



INTRODUCTION

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Leadership is intangible, and therefore no weapon ever designed can replace it.

General of the Army (GOA) Omar N. Bradley

Overview of the BOLC I: ROTC Curriculum

Being an officer in the US Army means being a leader, a counselor, a strategist, and a motivator. Officers must lead other Soldiers in all situations and adjust to environments that are always changing. To prepare prospective officers to meet this challenge, the Army ROTC program is designed to develop confident, competent, and adaptive leaders with the basic military science and leadership foundation necessary not only to lead small units in the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) but also to evolve into the Army's future senior leaders.

The ROTC program is the first, or pre-commissioning, phase of the Army's Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC). The goal of BOLC is to develop competent and confident leaders imbued with a warrior ethos, grounded in fieldcraft, and skilled in leading Soldiers, training subordinates, and employing and maintaining equipment. BOLC is designed to ensure a tough, standardized, small-unit leadership experience that flows progressively from the pre-commissioning phase (BOLC I, one source of which is ROTC) through the initial-entry field leadership phase (BOLC II) to the branch technical phase (BOLC III). This progressive sequence will produce officers with maturity, confidence, and competence who share a common bond—regardless of whether their branch is movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, command and control, or protection—and who are prepared to lead small units upon arrival at their first unit of assignment.

The basis of the Army ROTC curriculum is the BOLC common core task list, which represents the foundation of competencies a second lieutenant needs upon arrival at his or her first unit. ROTC Cadets receive education and training in BOLC I common core tasks, as do officers produced by other commissioning sources (the United States Military Academy and Officer Candidate School). Then, in BOLC II and III, all second lieutenants, regardless of commissioning source, participate in more advanced, field- and branch-oriented education and training events that are part of the BOLC II and III common core task lists.

Like the BOLC model, ROTC's Military Science and Leadership (MSL) courses are sequential and progressive; that is, the content and expectations placed on you as the student increase as you progress through the ROTC Program. The academic rigor of your MSL II year will be greater than that of your MSL I year.

As was the case with your MSL I ROTC curriculum, your MSL II courses are organized into five tracks: the Leadership, the Personal Development, the Values and Ethics, the Officership, and the Tactics and Techniques Tracks. Each succeeding year will treat each MSL track in greater depth in order to teach you all the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for commissioning, success at BOLC II, and the establishment of a sound foundation for a career as a commissioned Army officer.

In addition to classroom instruction, your MSL II year will provide you with multiple opportunities to apply military science and leadership concepts in field environments, including leadership labs, battalion or joint field training exercises (FTX), and any battalion situational training exercises (STX) that your professor of military science (PMS) may direct. As a contracted Cadet, you must participate in physical training (PT) to build your fitness ethos and maintain Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) standards. Crucial to the ROTC program is Cadet attendance at the Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC), normally between the MSL III and MSL IV years. The primary focus at LDAC is to evaluate each Cadet's officer potential in a collective garrison and field training environment. The secondary purpose of LDAC is to validate specific skills taught on campus and to impart selective individual and collective skills.

Military Science and Leadership Tracks

Each of the five learning tracks in the Army ROTC Military Science and Leadership curriculum has subcategories that are reiterated and developed progressively through the MSL courses. The US Army has long recognized the importance of the effective leader who fully embodies the leadership ethos, who is fully committed to being a lifelong learner of leadership as a process and journey rather than a destination; a person who has the professional acumen to put this leadership into action in an effective, value-added manner regardless of the challenge of the situation faced in the fast-paced, ever-changing COE.

Leadership

- *Leader Attributes* from FM 6-22 are used throughout the curriculum as a graphic organizer for developing a basic knowledge of leader dimensions. The implicit focus throughout the curriculum is on the importance of personal discipline in becoming a leader of character, a leader with presence, and a leader with intellectual capacity.
- *Core Leader Competencies* are centered around what an Army leader does. These competencies are defined and illustrated as they apply to direct (tactical), organizational (operational), and strategic levels of leader responsibility. The course of study as a whole is designed to challenge and develop the leader's ability to lead (demonstrate competence, communicate, and motivate), develop self and others (adapt, learn, and mentor), and achieve (prioritize, plan, and execute).

Personal Development

- *Character* development is an implicit aspect of the ROTC curriculum. Cadets are challenged throughout the course of study to recognize and model the Army Values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage; to empathize with their peers, subordinates, and others; and to live the Warrior Ethos.
- *Physical Presence* is foundational for Army leader development. Every Cadet who seeks to become an officer must be able to demonstrate an exceptional level of physical fitness, composure, confidence, and resilience.
- *Intellectual Capacity* has always been and continues to be an imperative characteristic for officers serving in the US Army. Those serving in the contemporary operating environments of Iraq and Afghanistan are learning firsthand the value of mental agility and innovation to Army leadership. Vignettes and case studies from these environments are used to challenge Cadets to examine nonlinear situations, to hone their judgment, and to increase their tactical, technical, cultural, and geopolitical knowledge.

Values and Ethics

- *Army Values*. While it is important for Cadets to be able to articulate the seven Army Values, it is even more imperative that they be able to demonstrate these values in their daily interactions with others. Values form the foundation for Army leadership.
- *Professional Ethics*. In addition to the Army Values, military codes and regulations govern ethical behavior and decision making. Cadets apply the ethical decision making process during case studies and historical vignettes.
- *Warrior Ethos* is embedded in case studies and historical vignettes throughout the curriculum. Cadre members discuss the four basic principles of the Warrior Ethos whenever possible. Cadets apply the Warrior Ethos to increasingly complex situations as they progress through the ROTC program.

Officership

- *Military Heritage.* Cadre members teach and model military heritage through daily performance and contact, lab exercises, ceremonies, and interpersonal interactions throughout the ROTC curriculum.
- *Military History.* Cadets review vignettes and case studies, which provide opportunities for critical reasoning in evaluating tactics, leadership styles, problem solving, and decision making.
- *Management and Administration.* Cadets learn Army programs, policies, and procedures related to areas such as organization, human resources, management, administration, training, and facilities in order to support Army operations.

Tactics and Techniques

- In MSL II students begin an in-depth study of *tactical operations*. During labs, Cadets are expected to develop and demonstrate a proficient understanding and ability to perform basic land navigation, troop leading procedures, and squad tactical operations.

MSL 201 Course Overview: Innovative Team Leadership

MSL 201 explores the dimensions of creative and innovative tactical leadership strategies and styles by examining team dynamics and two historical leadership theories that form the basis of the Army Leadership Requirements Model (trait and behavior theories). Cadets practice aspects of personal motivation and team building in the context of planning, executing, and assessing team exercises and participating in leadership labs. Focus is on continued development of the knowledge of leadership values and attributes through an understanding of Army rank, structure, and duties, and basic aspects of land navigation and squad tactics. Case studies provide tangible context for learning the Soldier's Creed and Warrior Ethos as they apply in the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE). Cadet objectives for MSL 201 include the following:

Leadership

- Describe the relationship between leader character and competence
- Explain the leader attributes and core competencies of the Army Leadership Requirements Model
- Describe the dynamics of team building and the qualities of successful teams
- Explain the trait and behavior leadership theories and their relationship to the Army Leadership Requirements Model.

Personal Development

- Define the basic elements of time and stress management
- List the four steps to improving communications skills
- Describe three techniques for active listening
- Describe the types of Army briefings and the elements of an effective briefing
- Conduct an information briefing in accordance with Army briefing standards.

Values and Ethics

- Explain the Warrior Ethos
- List and define the seven Army Values.

Officership

- Explain the importance of being a model citizen as an Army officer
- React to passing colors, National music, and approaching officers
- List and explain the principles of war and operations.

Tactics and Techniques

- Demonstrate map reading and land navigation skills
- Explain the Army problem solving process and troop leading procedures
- Describe squad organization and movement techniques
- Describe fundamentals of offensive and defensive operations and battle drills.

MSL 202 Course Overview: Foundations of Tactical Leadership

MSL 202 examines the challenges of leading tactical teams in the complex COE. The course highlights dimensions of terrain analysis, patrolling, and operation orders. Further study of the theoretical basis of the Army Leadership Requirements Model explores the dynamics of adaptive leadership in the context of military operations. MSL 202 provides a smooth transition into MSL 301. Cadets develop greater self-awareness as they assess their own leadership styles and practice communication and team-building skills. COE case studies give insight into the importance and practice of teamwork and tactics in real-world scenarios. Cadet objectives for MSL 202 include the following:

Leadership

- Explain the situational, transformational, and adaptive leadership theories and their relationship to the Army Leadership Requirements Model
- Describe methods of assessing leadership styles.

Personal Development

- Write in accordance with the Army standard for effective writing
- Explain how to set goals and manage time at the team level.

Values and Ethics

- Explain the Army Values and the Army's Consideration of Others program.

Officership

- Describe the history of terrorism and basic US antiterrorism policy.

Tactics and Techniques

- Distinguish between the different types of Army plans and orders
- Demonstrate terrain analysis and route planning skills
- Explain the five-paragraph format for an operations order
- Describe the characteristics and techniques of defensive operations
- Explain how squads and platoons plan for and conduct patrols.

The Role of the MSL II Cadet

LEADS—The MSL II year is the time to go beyond the basics of being an ROTC Cadet and begin digging deeper—into team-building and leadership theory, personal communications skills, team goal-setting and time-management skills, and the conduct of tactical operations at small-unit levels. As a potential Army officer, you will be challenged to study, practice, and evaluate Army leadership and values as you become more familiar with the Army.

DEVELOPS—To learn the skills required of a quality officer and leader, you must participate actively in learning through critical reflection, inquiry, dialogue, and group interactions. MSL 201 and 202 will teach you the specific leadership values, skills, and actions described in FM 6-22 as they relate to your development as a future Army lieutenant. Your instruction in small-unit operations will further prepare you to lead tactical teams in the COE. Everyone is responsible for contributing to the success of the learning experience.

ACHIEVES—Extensive small-group discussions and exercises are integrated throughout the MSL 201 and 202 courses. Emerging officers are encouraged to work together as a team and with their instructors in modifying assignments, suggesting agendas, and raising questions for discussion. Collaborative learning is enhanced when students apply what they learn in class by describing relevant lessons learned through experiences outside the ROTC classroom.

Academic Approach

The MSL curriculum is outcomes based and designed to focus on Cadet learning, rather than on any specific subject matter. Focusing on the Cadet requires student-centered objectives and conscious attention to how Cadets react to the instruction received. For effective instruction, Cadets need the opportunity to apply the knowledge received from instruction received by experienced cadre. Too often, academic instruction is limited to the delivery of information, either through reading assignments, lectures, or slide presentations. Active, student-centered learning, in contrast, is founded on the belief that interaction is central to the learning process. Learning occurs during class in the same way it does outside the classroom: through unstructured and structured experiences in which the Cadet interacts with cadre, with the instructional material, and with other Cadets. Helpful synonyms for ROTC's student-centered approach to learning are experiential learning, direct experience, discovery learning, experience-based learning, and participatory learning. All of these approaches center around five basic steps:

1. Readiness for and openness to the experience
2. The experience itself
3. Reflection upon the experience
4. Analysis, application of theory, or additional explanation of information to clarify the relationship between theory and actions, with an understanding of lessons learned regarding needed changes
5. The opportunity to re-experience (practice in new situations/practical exercises).

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The emphasis must first be on the Cadet’s preclass preparation. Cadets must come to class with a foundation of knowledge from their preclass readings. This allows the cadre to apply the Socratic model of reflective learning during the 50 minutes of classroom instruction. During this limited contact hour, the cadre can focus on explaining the concepts or material that needs clarifying.

How to Use This Textbook

The readings in this textbook have been compiled to prepare the Cadet to participate actively and productively in MSL classes and labs. The chapters are divided into the five MSL curriculum tracks as follows:



To be most effective, MSL class sessions are best sequenced to coincide with leadership lab schedules, which may vary from campus to campus due to weather, academic calendars, and other local variables. Thus, class sessions may not necessarily follow the same sequence as textbook chapters. *Cadets must follow the reading assignments given by their instructors to ensure they are adequately prepared for each class session.*

The first page of each chapter orients the Cadet to the key points to be covered in the reading assignment. At the end of each chapter, learning assessment questions serve as “checks on learning” for the Cadet to ensure he or she understands the key points of the chapter. Additionally, vignettes, scenarios, case studies, and critical-thinking questions are dispersed throughout the chapters to help the Cadet build critical-thinking skills and to apply the coursework to real-world situations. The learning assessment questions at the end of each chapter are aligned with the learning objectives for each coinciding lesson.

Cadet Resources

Cadet Textbook. This textbook contains the readings that support the MSL 201 course, Innovative Team Leadership, and the MSL 202 course, Foundations of Tactical Leadership. *Blackboard (Bb).* The Blackboard course web site, <http://rotc.blackboard.com>, contains MSL course materials.



CONCLUSION

The Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) common core task list forms the foundation of competencies a second lieutenant needs to know upon arrival at his or her first unit. Today's Army officer develops through a progression of BOLC sequential learning programs designed for pre-commissioning (BOLC I), common tactical training that is focused on warrior tasks and battle drills (BOLC II), and basic branch-specific training (BOLC III). The ROTC program is the implementation of BOLC I in a university setting. Today's ROTC Cadet represents the future leadership of this great nation. Such responsibility must be carried by officers well versed in the principles and practices of effective leadership, military operations, and personal development. A future officer must be a leader of character, of presence, and of intellectual capacity—a professional who is able to think critically and ready to lead Soldiers in the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE). The MSL II year of ROTC forges this officer through a challenging curriculum of leader development, Army operations, and personal development.

Although this course prepares you for this challenge, it is your responsibility to live the leader attributes while adopting and demonstrating Army Values at all times—both on and off campus. The qualities of an Army officer are not words professed for an exam or exercise. At the MSL II level, these qualities are the expression of a professional prepared to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic.” Your commitment to excellence in the Warrior Ethos, tactical proficiency, and adaptive team leadership is essential to the success of the Army of the future.

References

Cadet Command Reg. 145-3, ROTC Precommissioning Training and Leadership Development.

Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile*. 12 August 2006.