

Character Thread in the Academic Program United States Military Academy

The character thread is a multi-disciplinary effort embedded within the Academic Program's core curriculum that fosters character development through the content and instructional method of academic core courses. The purpose of the character thread is to support USMA's character-development efforts by identifying and reinforcing character connections across eleven academic core courses and enabling integration with the Cadet Character Education Program (CCEP), prevention curriculum, and other character-development activities conducted across USMA. Faculty members teaching courses in the thread will develop a shared understanding of cadets' strengths and opportunities for improvement related to USMA's character development goals as well as the way thread courses support character development.

The character thread comprises *core thread courses* and *supplemental thread courses*. The thread's core courses have course learning outcomes that directly support USMA's character development goals; supplemental courses contain content that supports USMA's character development goals.

Character thread core courses:

- The Army of the Republic: Leading Citizen Soldiers (HI101)
- General Psychology for Leaders (PL100)
- Philosophy & Ethical Reasoning (PY201)
- Military Leadership (PL300)
- Officership (MX400)

Character thread supplemental courses

- Computing Fundamentals (CY105)
- Literature (EN102)
- Physical Geography (EV203)
- American Politics (SS202)
- History of the Military Art (HI302)
- Constitutional & Military Law (LW403)

The character thread is one element of USMA's common character experiences, which include components of the Academic, Military, and Physical Programs along with prevention activities and Academy events (see appendix a). Common character experiences are developmental opportunities designed to prepare cadets to live honorably, lead honorably, and demonstrate excellence. The character thread promotes development both within a given year (e.g., plebe year) by connecting the thread's courses to simultaneous common character experiences and across its eleven academic core courses by reinforcing character-related content.

Character thread courses support USMA's character development goals by:

1. Introducing cadets to the concept of character writ large and within the specific context of service as an Army officer.
2. Teaching cadets to think critically using different disciplinary approaches that are useful in assessing moral dilemmas.
3. Fostering productive discomfort as cadets learn how to navigate complexity, ambiguity, and opposing perspectives.
4. Preparing cadets to critically reflect on, and civilly discuss, urgent issues facing the nation and the world.
5. Modeling and providing opportunities for cadets to demonstrate, and see the benefits of, empathy and emotional intelligence.
6. Modeling, studying examples of, and providing cadets opportunities to exercise intellectual courage and moral strength.
7. Modeling and encouraging intellectual and ethical humility.
8. Providing opportunities for cadets to explore the professional obligations of U.S. Army officers, the nature of the society in which they serve, and what it means to commit to a lifetime of service to the Army and the nation.
9. Providing cadets opportunities for self-discovery and growth.
10. Providing opportunities for cadets to imagine the probable and possible and to identify the implications of those scenarios.

Administration


Directors of core thread courses and supplemental thread courses will participate in thread meetings (three per year) to identify opportunities to reinforce connections and address institutional focus areas across their courses and within a given cadet year. Leaders of common character experiences not within the Academic Program will also be invited to thread meetings. Course directors, and leaders of these common character experiences will share assessments to create a shared understanding of cadets' strengths and opportunities for improvement related to USMA's character-development goals. Thread leaders will produce a document each year that shares course assessments related to USMA's character-development goals, identifies focus areas for the next academic year, and highlights connections made within the thread and with other common character experiences. This document will be informed by course annual executive summaries that include a section on thread contributions that identify new or existing connections with other thread courses or other common character experiences as well as relevant assessment results and character assessments in other programs.


Course directors of core thread courses and supplemental thread courses will share information about the character thread with faculty members teaching thread courses prior to the start of each semester. At a minimum, course directors should share the purpose of the character thread; their course's contributions to the character thread; and the connection of the course's content to other character thread courses, the Cadet Character Education Program (CCEP), prevention curriculum, and other USMA

character-development activities. Syllabi of thread courses will specify that the course is part of the character thread.

The attached appendices depict USMA's common character experiences (Appendix A) and contain a brief description of each of the thread's courses (Appendix B).

Appendix A: Common Character Experiences

 UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY WEST POINT					Common Character Experiences <i>"A common path towards living and leading honorably"</i>			
Plebe		Yearling		Cow		Firstie		
Followership		Lead Your Soldier		Lead the Corps		Lead the Army		
Cadet Summer Training (CST)								
AY Commandant's Time								
Military Science Sequence								
Physical Program Sequence								
Academic Program Sequence (Core)								
Academic Program Sequence (Supplement)								
Primary Prevention Plan								
Academy Traditions								

 UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY WEST POINT					Common Character Experiences <i>"A common path towards living and leading honorably"</i>			
Plebe		Yearling		Cow		Firstie		
Followership		Lead Your Soldier		Lead the Corps		Lead the Army		
CST Character Focus	CBT Squad30 CBT Team Day	CFT Squad30 CFT Peer Review Leader Dev Academy	CST Cadre and LTP	CST Cadre and LTP CLDT Peer Review				
Commandant's Time	CCEP ACFT	CCEP Inspiration to Serve ACFT	CCEP Leader Challenges (4) ACFT	CCEP Leader Challenges (4) ACFT				
Military Science	MS100	MS200	MS300	MX400				
Physical	PE116, PE215	PE117, PE32x	PE450, PE360, IOCT	PE2xx, IOCT				
Academic Core	HI101, PL100	PY201	PL300	MX400 (MCC)				
Academic Supplement	EN102, CY105	SS202, EV203	HI302	LW403				
Prevention	Theme Weeks Deep Dives Bystander Training	Theme Weeks Deep Dives Bystander Training	Theme Weeks Deep Dives Bystander Training	Theme Weeks Deep Dives Bystander Training				
Academy Events	R-Day and A-Day PPW Recognition	CFT Graduation - CPL YWW	Affirmation Ceremony 500 th Night	Ring Weekend 100 th Night Grad Wk Ceremonies				

Appendix B: Thread Courses

Character Thread Courses

The Army of the Republic: Leading Citizen Soldiers (HI101) (Core Thread Course):

HI101 and HI151 lay the foundation for cadets' course of study at West Point by instilling in them an understanding of historical ideas about military service and officership in the US Army, with a particular emphasis on the study of character in leadership. The intent of this course is to develop cadets intellectually and professionally through historical inquiry and analysis. Examining the history of the US Army in these ways will provide the tools they need to become better critical thinkers and more effective communicators in a complex world.

HI101 Learning Outcomes

1. Listen actively, read critically, and develop an informed understanding of the communications of others.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key historical persons, events, and developments and to employ historical thinking and analysis, both orally and in writing.
3. Use historical evidence to assess given situations both preceding and following historical change and to describe the limits of that change.
4. Identify conflicting points of view, analyze conflicting or ambiguous evidence, establish causal relationships between facts, and draw informed conclusions based on independent, critical, and synthetic analysis.
5. Understand and appreciate the role of historical insight in informing the decisions of political and military leaders and to apply this knowledge to enhance your professional decision-making abilities.
6. Examine and evaluate different ethical perspectives, principles, and concepts in their historical and cultural context.

Thread-related content

- The foundations of professional character are developed by the martial and civic virtues that are embedded throughout the course's assignments and discussions and include topics related to: duty, honor, discipline, sacrifice, patriotism, officership, civil-military relations (foundation of Army's relationship to nation).
- Activities in course address additional virtues: intellectual engagement, preparation and performance on assignments, respect, inclusion (gender, race).
- Character is "organic" in distribution across course, but also thematically and explicitly addressed in the consideration of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity. The course specifically addressed racial and gender integration in the Army and will assign articles and separate chapters that discusses this topic. This leads to productive conversations about racism and sexism and develops the intellectual foundations for inclusive leadership.
- Faculty are asked to make these connections in the classroom.
- Given the focus of the course, instructors place a special emphasis on officership during their PDR counseling with cadets.
- Instructors explain to cadets how to document, the importance of documentation, and the connection of documentation to the Cadet Honor Code.

General Psychology for Leaders (PL100) (Core Thread Course): Psychology as a discipline is both a natural and social science that involves the study of the brain, mind, and behavior. General Psychology for Leaders involves a multidisciplinary study of the behavioral sciences and leadership development. The course covers the cognitive, physical, and social domains of psychology to promote leader reflections on, development, ethical reasoning, and critical and creative thinking. The course outcome is a knowledgeable cadet capable of using scientific principles to explain, predict, and modify behavior to become a more effective leader of character.

PL100 Learning Outcomes

1. Apply the scientific method to develop critical thinking in the study of human behavior and leadership.
2. Explain how learning theory is used to acquire, modify, or stop behavior.
3. Explain the psychological, behavioral, and environmental factors involved in thinking, memory, and reasoning.
4. Apply multiple perspectives of human development and personality to understand identity development, ethical reasoning and behavior, and the transition to adulthood through reflection.
5. Apply an understanding of sleep, stress, and resilience to improve the psychological fitness of self and others using peer-reviewed research.
6. Explain the impact of social influence on decision-making and ethical reasoning.
7. Apply reflection as a developing leader of character to understand the importance of reflection in psychological development.

Thread-related content

- Papers apply integrative reflection to explore moral development, leadership, and challenges.
- Instructors discuss the importance of honesty with their classes before the first graded assignment.
- Cadets focus on exercising skills related to conducting difficult conversations.
- Statistical and critical thinking are designed to enable evidentiary and practical decision making of leaders.
- Observational learning provides content and discussion on leadership modeling and self-efficacy.
- A lesson is devoted to learning the biological basis of behavior in terms of impulse control and growth mindset.
- Motivation is designed to educate cadets concerning self-monitoring and goal setting.
- Sleep and circadian rhythms help cadet recognize cognitive limitations, mindfulness, and health dynamics.
- Memory provides theory to discuss and understand study habits and intellectual humility.
- Developmental psychology discusses moral reasoning.
- Intelligence discusses empathy, social and emotional intelligence.

- Emotion highlights an appreciation for gratitude.
- Stress and health provide information and discussion regarding physical and mental limits under stress.
- Social influence discusses selfless service, and obedience and conformity.
- Group dynamics and includes maximizing the contributions of group members by respecting diversity in membership and ideas.
- Prejudice and prosocial behaviors also include bystander behaviors.
- Psychological disorders also highlight suicidality and suicide prevention.
- Resilience, coping, and happiness.
- Healthy relationships and communication are designed to provide content and facilitate discussions on gratitude, team building, social and emotional intelligence, and sexual harassment and assault.
- Counseling fundamentals provides a foundation for professional communication and humility and feedback.
- Military leadership outlines WPLDS and discussing character integration in leadership.

Philosophy & Ethical Reasoning (PY201) (Core Thread Course): This course helps third-class Cadets develop their capacities to think clearly and critically and to write in a logically rigorous and conceptually precise manner. The course acquaints Cadets with various viewpoints on major philosophic issues, a significant part of it is devoted to developing Cadets' ethical reasoning ability. The study of ethical theory provides the foundation for this ability as well as the foundation for their Academy's character development efforts. The course also includes a substantial block on the ethical application of military power through the study of the Just War Tradition.

PY201 Learning Outcomes

1. Describe relevant philosophical concepts.
2. Think critically in identifying, analyzing, and evaluating claims and arguments.
3. Identify moral issues and examine the implications of these issues.
4. Possess a critical understanding of the moral dimensions of war and the philosophical bases of those dimensions.
5. Create written arguments that are logically rigorous and conceptually precise.

Thread-related content

- Cadets learn how to critically reason through analyzing and creating logically rigorous and conceptually precise arguments. They learn how to develop different types of argument forms and identify fallacies.
- During class and in their writing, cadets learn how to and are assessed on fairly describing and responding to opposing views. Their essays address controversial topics, and they learn how to discuss these topics effectively and with civility.
- Cadets learn the strengths and weakness of different ethical theoretical perspectives and how to apply these perspectives in different contexts.
- Through direct instruction in virtue ethical theory, Cadets learn to critically examine what it is to have a good character, to be of good character, and why that is desirable.
- The primary cadet writing assignment is a series of papers that begins with cadets exploring their own perspective on a topic such as capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion, or animal rights. In later essays, they apply what they learned in the course to the analysis of the topic.
- The last block of the course provides cadets opportunities to reflect on the ethics of killing and the ethics of war.
- Instructors also devote at least one lesson to a topic related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Military Leadership (PL300) (Core Thread Course): PL300 (Military Leadership) is a multidisciplinary study of leadership in organizations. Cadets gain a pragmatic understanding of the behavioral, organizational, and sociological sciences, and apply that knowledge to become better leaders, develop better leaders, and make their organizations more effective. The course surveys a carefully selected set of the most relevant and useful ideas, concepts, theories and knowledge from these sciences. A representative list of topics explored includes: leader and leadership development, character and its development, perceptions and biases, decision making, motivation, power and influence, multiple leadership theories, counseling, negotiations, team dynamics, cohesion and group development, conflict management, organizational justice, organizational culture, organizational change, socialization, and leadership in extremis. In addition to applying knowledge of these topics, cadets develop a leadership portfolio which helps refine and inform their personal approach to leading. The portfolio includes a 'Journey Line' reflection paper, an individual developmental plan, and a theoretically sound leadership philosophy. PL300 is designed to maximize direct application for cadets in their roles as leaders in the Corps of Cadets and as future Army officers.

PL300 Learning Outcomes

1. Cadets learn to apply knowledge from the behavioral, organizational, and sociological sciences to understand, explain, predict, and influence human behavior in organizations.
2. Cadets are inspired to own their development and to pursue life-long learning in topics pertaining to leadership and organizational effectiveness.
3. Cadets reflect on their leadership and become better, more self-aware, and inclusive leaders.

Thread-related content

- Reflection on Leadership: focus on self-awareness; perceptions of self.
- Character and Its Development: character strengths developed through habit.
- Humility and Leadership: self-awareness; teachability; low self-focus; appreciation of others.
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- Leadership Development: Leader Development Model associated with WPLDs
- Followership: Currently using Kelley's work (effective, alienated, survivor, yes, and sheep followers).
- Counseling: currently reads similarly to Army doctrine.
- Team Dynamics and Effectiveness: Discusses org inputs, processes, outputs.
- Cohesion: discuss interdependence; types of cohesion; and Tuckman's team model.
- Motivation / Goal setting. Motivation Problem Analysis; Expectancy Theory; Goal Setting.

- Decision Making: Rational, Naturalistic and Ethical Decision Making.
- Power and influence: Power based, influence tactics, and outcomes; how to acquire it.
- Counterproductive Leadership: Use toxic triangle (destructive leader, conducive environments, and susceptible followers).
- Transformational Leadership; Discuss full-range leadership model, TFL process
- Principled negotiation.
- Organizational justice
 - Assessing organizational change; Use Schein's cultural assessment.
 - Leading organizational change; Use Kotter's 8 step process and Schein's anchoring mechanisms.
 - Socialization
 - In-extremis leadership

Officership (MX400) (Core Thread Course): MX400 is the Superintendent's capstone course. With its emphasis on each officer's duty to provide moral leadership, MX400 challenges cadets to become commissioned leaders of character who demonstrate virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination to civilian authority. In MX400, cadets look both to the past and the future, reflecting on their own character-development experiences as part of the West Point Leader Development System (WPLDS), while also studying the enduring and emerging ethical challenges of the profession they are about to enter. MX400 empowers cadets to understand and embrace their ongoing development as leaders of character and their emerging identities as Army officers. Upon completion of MX400, each cadet should internalize their professional identity and feel confident in his or her ability to apply critical thinking in complex situations and present interdisciplinary solutions to complex military problems. MX400 supports the West Point Writing Program, as one of the two Writing-in-the-Profession courses, with the Pershing Reflective Essay.

MX400 Learning Outcomes

SLO 1: Apply doctrinal principles to military and leadership problems. Results indicate that MX400 successfully prepares Cadets to:

- (1) Recognize the complexity of their future operating environment
- (2) Learn and apply Multi-Domain Operations
- (3) Recognize, analyze, and apply the continuities and fallacies of war
- (4) Learn and apply the foundations of officership and the Army Profession (ADP 6-22)
- (5) Learn and apply the seven principles of Mission Command and the Commander's Role in the Operations Process (ADP 6-0)
- (6) Learn the sources of the Army Ethic and apply it to complex moral dilemmas

SLO 2: Reflect on the West Point experience to develop expertise and strengthen character. Results indicate that MX400 successfully prepares Cadets to:

- (1) Evaluate their experiences in the West Point Leader Development System
- (2) Reflect on their own character growth and their ability to provide moral leadership
- (3) Apply the Leader Growth Model to strengthen their readiness for Officership
- (4) Reflect on their professional identity as a leader of character in the Army Profession
- (5) Reflect on their own experience with ethical fading and moral rationalizations
- (6) Apply moral reasoning process to analyze and reflect on their moral failures

SLO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking, collaboration, and effective communication.

Results indicate that MX400 encourages Cadets to:

- (1) Apply critical thinking to analyze two book-length case studies
- (2) Assess the quality of their reasoning with the standards of critical thinking
- (3) Recognize the importance of intellectual virtues to honest critical thinking
- (4) Practice the elements of critical thought to improve performance counseling

- (5) Collaborate with teammates to create solutions for complex military scenarios
- (6) Succinctly communicate while writing internally to the Army Profession
- (7) Leverage their interdisciplinary experiences to present solutions to difficult problems

Thread-related content

(Former) Character Program and Goldbook Supported Goal or Outcome:

- Outcome 4: Cadets understand the West Point Values and the Army Values.
- Outcome 5: Cadets accept responsibility for their own, ongoing character development.
- Outcome 6: Cadets accept their responsibility to positively influence other cadets' character development.
- Outcome 7: Cadets understand how character is integrated into all aspects of officership.
- Outcome 8: Cadets understand the responsibility of commissioned officers to provide moral leadership.
- Outcome 9: Cadets are confident in their ability to fulfill the moral demands of officership.

Computing Fundamentals (CY105) (Supplemental Thread Course): This course provides an introduction to the fundamentals of computing and Cyberspace. The course presents basic program design and construction techniques, with consideration given to principles of software engineering. Problem solving using computing devices as tools is a central theme throughout the course as students employ various design methodologies. Students utilize an integrated development environment and contemporary application software. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking, creativity, and learning how to learn. Students are introduced to legal, ethical, professional, and security issues and the challenges, opportunities, and attributes of the cyber domain.

CY105 Learning Outcomes

1. Examine legal, ethical, professional, and security issues associated with the cyber domain. CY105 meets LO #1. A total of 87% of the cadets met the standard.
2. Function as an ethical, secure, and competent user in West Point's immersive technology and cyber environment. CY105 meets LO #2. A total of 83% of the cadets met the standard.
3. Apply sequential logic, control flow statements, and code libraries using a modern programming language, algorithmic thinking, and a problem-solving process. CY105 meets LO #3. A total of 93% of the cadets met the standard.
4. Describe digital data representation, components, and functionality of computer hardware, and computer networks. CY105 meets LO #4. A total of 88% of the cadets met the standard.
5. Describe the attributes, opportunities, and challenges of the cyber domain. CY105 meets LO #5. A total of 89% of the cadets met the standard.

Thread-related content

- Honor and documentation constitute a significant part of the first lesson, and this theme is reiterated for each assignment in the course. (*moral virtues*)
- A lecture on copyrighting is part of the course, with a focus on artificial intelligence and the associated legal challenges. (*intellectual virtues*)
- The course includes a focus on the ethical challenges of data collection, as well as the ethical challenges and possible bias of automated systems (using various implementations of artificial intelligence) making decisions that deal with lives, ranging from civilian to military applications. (*civic virtues*)
- Cadets discuss social media and how to use it appropriately, including both the character and cybersecurity related implications of their digital footprint. As part of this theme, cadets complete a digital footprint audit assignment where they analyze their data from multiple social media and other technology companies. The objective is to understand both the cybersecurity risks associated with their online presence as well as the implications of the character traits reflected by their online persona. (*moral virtues*)
- As a culminative assignment, cadets complete a summative presentation where they develop a project using the programming skills learned during the course and by

teaming with artificial intelligence. Cadets are challenged to apply the skills learned to develop a relatively complex software-based project. (*performance virtues*)

Literature (EN102) (Supplemental Thread Course): EN102 provides Cadets the opportunity to refine the skills of oral and written communication practiced in EN101 and to develop certain foundational capacities essential to undergraduate learning and to professional development through the study of literature. Habits of mind practiced in the study of different types of literary expression include close reading, critical thinking, intellectual agility, emotional intelligence, moral and sympathetic imagination, and creativity. By studying the most challenging and intricate uses of language, Cadets confront ambiguity while also learning both how to recognize and value difference and also how to find commonality. They hone their interpretive skills through the judicious interpretation of evidence. Rigorous immersion in literature enables Cadets to deepen their appreciation for the force, influence, and aesthetic qualities of literary expression as well as to increase the precision and power of their own speech and writing. Cadets learn about the central importance of literary models to their own culture and profession as well as to cultures around the world. In their encounter with diverse perspectives Cadets acquire insight into the human condition and begin to grapple with ethical issues studied in PY201.

Thread-related content

- Reinforces instruction on documentation and its connection to honorable behavior within military and civilian communities.
- Calls for intellectual courage, sound judgment, and responsible use of evidence.
- Highlights need to examine both text and subtext in the search for meaning.
- Develops awareness of the degree to which literary models have shaped contemporary understandings of the military profession.
- Presents examples of admirable, reprehensible, and ambiguous behavior.
- Exposes Cadets to representations of civic values—both American and those of other cultures and peoples.
- Gives Cadets confidence to speak in public, sharpens listening skills, and fosters awareness of group dynamics through dramatic performance.
- Encourages Cadets to lead an examined life by allowing opportunities for introspection and reflection and by exposing them to perspectives that might differ sharply from their own.
- Cultivates moral and sympathetic imagination in Cadets by exposing them to cultures and traditions that might seem strange and unfamiliar.

Physical Geography (EV203) (Supplemental Thread Course): This core course provides cadets with a fundamental understanding of scientific principles and processes of earth science, meteorology, climatology, geomorphology and environmental systems, as well as an introduction to cultural geography. Further, the course introduces cadets to technical skills - (terrain analysis, image interpretation and spectral analysis, remote sensing, global positioning system, geographic information systems cartography) - to delineate the geographic distribution of landforms, weather, climate, and culture systems; and evaluate their potential impact on military operations. Lessons are reinforced by use of in- and out-of-class practical exercises, terrain walks and computer exercises to demonstrate the interrelationship between physical and human processes, and their impact on the environment. Historical and contemporary vignettes are employed to demonstrate how weather, climate, terrain, soils, vegetation and culture are important, cogent and frequently decisive in military operations.

EV203 Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the fundamental concepts of physical geography incorporating earth science, meteorology, climatology, and geomorphology.
2. Employ remote sensing, cartography, digital terrain analysis, and geographic information systems to analyze physical and cultural landscapes.
3. Discuss the scientific principles of meteorology and the geographic distribution of weather systems, and the impact of weather on military operations.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the scientific basis for the geographic distribution of climates and explain the physical processes that determine the climate of a region. Evaluate the links between weather, climate, vegetation, soil regimes, weathering processes, and landforms.
5. Recognize the fundamentals of the geologic structure of the Earth's crust and endogenic and exogenic forces that shape the Earth's surface. Explain the global distribution of landforms in terms of tectonic activity and geomorphic processes.
6. Apply the fundamentals of culture systems and cultural landscapes to the geographic distribution of cultures.

Thread-related content

- Department promotes Army values and modelling empathy while upholding high standards.
- Instructors encourage cadets to continually question and pursue growth.
- Instructors introduce achievable goals and provide tools to succeed (study strategies, improving performance).
- During new instructor training, new faculty discuss modeling character in the classroom by (1) creating positive classroom culture (2) navigating character-related issues in classroom.
- During the course culture block, instructors focus on developing curiosity, empathy, and humility.

- Course director goals over the last several years include: (1) guide cadets more towards perspective taking (2) deepen critical thinking, curiosity, creativity (3) move from more definition-based to conceptual language/thinking.
- Cadets discuss timely, relevant case studies on culture designed to foster critical thinking from different perspectives. In the past, these have included a case study of the Teddy Roosevelt statue controversy at the Museum of Natural History in NYC. Another case study was the Frontline documentary “The Man behind the Mosque” about the planned construction of a mosque near 9/11 Ground Zero.
- Cadets complete assignments in groups and on their own.
- Instructors explain to cadets how to document, the importance of documentation, and the connection of documentation to the Cadet Honor Code.

American Politics (SS202) (Supplemental Thread Course): This course explores the American political system - its philosophical underpinnings, the structure and behavior of formal government institutions, and the influence of informal political actors within the political construct. The course introduces the discipline of political science by exploring a broad range of literature: classics of American politics, leading political theory, and contemporary reading. Cadets will apply their knowledge of political ideas, institutions, and behavior to public policy making and demonstrate critical analysis of contemporary debates in American politics. Finally, this course provides cadets with an understanding of the professional norms and responsibilities associated with their role as military officers within the American system of government.

SS202 Learning Outcomes

1. Understanding American Politics
2. Understanding military professionalism and civil military relations
3. Effectively communicating meaningful information using logical and relevant evidence

Thread-related content

- Throughout the course, cadets grapple with tradeoffs among core values in a democratic society (e.g., liberty, equality, justice, and security).
- Cadets explore the rules and norms associated with maintenance of healthy civil-military relations in a democratic republic.
- Cadets discuss the concept of professionalism through the lens of military officership as an institutional norm.
- Cadets explore citizen politics and how various citizenries and groups work with and against each other to influence government policies.

History of the Military Art (HI302) (Supplemental Thread Course): This one-term, upperclass core course traces the evolution of the art of war from 1900 to the wars of the present day. Emphasis is placed on the changing character of warfare as nations adjusted to social, political, ideological, economic, and technological developments. The historical method is used as a tool for understanding war as a complex, ambiguous, and unpredictable human phenomenon. Analysis focuses on causation, the interrelationship of events as warfare evolved over the ages, operational and logistical aspects of military history, and the role of society in warfare.

HI302 Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze military history through critical thinking, oral communication, and written assignments. Fundamental to this skill is your ability to write an effective essay that answers a historical question with your own thesis. You will research and analyze evidence, establish causal relationships, and properly document your work.
2. Evaluate how and why armed force has been employed in twentieth and twenty-first-century warfare.
3. Analyze how political, social, ideological, geographic, economic, and technological factors have shaped national military organizations and the methods and ethics of waging war.
4. Evaluate the attributes of successful and unsuccessful military leadership in different historical circumstances.
5. Appreciate the individual personal challenges of war by examining the experiences of soldiers and leaders in combat.
6. Demonstrate analytical and communications skills through writing.

Thread-related concept

- Address martial virtue and cadets' professional identity as an Army officer.
- Prepare cadets to think intellectually and morally about warfare.

Constitutional & Military Law (LW403) (Supplemental Thread Course): This course studies the Constitution of the United States and Military Law. Cadets will acquire information and skills in order to recognize and resolve constitutional and legal problems. The course provides analytical models for dealing with problems regarding societal and military order. Finally, the course seeks to enable the cadet to make an intelligent commitment to the values and preferences embodied in the Constitution and our system of military and civilian law. Examples from military law are used to model fundamental principles examined in the course. Significant decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States are explored to support the course goals. Specific substantive areas include: separation of powers, judicial review, war powers, the law of armed conflict, equal protection, privacy, individual rights, searches and inspections, military justice processes, and military criminal law.

LW403 Learning Outcomes

1. Educate Cadets on the basic principles of constitutional law.
2. Educate Cadets on the basic principles of criminal law and the military justice system.
3. Educate Cadets on the fundamental principles of international law and the Law of Armed Conflict.
4. Develop Cadets' ability to think critically, analyze legal issues, and effectively communicate persuasive legal analysis.

Thread-related content

The course is broken down into four parts: Part I—The American Constitutional System, Part II—Military Law and Criminal Procedure, Part III—The Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), and Part IV—Constitutional Rights. Part I provides the intellectual foundation for constitutional law, examining how the Supreme Court established judicial review and has then used that power to interpret the constitutional powers of itself, the Congress, and the Executive Branch.

Part II of the course has several lessons that support character development. These lessons examine the commander's legal powers to uphold good order and discipline. Character is reinforced in describing the commander's important role to wield her powers lawfully, balancing the need to maintain good order and discipline while continuing to care for the Soldiers in her charge. A consistent theme in this block is balancing Soldiers' rights against a commander's authority.

Part III of the course covers the LOAC. The lessons in this block examine why it is important to follow rules that limit what Soldiers can do in combat. By examining concepts like balancing military necessity against humanity, Cadets get a sense of the character that is required to lead Soldiers in difficult circumstances where the law seems to restrict the force they can use against the enemy. Classes like Lesson 30—Command Responsibility and Obedience to Orders and Lesson 31—War Crimes,

particularly examine character in combat, and how the failure to follow the law leads not just to prosecution of war crimes but has a significant strategic effect on a nation. Finally, Part IV of the course examines constitutional rights. Cases like *Texas v. Johnson*, where the Supreme Court upheld the freedom of expression in a flag-burning case shows how the rule of law protects constitutional rights, even when the exercise of that right is offensive to most citizens. Lesson 37-Equal Protection of the Laws and Race-Based Classifications looks at how the law failed Americans in cases like *The Dredd Scott Decision* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, where black slaves born in America were denied citizenship (*Dredd Scott*) or the concept of “separate but equal” was institutionalized (*Plessy v. Ferguson*). This part of the block highlights some of the lawyers and Supreme Court justices who disagreed with how these laws were applied, and how these attorneys demonstrated character by advocating for applying the rule of law to protect the rights of others.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, most of the lessons in LW403 support character development, whether by teaching the Cadets the law, teaching Cadets how to apply the law, or by providing examples of how others have used the law—either positively or negatively—against others, whether to protect the rights of citizens or to deny citizens their rights. These practical examples serve as reinforcement to Cadets of how to live honorably, lead honorably, and demonstrate excellence.