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HUMANITIES-BASED TRAINING IN U.S. AIR FORCE OFFICER EDUCATION

In the 21st century, the training of future U.S. Air Force officers is grounded in an advanced concept of military education that emphasizes the interconnection between professional activity and career development as an integral component of personal growth. This framework is formalized in the concept known as the “ *Officer personnel management system XXI* ” (Reimer, 1997). Within this model, officer training is based on achieving a balance between the advancement of professional competencies and the development of the individual as a self-directed learner capable of independent decision-making, adaptability to diverse operational environments, and effective leadership. Accordingly, the selection of core educational categories prioritizes these competencies as fundamental outcomes of training (*Army leader development strategy*, 2013; Miller, 1991).

At the United States Air Force Academy, the duration of study is four years. The academic program is designed to prepare specialists with both a comprehensive higher education and foundational military training. Graduates are awarded a bachelor’s degree across a range of disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences. The curriculum is structured as a sequence of required courses spanning technical, natural science, humanities, and social science fields, delivered across 19 academic departments. Notably, ten of these departments are oriented toward the social sciences and humanities, including history, English, foreign languages, philosophy and fine arts, geography, economics, management, behavioral sciences and leadership, law, and political science.

The Department of English occupies a particularly significant position within U.S. higher military education. Its study is given considerable emphasis, as military educators maintain that an officer must possess advanced rhetorical skills, be capable of conducting discussions effectively, and demonstrate a high level of proficiency in

pronunciation and orthography in their native language. Consequently, all military training programs include compulsory courses in English language and literature.

At the United States Air Force Academy, the Department of English offers a wide range of elective courses, including speech communication, business writing, public speaking, literary criticism, British literature, American literature, world literature, and literature and science. The curriculum is designed not only to develop technical writing skills but also to foster creative expression, enabling cadets to produce essays, narratives, and texts across various genres. A bachelor's degree with a specialization in English provides broad career opportunities within the U.S. Air Force, as there is a consistent demand for professionals capable of preparing reports, composing official correspondence, and effectively engaging with people.

U.S. military leadership assigns strategic importance to foreign language acquisition, viewing it as a critical component of officers' professional competence in a globalized security environment. As a result, proficiency in one or more foreign languages is relatively common among senior officers, reflecting both institutional priorities and career requirements. Language training is systematically integrated into the educational process at military academies. At the Department of Foreign Languages of the United States Air Force Academy, cadets are offered instruction in seven languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish) covering key geopolitical regions. The program culminates in a comprehensive assessment designed to evaluate the level of communicative and linguistic proficiency achieved, thereby ensuring that graduates meet the operational and analytical demands of military service.

The language curriculum is structured progressively: during the first and second years, specialized programs focus on developing basic communicative competence, while advanced courses aim to refine these skills and broaden cadets' cultural, historical, and literary knowledge related to the target language. Furthermore, some graduates of military institutions have the opportunity to undertake extended training – typically 9- or 12-month programs at specialized language institutes – followed by up to two years of immersion abroad, with the possibility of earning an additional academic degree at a partner university.

At the institutional level, the structure of the United States Air Force Academy confirms this multidimensional approach. The combination of technical, natural science, humanities, and social science disciplines across a wide range of departments highlights the deliberate integration of cognitive, analytical, and socio-cultural competencies. The significant presence of humanities-oriented fields suggests that modern military education increasingly recognizes the importance of critical thinking, communication skills, and cultural awareness alongside technical proficiency.

From a broader analytical perspective, the examined model illustrates a clear tendency toward the humanization and intellectualization of military education. The integration of humanities, communication disciplines, and foreign language training suggests that contemporary officer preparation prioritizes cognitive flexibility and intercultural competence as strategic assets.

At the same time, this system remains functionally oriented toward operational effectiveness, as all educational components are ultimately aligned with the requirements of military service. Therefore, a balanced conclusion can be drawn: U.S. Air Force officer education represents a hybrid model in which professional specialization and holistic personal development are not opposing goals but mutually reinforcing dimensions of training.

Overall, the findings indicate that modern military education is evolving toward a more complex, interdisciplinary, and adaptive structure, where success is determined not only by technical expertise but also by intellectual versatility, communicative ability, and lifelong learning capacity.

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