

Marine Corps War College
Leadership and Ethics

Leadership and Ethics: Course Overview

Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.

President Harry S. Truman

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The Marine Corps War College faculty recognizes your status as a mature, experienced professional. The fact that you are here strongly suggests that you already know much about the subject of leadership and ethics, have excelled as a leader at the tactical and possibly operational levels and have the potential to rise to senior leadership positions. This course is an opportunity for you to take the competencies you already have and examine them in light of the new roles and responsibilities that you will encounter in future assignments. It asks you to think deeply about strategic leadership – leadership in the complex and uncertain interagency, joint and international environments. It also asks you to think about developing new skills in addition to those you already possess in order to thrive in the complicated strategic environment where there are often no right answers, only difficult decisions.

The Leadership and Ethics (L&E) Course provides the student with tools he or she can use both in the other courses in the MCWAR curriculum and throughout a career. Make no mistake – as a Senior War College graduate you will soon find yourself assisting a senior leader making strategic decisions. Study of critical thinking and historical decisions, for example, will improve the quality of your advice and your actions when you become a strategic leader.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Each lesson will contribute to the students achieving the following Learning Outcomes:

1. Evaluate effective strategic leadership.
2. Assess the ethical and moral dilemmas strategic leaders face in a complex and dynamic security environment, in particular the moral courage required to convey unpleasant truths to one's superiors in such an environment.
3. Evaluate the impact of legal and ethical considerations associated with the use of military force in a complex and dynamic security environment.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY:

1. **Overview.** The L&E curriculum is designed to expand on the solid leadership experience and education of War College-level students by blending the study of theory with discussions with senior military and civilian practitioners of strategic leadership. The course is organized conceptually into three blocks: (1) Thinking, (2) Ethics, and (3) Leadership. The blocks intertwine to provide the students with a broad understanding of leadership at the strategic level.

The L&E course begins with the Thinking block where we will seek to improve our critical and creative thinking. After the Thinking Block, we will move into the Ethics Block where we will explore the profession of arms, ethical decision-making and the impact of command climate at the

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operational and strategic level on preventing war crimes. The Leadership Block will run concurrently with the other blocks and primarily consists of discussions with senior leaders. The Executive Assessment and Development Program (EADP) is a key component of the Leadership Block and will begin in the fall (see lesson card 16-8521 for more information). The Strategic Negotiation Exercise is an L&E lesson that also supports the Diplomacy and Statecraft learning objectives.

2. **Lesson Sequence.** The lesson sequence will definitely change due to guest speaker availability and current events.

Lesson	Lesson Title	Block
8500	Leadership and Ethics: Introduction and Course Overview	All
8501	Modern Social and Political Philosophy	Ethics
8502	Human Dimension of War	Leadership
8503	Critical Thinking	Thinking
8504	Leadership and High Command	Leadership
8505	Introduction to Systems Theory	Thinking
8507	Thinking, Ethical Blind Spots, and Atrocities	Ethics/Thinking
8508	Profession of Arms and Ethics	Ethics
8509	Ethical Use of Military Force	Ethics
8510	Command and War Crimes Panel	Ethics
8511	Ethical Challenges for Strategic Leaders	Ethics
8515	Introduction to Strategic Negotiation	Leadership
8516	Perspectives on Leadership	Leadership
8517	Strategic Negotiation: Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Practical Application	Leadership
8519	Creative Thinking	Leadership
8520	Ethics of Strategy: Holocaust Case Study	Ethics
8521	Executive Development Assessment Program (EADP)	Leadership
8599	Leadership and Ethics Writing Assignments	All

3. **Summary Course Hours.** All hours are approximate and subject to change. See individual lesson cards for specific hours.

Lecture	Seminar	Practical Application	Field Study	Exam	PSPT	Total
3	43.5	15	0	0	116	177.5

ASSESSMENT MEASURES: Student grades will be calculated as follows:

- Student Seminar Contribution and Discussion Boards* (40%)
- Ethics Essay (25%)
- Strategic Leadership Paper (35%)

*In seminar contributions, quality is of greater importance than quantity; likewise, sustained contribution is more important than sporadic involvement.

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RECURRING THEMES:

1. The character of war changes over time, but the nature of war is enduring.
2. The “human dimension” is central to war, politics, and diplomacy; consequently, the subjects of leadership, morality, ethics, and the art of command are central to an understanding of the profession of arms.
3. Context matters; many factors (social, cultural, economic, and geographic, etc.) shape the strategic environment and the decisions made by strategic leaders.
4. The national security environment is inherently complex, dynamic, and unpredictable; not all strategic problems have a solution and every solution is temporal.
5. Consistent success in war and peace requires the integrated application of all instruments of national power.
6. Effective strategists understand the relationships between ends, ways and means in pursuit of political objectives.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION: The College is very attentive to what many educators call “Institutional Effectiveness” – that is, how well we achieve our objectives. Critiques enable students to register views on the methodology for each segment of the course. All participants are required to contribute their constructive criticism and their suggestions for improvements. Surveys are electronically tallied, studied by faculty and members engaged in courseware revision, and eventually archived for use in future institutional research.