Military science (Army ROTC) lecture classes are open to all students, including those not interested in pursuing a commission as an army officer. Students who are interested in exploring a potential commission are strongly encouraged to participate in labs and the organized physical training sessions.

The primary objective of the program is to develop leadership and management skills in students. Supplementary objectives include enhancement of the student’s abilities in speaking and writing, situational assessment, goal setting, and problem solving. The department cultivates within its students a strong sense of personal integrity, self-discipline, and responsibility.

For those interested in or actually pursuing an army commission, all levels of course work combine classroom instruction with practical exercises. The two-year basic course (100 and 200 level classes) consists of a one-credit lecture course each freshman semester and a two-credit lecture course each sophomore semester. For most students, these classes are taken simultaneously with no-credit lab courses. The curriculum covers confidence building exercises, map reading, leadership, management principles, first aid, and other life skills with broad applications beyond the military. Students in labs participate in several activities, including drill and ceremonies, rappelling and rifle marksmanship.

Other than scholarship students, no military commitment is required of students in the first two years of the program. These students survey army opportunities and decide whether to continue in the program as advanced course students who will commission as Army officers. Students who have made a contractual commitment to seek a commission receive monthly stipends ranging from $300 to $500 depending on status. Scholarships from two to four years are available to some students.

The advanced course consists of three-credit lecture and no-credit lab courses normally taken each semester during the last two years of university study. The program also includes a four-week advanced camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky (normally after the junior year). Study centers on leadership styles and techniques with special emphasis placed on small unit leadership.

Army ROTC is the major source of commissioned officers for the U.S. Army. After successfully completing the program and baccalaureate degree requirements in almost any field, the student receives a commission as a second lieutenant. Active duty is not a requirement but is something for which students compete. Graduates also choose from among 26 different army branches or specialties. Those not choosing active duty serve with the Army Reserves or Army National Guard on a part-time basis.

Prior to commissioning, all cadets must demonstrate proficiency in communications and military history. This may be achieved through taking U of I course offerings in those subject areas. See your Army ROTC class advisor for a list of approved courses.