

Marine Corps War College
Advanced Studies Program

Advanced Studies Program: Course Overview

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The Advanced Studies Program (ASP) allows students to deepen their mastery of a particular topic within the core curriculum. With the exception of ENP, each course at MCWAR holds a year-long ASP that allows students the opportunity to read more deeply on their chosen topic, engage with faculty in a smaller setting (often 4-8 students), and develop a project of their choosing. Students are offered the option of taking one of the offered ASPs or conducting research in their own area of study as part of the Independent Research Project (IRP). All ASP offerings contain roughly 3500 pages of reading over the academic year (roughly 350 pages for each seminar) and a writing requirement of roughly 6500 words. Some ASPs require a number of shorter writing assignments to meet the 6500-word requirement, while others assign fewer longer papers.

For AY16-17, the following core curriculum ASPs will be offered:

- From War Hawks to the Red Guards: Major Crises in American Foreign Relations, 1812-1989;
- The Fiction of National Security & Joint Warfare;
- Strategic Leadership; and
- Future Wars.

Students also may propose a topic for independent study. This topic should be strategic in focus, but students are otherwise unrestrained in their area of study. The goal of the IRP is to contribute to the broader professional military discourse by writing a paper with the focus, length, and quality to be suitable for publication in professional military journals such as *Joint Forces Quarterly* or *Parameters*.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students will demonstrate creative reasoning and problem solving at the strategic level, including the robust generation of imaginative and pragmatic proposals to address complex problems.

1. Create defensible, well-stated positions to address complex strategic issues.
2. Develop scholarly written and oral projects.
3. Demonstrate an ability to think and read critically at the strategic level, including an emphasis on examining assumptions, evaluating alternative courses of action, assessing evidence, making logical inferences, and using appropriate analogies.

In addition to the ASP Learning Outcomes (LOs), core curriculum ASPs will also engage and assess the core course's LOs.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY:

1. Overview. The ASPs are organized to simulate an Oxford style tutorial, where a small group of students engage a significant body of reading under the mentorship of a faculty member. While students are responsible for their educational experience in all courses at

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MCWAR, this is particularly true of the ASP, where students lead seminars, drive issues for consideration, and create recommendations and curricular material. Different faculty will organize seminars to best suit the educational goals of each course, but every ASP will center on small group, engaged learning.

2. Lesson Sequence. Each ASP has its own lesson sequence, so please consult the individual ASP course overviews when they are published in August. Every ASP will meet 10 times over the course of the academic year, generally once per month through the end of April. Students participating in the IRP will schedule regular meetings with their mentor to ensure effective progress.

3. Summary Course Hours. All hours are approximate and subject to individual ASP course design. See individual course ASP overviews for specific hours.

Lecture	Seminar	Practical Application	Field Study	Exam	PSPT	Total
	36	4			200.00	240

ASSESSMENT MEASURES: Student grades will vary by ASP. Each will have a number of written assignments. Every ASP will evaluate class contribution twice – once in December and once following the final class. ASPs may have other graded assignments. Please see individual course ASP overviews for specific hours.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS: The College is very attentive to what many educators call “Institutional Effectiveness” – that is, how well we are achieving our objectives. The critique allows the student to register views on the methodology of each segment of the course. All participants are required to contribute their constructive criticisms and their suggestions for improvements. It is best to do these evaluations at regular intervals, rather than waiting until the end of the course. Surveys are electronically tallied, studied by faculty including members engaged in courseware revision, and eventually archived for use in future institutional research.