COURSE SYLLABUS
U.S. AIR FORCE
SENIOR NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY
ADVANCED LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE (ALE)
1 July 2016

Course Goal
Develop adaptable Senior Enlisted Leaders to operate critically, strategically and jointly in complex and ambiguous environments.

Course Description
The AFSNCOA ALE provides Senior Enlisted Leaders with education that helps prepare them to be prepared, effective, and strategically relevant in their operating environment. Upon successful completion of SNCO DLC (distance learning), students attend the ALE portion of the course. Successful students are able to apply their understanding of concepts covered in the distance-learning course as well as additional concepts covered during the in-residence course. In total, the ALE prepares SNCOs for increased leadership responsibility in the joint, combined, and interagency operating/strategic environment.

Course Objectives
The ALE consists of the following modules that, by the end of the course, prepare students to:

- Module 1: Orientation - receive information on the AFSNCO Academy’s purpose, policies, procedures, and requirements.
- Module 2: Self-Awareness - synthesize Self Awareness concepts and their impact on personal, subordinate, unit, and mission effectiveness.
- Module 3: Deliberate Leadership Path - appraise self and others, establish deliberate leadership paths/career goals by utilizing personal/subordinate desires and the needs of the Air Force.
- Module 4: Visionary Leader - build effective teams by articulating a shared vision and leveraging diversity.
- Module 5: Ethical Leader/Results Driven Decision Making - formulate, evaluate, monitor, and enforce ethics policies and procedures. Hold others accountable to the POA while developing, supporting and inspiring others to hone skills that further support and develop military attributes and capabilities.
- Module 6: The Influential Mediator - formulate alternatives that can win acceptance of others resulting in selection of most appropriate outcome while simultaneously maintaining positive, long-term relationships and sustaining mission focus.
- Module 7: The Strategic Planner - translate and prioritize strategy into progressive tactical application.
- Module 8: Leadership Immersion Lab – effectively apply all leadership, management, strategic communication, and Advanced Leadership Experience (ALE) concepts in a leadership lab
- Module 9: Capstone – effectively capture/communicate the AFSNCOA experience and how the experience enhances unit, subordinate, and mission effectiveness.
- Module 10: Comprehensive Fitness – recognize the skills required of senior enlisted leaders in leading personnel, to include: the training and development of subordinates and an understanding of standards and Service cultures.

**Course Prerequisite(s)**

SNCO DLC

**Assessments**

Students complete several assessments to include writing and research, public speaking, military briefings, and individual and group problem solving/situational planning exercises. Students also participate in a Leadership Immersion Lab where instructors and peers observe and assess actions, decisions, and behaviors using various assessment rubrics. The use of leadership and critical thinking skills are a component of each assessment. All modules have graded assignments worth 100 points and some modules include Go/No Go assignments.

Instructors evaluate the essay, projects, and briefings for quality and comprehensiveness, and assign grades based on an “ineffective”, “effective”, or “very effective” rating scale. To receive a diploma, students must achieve a minimum passing score on all assignments. Instructors counsel students who fail to achieve the minimum passing score and provide remediation as needed.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

- Personal Leadership Development Plan (PLDP)/Action Plan
- Deliberate Development Plan
- Visionary/Ethical Synthesis Essay
- Visionary/Ethical Leader Briefings
- 100 Day Strategic Plan
- Strategic Studies Group Project

**PHASE I**

**Module 1: Orientation**

**Hours:** 20

**Overview:** Orientation begins with a flight roll call followed by a 15-minute briefing in the auditorium by the AFSNCOA Commandant. Next, students return to their respective flight rooms for in-depth discussions/explanations about administrative issues; student additional duty assignments; staff and student expectations; emergency management requirements; and resources found on/off campus. Next, students will be briefed on Human Performance which will introduce
them to the AFSNCOA fitness program. Finally, instructors spend two 45-minute sessions explaining the various written projects and expectations.

**Student Preparation:**
- Read AFSNCOA ALE Syllabus
- Read AFSNCOA Orientation Guide

**Communication & Written Project Requirements:**

*Self/Peer Assessment and Feedback:* Effective leaders are both willing and able to give and receive feedback, thus there are three formal opportunities for students to do just that by evaluating themselves and their peers against a set of criteria.

*Professional Leadership Development Plan (PLDP) and Action Plan:* The Personal Leadership Development Plan is developed through the course and culminates in an action plan made up of targeted activities intended to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for personal and professional growth.

*Synthesis Essay:* This essay helps students increase their proficiency at synthesizing, composing, framing, and adjusting their messages to meet the needs of audiences from all organizational levels. Students practice using terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to their audience while simultaneously adjusting their delivery style based on the needs of the audience and the type of message being delivered. In the synthesis essay, students research a historical figure and then describe how the person is (or is not) a Visionary Leader then describe how decisions made by the person are (or are not) ethical.

*Leadership Reflection Brief:* As part of Module 4 Homework, students will also be required to brief the components of each Main Point of their Synthesis Essay in two 5-7 minute briefings For the Formative Brief, students will focus their attention completely on the Visionary Leader Concepts under Modules 4. And for the Summative brief, students will speak only to the Ethical Leader concepts from Module 5. See the Homework folder under Module 4 for further instructions. Ensure the Rubric, located within the assignments folder, is being used to build your briefings to the standard.

*Projects:* The first project requires students to select an Airman or NCO from their career field and then create a deliberate development plan that addresses specific criteria. The second project students create a 100 Day Strategic Plan, which consists of: 1) an analysis of their customers, 2) leaderships’ most important priorities, 3) key objectives to reach priorities, 4) tasks to achieve each objective, 5) metrics to track progress, 6) proposed budget changes, and 7) a critical path. These projects form part of a leadership portfolio which student can share and utilize in their organization.

*Capstone Brief:* This briefing has a three-fold purpose. First, it provides each speaker an opportunity to frame, compose, synthesize, and adjust their message while presenting their cumulative thoughts about the course to peers. Secondly, the relaying of personal reflection helps re-enforce lesson principles for all participants. Finally, it helps students develop as adaptable leaders by helping them see how lesson principles work together.

*Grading:* Instructors evaluate essays, projects, and briefings for quality and comprehensiveness, and assign grades based on applicable rating scales outlined in each rubric. Below is a summary of the assignment weights:
Module 2: Self-Awareness

Hours: 18

Overview:

This module begins by introducing students to the “Know-Want-Learned” concept. The session begins with students describing what they already know (“K”) about the topic of Self Awareness. Next, students explain what they want (“W”) to learn about Self Awareness. After this discussion, students complete several self-assessment instruments that tap into the notion that leadership begins with self-awareness. The final session in this module utilizes discussions and small group exercises that challenge students to think critically.

Student Preparation:

Students should be intimately familiar with all terms associated with SNCO DLC lessons on:

- Personal Profile System
- Team Building
- Full Range Leadership (FRL)
- Adaptation-Innovation Theory
- Critical Thinking

Access Blackboard, Module 2 – Self-Awareness, register for and then complete:

- Electronic Cognitive Preference Estimator (e-CPE Link): This is a psychometric tool designed to measure your preferred cognitive (thinking) approach to problem solving, change management, and decision-making.
- **In-class session**: students complete the following self-assessment instruments with instructor guidance during the in-class session:
  - **DiSC® Dimensions of Behavior Model**: This instrument helps students learn about their primary and secondary behavioral tendencies and understand how these tendencies impact SNCO, subordinate, unit, and mission effectiveness.
  - **Team Dimensions Profile**: This instrument helps students learn about team roles and it helps them identify their preferred role(s). It also helps SNCOs use their knowledge of team roles to improve team effectiveness.

- Read article “Narcissism and Toxic Leaders” (Approximately 2957 words, 25 minutes of reading)

**General Learning Outcomes:**

Students are better prepared to analyze and modify self-behaviors to effectively deal with change by understanding that self-awareness:

- Identifies strengths and weaknesses
- Stretches one beyond his/her comfort zones
- Controls or redirects one's disruptive emotions or impulses and adapts to changing circumstances
- Promotes favorable behaviors, actions and decisions
- Impacts decision making
- Enhances successful team building
- Manages relationships and moves people in a desired direction
- Impacts subordinate, SNCO, unit, and mission effectiveness

**Learning Strategy:**

Students will:

- Summarize appropriate approaches to leading based on self-awareness concepts. (PPS, TD, FRL, AI, and CT)
- Utilizing a simulated situation scenario, identify two or more self-awareness concepts
- Explain (synthesis/evaluation) a relationship between selected self-awareness concepts from simulated situation scenarios
- Evaluate the use of selected self-awareness concepts collectively (appropriate or inappropriate/effective or ineffective)
- Defend differentiation (explained relationship) based on selected self-awareness concepts
- Create a Personal Leadership Development Plan (PLDP) by synthesizing results from assessments associated with self-awareness

**Assignments:**
- PLDP entries
  Note: PLDP and Action Plan due in Module 8

**Module 3: Deliberate Leadership Path**

**Hours:** 8

**Overview:**
This module begins with a K-W-L discussion about Deliberate Leadership concepts including progressive professionalism and direction, discipline and recognition. Then, students discuss Profession of Arms concepts to include the progressive professionalism with the professionalism continuum. Next, students discuss whether supervisors (current/past) have fulfilled their deliberate development responsibilities as outlined in AFI 36-2618. Next, students discuss factors to consider when developing their subordinates. Then, students create a subordinate development plan for junior NCOs. The module wraps up with a discussion about transformational leadership behaviors required to develop subordinates and why deliberate development is important for our Air Force.

**Student Preparation:**

- Students should be intimately familiar with all terms associated with SNCO DL lessons on Profession of Arms and Full Range Leadership.

- Access Blackboard, Module 3 – Deliberate Leadership Path and read:
  - Developmental Special Duty Nomination Selection
  - The Right to Lead Primer
    (Approximately 3569 words, 30 minutes of reading)

**General Learning Outcomes:**
Students are better prepared to appraise self and others, establish deliberate leadership paths/career goals by utilizing desires and the needs of the Air Force by understanding that:

- Progressive Professionalism is key to deliberate development
- Progressive Professionalism is accomplished through Direction, Discipline, and Recognition, self development and developing others
- Mission of the Air Force comes first
- Development is accomplished through formal/informal learning activities/assignments
- AFI 36-2618 mandates deliberate development
- Living by the AF Core Values requires deliberate development

**Learning Strategy:**
Students will:
- Explain (synthesis/evaluation) a relationship between the concepts of FRL (4 Is) and Deliberate Leadership concepts;
- Analyze the status of deliberate development within their unit/organization/career field;
- Evaluate the use of Deliberate Leadership Development concepts in current organization (appropriate or inappropriate/effective or ineffective);
- Defend actions related to deliberate development

Assignments:
- Deliberate Leadership Development Plan
- PLDP entry

Module 4: The Visionary Leader

Hours: 11

Overview:

This module begins with a K-W-L discussion about visionary leadership and includes an exercise where students construct a working definition. Next, students engage in a guided discussion on diversity and change management concepts. Then, students discuss the concept of “leading from the middle” because this is the position from which most SNCOs operate. Next, students participate in a 5-Part Transformation Process exercise where students look at the diverse climate of a fictional organization. After the exercise, students go over the requirements for the Synthesis Essay and Leadership Reflection Brief. Then, students are free to work on their Synthesis Essay during PLDP Reflection and Assignment Development time. Additionally, students conduct their Leadership Reflection Briefing (Formative) on what they learned as a result of the Visionary Leader portion of their synthesis essays. Finally, students reflect on the module take-aways and discuss what they learned as a result of their experiences in the module.

Student Preparation:

- Students should be intimately familiar with all terms associated with SNCO DLC lessons on Team Building, Diversity, Full Range Leadership and Change Management.
- Access Blackboard, Module 4 – Visionary Leader and read:
  - Read the CSAF White Paper and the Special Edition AF Key Talking Points – Diversity
  - Read the articles/sources listed (Approximately 5495 words, 30 minutes of reading)
- Be familiar with Module 4 Handouts
**General Learning Outcomes:**

Students are better prepared to build effective teams by articulating a shared vision, leveraging diversity, and by understanding that:

- Inclusive environments based on trust and respect are the foundation for building teams
- Effective leaders capitalize on the natural strengths and tendencies of the team
- Leaders must strike the right balance between the needs of the team (individual differences) and the needs of the mission (Planning, Decisions, Operations, and Daily Mission Activities)
- Anchoring teams via a shared vision helps inspire/motivate them to accomplish the mission
- Multi-dimensional differences within a team can impact its development and level of innovation
- The climate of the work center/unit/organization is the leader’s responsibility

**Learning Strategy:**

Students will:

- Explain the relationship between FRL, Diversity and Team Building concepts
- Apply team building concepts in simulated situations
- Diagnose status of team building within unit/organization
- Discuss the importance of shared vision and its relationship to team performance
- Analyze status of diversity management within unit/organization
- Evaluate the use of diversity concepts in current organization (appropriate or inappropriate/effective or ineffective)
- Evaluate the use of team building concepts in current organization (appropriate or inappropriate/effective or ineffective)

**Assignments:**

- Synthesis Essay
- Visionary Leader Briefing
- PLDP entry

**Module 5: The Ethical Leader**

**Hours:** 9

**Overview:**

This module begins with a discussion about ethical leadership and how ethical leadership, critical thinking and emergent leadership issues may be intertwined. Then, students participate in an exercise designed to help them understand how ethics and critical thinking impact their approach to leadership. Next, students will conduct their Leadership Reflection Briefing (summative) on what they learned as a result of the Ethical Leader portion of their essay. In the final session of
this module, students are free to work on their Professional Leadership Development Plan and Synthesis Essay.

**Student Preparation:**

- Students should be intimately familiar with all terms associated with SNCO DLC lessons on Ethical Leadership, Critical Thinking, and Emergent Leadership.

- Access Blackboard, Module 5 – Ethical Leader and read:
  - Read the Little Blue Book, Air Force Core Values
  - Complete Leadership Reflection Brief Homework
    (Approximately 4618 words, 39 minutes of reading)

**General Learning Outcomes:**

Students are better prepared to formulate, evaluate, monitor, and enforce ethics policies and procedures. Hold others accountable to the POA while developing, supporting, and inspiring others to hone skills that further support and develop military attributes and capabilities.

Students should understand that:

- Ethical leadership combines ethical decision-making and ethical behavior, and occurs in both an individual and organizational context.

- The use of ethical leadership in conjunction with critical thinking can help avoid or overcome emergent leadership issues.

- Leaders are expected to create and promote an ethical climate and foster ethical behavior.

- Ethical behavior and ethical decision-making are equally important.

- SNCOs are expected to:
  - embrace the AF Core Values
  - recognize and avoid ethical traps
  - know and apply Toner’s tests
  - foster a wingman culture in their organization

**Learning Strategy:**

Students will:

- Explain the relationship between Ethical Leadership and critical thinking.

- Illustrate the relationship between ethical decisions and ethical behaviors

- Given a situation, defend or amend actions related to Ethical Leadership.

- Express arguments supporting ethical leadership and critical thinking practices.

- Analyze status of an ethical climate within unit/organization/career field.

- Identify, evaluate and defend or amend ethical and critical thinking practices that impact emergent leadership issues.

**Assignments:**
Module 6: The Influential Mediator

Hours: 6

Overview:

This module begins with a K-W-L exercise and includes a small activity where students construct a definition for Influential Mediator. Next, students discuss the roles/functions a mediator serves in a negotiation, the steps the mediator should take to successfully mediate a negotiation, the benefits of mediation, and the stages of mediation. The module wraps up with a quick review of the definition of the Influential Mediator and a brief recap on the day’s events.

Student Preparation:

- Students should be intimately familiar with all terms associated with SNCO DLC lessons on Mediation and Cross Cultural Competence.

- Access Blackboard, Module 6 – Influential Mediator:

General Learning Outcomes:

Students are better prepared to formulate alternatives that can win acceptance of others resulting in selection of most appropriate outcome while simultaneously maintaining positive, long-term relationships and sustaining mission focus.

Students should understand that:

- To be effective, SNCO’s must be able to: 1) recognize and adapt to cultural differences, 2) maintain a positive attitude and 3) be willing to see the world through an opposing worldview.

- Effective Mediation and Negotiation can be used to gain influence without sacrificing long-term relationships.

- Effective active listening and conflict management affects cultural engagements.

- When dealing with others, SNCO’s must apply the correct Negotiation/Mediation strategy for that particular situation.

- Relationship between the Air Force Cross Cultural Competence (3C) model and SNCOs core responsibilities.

Learning Strategy:

Students will:

- Predict how culture influences negotiation and mediation strategies.

- Differentiate between high and low context cultures.

- Recognize and positively respond to cultural differences.
- Employ situational appropriate Negotiation & Mediation style/strategy.
- Evaluate the use of Negotiation & Mediation concepts (appropriate or inappropriate/effective or ineffective)

Given Influential Mediator concepts in a simulated situation:
- Identify Influential Mediator concepts and their impact on personal, subordinate, unit, and mission effectiveness.
- Interpret Influential Mediator concepts and their relationship to personal, subordinate, unit, and mission effectiveness.
- Apply Influential Mediator concepts and their relationship to personal, subordinate, unit, and mission effectiveness.

Assignments:
- PLDP Entry

Module 7: The Strategic Planner

Hours: 21

Overview:
Students were briefly exposed to this lesson on Orientation Day; thus, this module begins with K-W-L Strategic Planner exercise to get them thinking about what it takes to become a strategic planner. Next, students encounter Strategic Alignment & Development and have an opportunity to build a Mission and Vision statement; discuss and explore resource stewardship constraints in a UMD activity bridging manpower to resource and programming impacts; conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and complete a Strategy Map that aligns with Higher Headquarters HHQ. Then, students conduct a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) using the 8-Step Problem Solving Process. In addition, during this module, students develop a 100 Day Strategic Plan and participate in activity involving the importance of planning, using Project Management Concepts, as a mid-level leader. Students utilize their RIE to develop a Change Plan using Lewin’s Phases of Change and use Steps 7-8 of the 8 Step Problem Solving process to standardize their new process. The module wraps up with a discussion about the importance of being Strategic Planner and allows time for students to work on their PLDP entries and 100 Day Strategic Plan.

Student Preparation:
- Students should be intimately familiar with all terms associated SNCO DLC lessons on Strategic Planning, Continuous Improvement, Change Management, Project Management and Resource Stewardship.

Access Blackboard, Module 7 – Strategic Planner:
- Complete the 100 Day Strategic Plan per Guide and Template
- Read the articles/sources listed
  (Approximately 5545 words, 45 minutes of reading)

General Learning Outcomes:
Students who graduate from the AFSNCO Academy are better prepared to translate and prioritize strategy into progressive tactical application. They should understand that:

- Strategic leaders see the big picture beyond how strategic planning or changes will impact themselves or their smaller organizational scope of the Air Force.
- Comprehend how Strategic Alignment and Deployment (SA&D) benefits organizations from the top down and bottom up to drive and focus task performance.
- Significant positive change occurs when organizations work together to achieve a shared vision and goals, instead of multiple agendas.
- Adaptable leaders can flex with changing times, technology and leadership. They stay one step ahead of the change with inventive processes, requirements, and cultures.
- Successful leaders foster an understanding of what is value added in a process and can view it themselves from a customer’s perspective.
- Effective leaders can encourage innovation and risk-taking, instead of worrying about failure.
- Strategic and critically minded leaders deliberately consider resources and constraints when developing and executing plans.

**Learning Strategy:**

Students will:

- Explain the relationship between Strategic Planning, Continuous Improvement, Change Management, Project Management, and Resource Stewardship concepts.
- Analyze Strategic Planning, Continuous Improvement, Change Management, Project Management, and Resource Stewardship effectiveness in any situation.
- Evaluate Strategic Planning, Continuous Improvement, Change Management, Project Management, and Resource Stewardship concepts effectiveness (appropriate, inappropriate/effective, or ineffective).
- Defend actions as they relate to previous bullets.

**Assignments:**

- 100 Day Strategic Plan
- PLDP Entry

**Module 10: Comprehensive Fitness**

**Hours:** 13.5

**Overview:**

Students will participate in, promote, and apply an understanding of the ALE Comprehensive Fitness program. This begins with a comprehensive demonstration of movements, expected
performance and any needed corrections. Movements include upper body, lower body, core and total body exercises. Students will then experience short functional fitness routines designed to place students under physical stress. Then, students are provided a group problem solving scenario which requires teaming, communication, and leadership under constricted conditions. When complete, the learning experience drives home the lessons of CAF linking it to the leadership and teaming principles taught in the course synonymous with military service and contributes to our Resiliency, Warrior Ethos, and Military Professionalism and ability to maximize our overall Human Performance. Students with limiting conditions are also a focus. Students are educated on a program that creates an inclusive environment that allows all levels of fitness and abilities to exercise together.

**Student Preparation:** Accomplish the student reading in the student guide, maintain proper nutrition and adhere to any personally applicable duty limiting medical profiles.

**General Learning Outcomes:** Students who complete this module are better prepared to lead and manage units and model professional military attributes as evidenced by their understanding of Comprehensive Fitness.

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**PHASE II**

**Module 8: Leadership Immersion Lab**

**Hours:** 55

**Overview:**
The Leadership Immersion Lab (LIL) consists of a series of experiential activities that provide students the opportunity to apply leadership/management concepts and principles while honing self-awareness concepts in order to be a more adaptable SNCO. Throughout the LIL, students will be presented with authentic, real world problems/situations and given the room to make decisions based on what they have learned. A major component of the LIL includes dedicated times for students to ‘stand down’ and discuss their actions, decisions, and/or behaviors. During this time, students make connections between their behavior and the course concepts/principles.

**Student Preparation:** None

**General Learning Outcomes:**

Students who complete this module develop better Adaptable Leadership based on a myriad of opportunities for them to apply the leadership, management, and communication concepts from SNCO DLC and the first phase of the resident course. Students attempt to manage self-awareness elements while attempting to solve real word problems. Students overcome obstacles and apply course concepts during a leadership lab designed to promote critical thinking and adaptability.

**Learning Strategy:**

Students will apply leadership, management, strategic communication, and Advanced Leadership Experience (ALE) concepts in a leadership lab.
Assignments:
- Working in a group, students complete and present a Defense Proposal on an assigned Air Force topic.

PHASE III

Module 9: Capstone Event

Hours: 16

Overview:
Students will be exposed to a full day of presentations where they are expected to individually frame, compose, and synthesize their thoughts, feelings, and strategies into an 8-10 minute presentation. Their briefing should be a reflection of their experiences including how it increased their adaptability. They should analyze their weaknesses, focusing on what they gained, and what they will utilize to increase unit, subordinate and mission effectiveness. They should also attempt to influence their peers through their ALE reflection; giving them vital lessons learned. At the same time, students must be prepared for a 10-minute question and answer session with their flight peers at the conclusion of their presentation. The following day, the instructor will conduct individual feedback with each student. Areas that may be explored are the Capstone Briefing Feedback Rubric, PLDP, Action Plan, Individual/Peer Feedback, Observation Rubrics, Portfolio, and Assignments/Rubrics but are not all inclusive.

Student Preparation:
Review Capstone Oral Presentation, Capstone Presentation Feedback Worksheet, and Capstone Feedback Schedule.

General Learning Outcomes:
Students who complete this module are better prepared to maintain continuity for self and others when mission requirements vary or become ambiguous.

Learning Strategy:
Students will summarize their personal AFSNCOA experience and describe how their experience will enhance unit, subordinate and mission effectiveness.