**

Celebrating the company's 10-year licensing anniversary in April 2026, Dain is recognized for his expertise in designing and building high-quality outdoor spaces and his dedication to mentoring the next generation of trade professionals. His commitment to craftsmanship, safety, and education makes him a trusted leader and instructor in the industry.

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## About American Trade Secrets (ATS) Trade School

American Trade Secrets (ATS) is a state-approved continuing education provider for contractors in Oregon, offering accredited courses that fulfill the requirements of the Construction Contractors Board (CCB) and Landscape Contractors Board (LCB). ATS is dedicated to raising industry standards through practical, real-world training and professional development.

ATS proudly supports a foster youth program serving individuals aged 16-24 through the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), providing educational opportunities and career pathways for those in need. Additionally, ATS offers comprehensive online resources and licensing courses accessible to students nationwide, empowering aspiring and established contractors across the country.

With a focus on hands-on learning and expert instruction, ATS helps contractors master essential skills, earn valuable continuing education credits, and grow their businesses. As a leader in trade education, ATS is committed to building a stronger, more skilled workforce for the future of the industry.

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