

## Evaluation Criteria and Information

### Written Assignments

Each written assignment will be evaluated based on your demonstrated understanding of and critical engagement with the material. Written assignments should do more than simply repeat the information you have read in the textbooks and the *Course Notes*; they should also reflect your own thoughts and responses to the material. As a formal reflection of your thoughts on the material, all assignments should also have an introduction with a thesis statement (your reflection on the subject), body paragraphs which develop the reasoning behind your thesis, and a conclusion.

The presentation of your argument is very important: always pay attention to the quality of language you use in expressing your ideas. While having good ideas is a strong first step to a well-constructed assignment, the ability to communicate them in a clear, concise, and precise manner is equally, if not more, important.

Be vigilant against plagiarism when using the words and ideas of others in your assignments: whenever you cite an author, enclose his or her words within quotation marks and give the location in the text or document (page number) where you found them. You will find a more explicit explanation of citation requirements as well as the format for citing your sources by clicking on Citation Guidelines. Details on how to prepare written assignments are found in *A Military Writer's Handbook*, located in the administrative CD-Rom in your course materials package. You are encouraged to consult this text regularly for all your writing assignments.

### Web Discussions

Each lesson is accompanied by a web discussion, in which you are asked to participate. There will be one predetermined question per lesson. The participation mark will not only depend on the number (two points) but also on the quality (three points) of the postings. Students who make the required number of postings per lesson – two – will automatically receive two points out of five. A half-point is deducted for each missing entry (to a maximum of four missing entries).

Note that if you miss a posting in one lesson (and only submit one discussion post), you cannot “make it up” in the next lesson by making more than the required number of postings. A student who has not written the required number of postings per lesson can make up a partial mark (1 point) by posting their answer to the modular question before the discussion forum for that particular module is closed.

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You are encouraged to participate more often than twice per lesson if you are interested in a topic; there is no limit to the postings allowed.

Each posting should be between 50 and 100 words. *Attachments may be included with a posting, but they are not included in the word count.* Though postings do not have to be formally composed, they do need to be responsibly constructed. In assessing the quality of postings, the instructor will consider the following:

- **Understanding of the question:** relevance of ideas expressed on the subject
- **Communication skills:** ability to present ideas clearly and to respond to others' points of view (replying, discussing, etc.)
- **Quality of argumentation:** use of facts and precise references to support a point of view or idea; ability to ask questions, to detect flaws or weaknesses in an argument (including one's own); and to offer constructive and persuasive counter arguments

The discussion forum associated with each module will be closed on the Friday following the final week of the module. This means that students will not be able to post new messages after that day; however, the discussion threads will remain visible so that students can refer back to the postings should they wish.

If you are unable to participate in the discussion forum for a particular module for operational reasons, you will be offered the opportunity to submit a written response to the modular question in lieu of participating in the web discussion, *but only with the prior permission of the instructor.*

The table below explains how the web discussion forum is evaluated:

Component	Criteria	Weight
<b>Participation</b>	writing the required number of postings per lesson	2
<b>Comprehension of the question and quality of argumentation</b>	using facts and references to support your statements/arguments; ideas expressed are directly related to course content	2
<b>Communication skills</b>	demonstrating your ability to present ideas clearly and to ask relevant questions	1
<b>Total</b>		5
Modular Question		1
Note: 0.5 point is deducted for each missing intervention per lesson		

## Discussion Forum: Some Rules to Follow<sup>1</sup>

To ensure the smooth and successful flow of the discussion forum, all students must respect certain rules of communication. There are a number of recognized guidelines for online discussion – otherwise known as “netiquette” – and the main points are listed below:

- Avoid submitting hostile or sarcastic comments, and never use intolerant, racist, or sexist expressions.
- When responding to others online, use encouraging phrases such as “good idea” and “thank you for the suggestion.” Even if you disagree with someone’s idea, thanking him or her for actively engaging with your comments generates a respectful and productive discussion forum. Brief comments such as “I agree,” however, do not constitute a significant contribution to discussion.
- Never mock or belittle the contribution of another participant. If you disagree with another’s expressed opinion, begin your rebuttal by pointing out the positive aspects of his or her contribution, and then follow these comments in a manner in which your fellow participant will not feel excluded. For example: “Eric, I think your ideas on the role of doctrine in the CF are interesting; have you considered the following.....”

<sup>1</sup> This section is adapted from Linda Harasim, Starr Roxanne Hiltz, Lucio Teles and Murray Turoff, *Learning Networks. A Field Guide to Teaching and Learning Online*. Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 1997.

- The use of humour is not recommended; often, comments that are humorous in person appear derisive or sarcastic in print. To avoid these misplaced remarks, insert symbols such as a smiley face ☺, or parenthetical remarks such as (ha ha!) or “lol” (laugh out loud), which say to the reader, “I’m joking.”

### **Additional Advice for Working on the Web**

- Write your user name and password in two different places
- Keep a pen and paper close to hand to take note of the titles of messages that are particularly interesting to you, or to which you want to respond later
- Make sure the titles of your postings reflect their subject matter; it may save time when trying to follow lengthy discussion threads
- Always be open to new ideas and alternative perspectives
- People who put in the earliest notes on a topic are the most likely to be responded to and referenced by others (and appreciated by the facilitator)
- Long messages are boring. Keep entries to one or two screens, on a single point or topic. Use separate, short entries for each idea or distinct response
- Avoid one of the most common mistakes: hasty posting of an item to the wrong reference

### **Late Assignment Policy**

Students must notify their instructor and DCS (in accordance with the *Guide to Distance Education at RMC*, if you are a DCS registered student or the *Student Guide to OPME*, if you are an OPME-registered student) if an assignment is going to be late: failure to do so may result in a mark of incomplete/fail. If you are unable to reach your instructor, contact the Division of Continuing Studies and staff there will forward your message.

If the late submission of one assignment will cause a delay in the submission of subsequent assignments, you must submit to the instructor a list of the proposed new submission dates.

To accommodate the unique needs of Continuing Studies students, all assignments are accepted late as a result of operational commitments and postings. Nevertheless, students are still required to notify the instructor and DCS.

### **Submission of Written Assignments**

Please refer to the appropriate *Guide* (on the Administrative CD-Rom or online) for detailed instructions on assignment submission.

There is no final exam. However, in order to complete this course, **all** assignments must be submitted and successfully completed. For example, if you do not submit the assignment (or part of the assignment) associated with a module, you will not be credited with the successful completion of the module; consequently, you will not be considered to have completed the course.