THE VMI CORE CURRICULUM:

The Nucleus of Effective Citizenship and Leadership

The VMI Core Curriculum is a common and mutually reinforcing set of courses and experiences designed to cultivate the essential characteristics of the citizen-soldier—a person of character who is able to anticipate, respond, and lead in a complex and changing world.

Through required courses and carefully managed elective opportunities, cadets develop *habits of mind* (learning to read, think, inquire, and communicate effectively) and *habits of living* (committing themselves to ethical behavior and lifelong learning and wellness). This nucleus of experience enables their development as students and prepares them to become strong contributors to their communities, their professions, and the nation following graduation.

The Core Curriculum is integrated across all four years of the cadetship, providing knowledge and experiences that expand, inform, and facilitate cadets' specialized study in the major discipline of their choice. Complemented by a variety of experiences in the VMI co-curriculum, the Core Curriculum contributes specifically to the academic preparation of graduates who possess:

- *An understanding of the responsibilities of American citizenship, including the obligation to defend the principles of democracy on which the United States is founded;*

- *The ability to influence human behavior to accomplish organizational goals, recognizing moral issues and applying ethical considerations in decision-making;*

- *The ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing;*

- *The ability to design and conduct scientific experiments as well as analyze and interpret data;*

- *The ability to understand and apply mathematical sciences to solve quantitative problems;*

- *A knowledge of history and culture and an appreciation of how they may be used to understand human behavior, achievement, and ideas in a global context;*

- *The ability to process information for strategic or creative purposes to include evaluative, anticipatory, logical, conceptual, or divergent thinking which results in effective solutions to problems;*

- *The confidence to use technology and experiment with technological solutions to problems;*

- *Intellectual curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning;*

- *A lifetime commitment to physical fitness and wellness; and*

- *A commitment to public service.*

The VMI Core Curriculum (CC) is thus organized into four components:

A. Key Competencies
B. Foundations of Citizenship and Leadership
C. Perspectives on Civilization and Human Achievement
D. Integrative Experiences

All courses in the Core are approved and monitored by an oversight committee appointed by the Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty. Courses are taught with an explicit effort to stimulate cadets' intellectual curiosity and awareness of why these requirements have been established as the core academic contribution to the Institute's mission to develop citizen-soldiers.

A. Key Competencies: 25 hours

This component of the Core develops in each cadet a base of skills and knowledge necessary for success in college courses and in life after graduation: effective communication, analytical and creative thinking, and a commitment to health and wellness.

1. **Written Communication (6 hours) – Class of 2011**
   Principles of Rhetoric: stressing awareness of audience, occasion, and purpose in effective use of the written word: EN 101, EN 102 – both completed with grade of C or better.

2. **Oral Communication (1 hour) – Class of 2011**
   Public Speaking: reinforcing awareness of audience, occasion, and purpose in effective use of the spoken word: SE 300.

3. **Scientific Analysis (8 hours) – Class of 2012**
   Two CC-designated laboratory courses in the natural sciences: emphasizing scientific modes of thinking and problem-solving: BI, CH, or PY. The major department may require a cadet to take two, stand-alone courses in two natural sciences <u>or</u> two sequential courses in one of

the natural sciences. If the major department does not specify, the cadet may select either option.

4. **Mathematical Reasoning (6 hours) – Class of 2011**
   Two CC-designated sequential courses in mathematics: developing the ability to understand and apply mathematical sciences to solve quantitative problems. The major department may require a particular sequence of courses for this requirement.

5. **Physical Education (4 hours) – Class of 2011**
   Seven semesters of physical education: beginning second semester of the 4th class year, totaling 4 semester credit hours (exclusive of PE 430, an elective):

	4th class year	3rd class year	2nd class year	1st class year
1st Semester	No Course Requirement	Boxing PE 102 or Swimming PE 100 or 101	Principles PE 300 or Wrestling PE 211	Drug & Alcohol PE 200 or Elective
2nd Semester	Boxing PE 102 or Swimming PE 100 or 101	Principles PE 300 or Wrestling PE 211	Drug & Alcohol PE 200 or Elective	Elective

All courses in the above matrix are ½ credit, meeting one time per week, with the exception of PE 300 (Principles of Physical Conditioning), a one credit course that meets twice per week. Each course has a physical fitness component, measured by a physical fitness test, that constitutes 25 percent of the final grade.

B. Foundations of Citizenship and Leadership: 15 hours

This component of the Core provides classroom and practical experience with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society and prepares cadets for effective leadership and service to the nation, whether in the military or in another profession of their choice. It also equips them for personal success in the community of the Corps of Cadets and in their early life after graduation.

1. **ROTC (12 hours) – Class of 2011**
   The progressive combination of eight courses of any Service ROTC to include associated leadership laboratories when offered, emphasizing foundational background and practical leadership experiences in preparation for commissioned service in our Armed Forces: AS, MS, NS.

2. **Leadership (3 hours) – Class of 2010**
   An interdisciplinary study of leadership in an organizational context focusing on the integration of theory and practice, taught by faculty with

formal academic training and experience in leadership studies and affiliated disciplines. Cadets study the leader's direct influence on individual motivation and group processes through the application of leadership theories, skills, and attributes. They also learn how to influence subordinates indirectly through organizational systems and procedures, organizational culture, and ethical climate. The course will be structured around opportunities for cadets to reflect upon and apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to their experiences as leaders (and followers) in the Corps of Cadets and in the various ROTC curricula.

3. **Institute Seminar (0 hours; pass/fail) – Class of 2013**
   A series of lectures, breakout sessions, and workshops for fourth classmen covering the history and heritage of VMI; academic life; barracks life; the VMI co-curriculum; life beyond Limits Gate; and life in the Corps of Cadets. 16 bi-monthly meetings during the fall and spring, organized on a cadet battalion or company basis and scheduled during academic day class periods or on Dean's and Commandant's Saturdays. Workshops are led by Faculty Preceptors and Cadet Mentors, whose preparation is advised by subject matter experts

C. Perspectives on Civilization and Human Achievement: 12 hours

This component of the Core encourages cadets to contemplate and think critically about major challenges, accomplishments, and errors of humanity on a global scale. The goal is to cultivate and energize cadets' capacity for self-examination through analysis of the products of civilization.

1. **World History (6 hours) – Class of 2011**
   Two courses designed to introduce students to the history of humanity and human endeavor on a global scale by focusing on patterns of development in the major cultures and civilizations of the world. The courses are thematically organized and include presentation of case studies showing, historically and cross-culturally, how societies organize themselves to meet human needs and solve problems, including those of leadership.

2. **Civilizations and Cultures (6 hours) – Class of 2012**
   Two CC-designated courses, taught in any academic department, that are designed primarily to investigate and develop an understanding and appreciation for cultures and their products and traditions. One of these required courses may be replaced by a credit-bearing, Institute-approved Study Abroad experience.

D. Integrative Experiences: variable hours

This component of the Core ensures the ability to integrate and apply key competencies and discipline-specific knowledge developed through the Core and the major curricula.

1. **Writing-Intensive Courses (variable hours) – Class of 2011**

   Two designated W courses numbered 200 or higher, at least one of which must be in the cadet's major, taken after the completion of EN 102 with a grade of C or better. The goal is to demonstrate the ability to use writing as a means of learning and communicating in a specific discipline.

2. **Capstone Experience (variable hours/no credit/course-embedded experience) – Class of 2011**

   As a culminating experience and a demonstration of intellectual curiosity and a creative approach to problem-solving in the major, each cadet will design and complete a project that demonstrates his or her ability to integrate and apply particular knowledge, skills, and experiences developed in both the Core and major curricula. Criteria for qualifying capstone experiences will be established departmentally.