

# The Falconer: Tools of Strategy in an Uncertain World

## Summer 2010

### WHY?

If the last decade has taught us anything it is that key global forces are changing with lightning speed. The worlds of business, economics, politics, security, the environment, energy, and international policy are radically different than they were before 2001. The pace of change has dramatically increased and will continue to do so. The effective officer will need to know how to adapt, innovate, and share in the creation of new knowledge, instead of being forced to react to it. This new strategic thinking is recognized as a critical aspect of cadet training.



*From “Educating Army Officers for a Changing World”:*

*“...deal with rapidly evolving situations...”*

*“...respond to challenges that we can predict only imperfectly today...”*

*“...anticipate and respond to uncertainties.”*

*“...aware of limits of their own understanding...”*

*“...recognize and appreciate diverse perspectives on complex situations...”*

*“...frame a question or problem from multiple perspectives...”*

*“...think and act creatively...”*

*“...value and reward curiosity and questioning...”*

*“...recognize that questions, not answers, are the driving force in thinking.”*

### WHAT?

The *Falconer* model of strategic design incorporates a novel interpretation of *The Art of War* that recognizes a highly-specific and easy-to-implement guide to unlocking opportunities and solving problems; to accurate assessment of complex systems; to managing risk and overcoming setbacks. It is a model for creating new perspectives and knowledge using both the fruit of experience and the future unknown. The techniques embedded in the model are specific, tangible, and useable at scales ranging from broad mission planning and goal setting to what-am-I going-to-do-today.

### KEY OUTCOMES

1. Actively seek challenges and exploit opportunities, whether or not they are readily apparent.
2. Develop the ability and willingness to ask questions as the essential key to creative problem solving.
3. Develop an understanding of a personal worldview; how it may fundamentally differ from the worldview of others; self-assessment as a prelude to environmental assessment.
4. Situational assessment: key steps to correctly analyze and understand new or unfamiliar circumstances and environments.
5. Seeking out and finding problems before they arrive.
6. Nine-step model for problem solving based on *The Art of War*.
7. Strategies for avoiding conflict where possible.
8. Synthetic thinking: creating new knowledge in rapidly changing environments.



## WHO?

This training program is open to a maximum of 16 cadets who want to learn what “thinking outside the box” really means. This is a test case seminar that may be used to develop longer-range training programs at USMA West Point or in the larger Army training and development program. Cadets selected for this program must be willing to:

- Offer, articulate, and defend personal viewpoints
- Accept the validity of contrary arguments
- Adapt to new ideas
- Extrapolate personal experience and knowledge to theoretical situations