

Orientation program helps prepare distance ed students for USAWC experience

Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College

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Dr. Larry Miller, communicative arts director, speaks with members of the Army War College Distance Education Class of 2014 about writing at the graduate level during an orientation program May 4. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.

May 7, 2012 -- Nearly 300 distance education students in the Army War College Distance Education Class of 2014 will come to Carlisle Barracks this month for an orientation program designed to provide a face to their online discussions and prepare them for success in the two-year program.

For the 5th year in a row distance education students have the option to come here for a two-day orientation program that touches on everything from using the Online Automated Student Information System (OASIS) system to a refresher on how to write at the graduate level.

“These orientations give a human face to our faculty and reinforce our commitment to the students which you just can’t get online,” said **Col. Darrell Fountain**, director of the first year course. The optional course took place on two weekends in May, each attended by about 140 students.

“We really try and provide the students with some of the tips, tactics for being successful in the course,” said Fountain. “We realize the challenges that the students will face in the two-year program. We try and prepare them as much as we can for what they are going to do.”

One of the most beneficial parts of the orientation said Fountain was a session on critical thinking held

by Dr. Steve Gerras, professor of behavioral sciences.

“He really challenges the students to begin a critical review of what they are presented with,” he said. “He asks them to really analyze what they are reading and to agree or disagree with the conclusions it draws. This is a challenge they will face in the future as a strategic leader. Sometimes you have to question or challenge information you are presented.”

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