

Marine Corps War College
War, Policy, and Strategy

War, Policy, and Strategy: Course Overview

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) is based, in part, on developing the student’s ability to analyze complex, abstract problems relating to war, policy, and strategy. Since it is impossible to duplicate the vague, incomplete, and contradictory events that shape the practice of war, the study of history frequently has been used as a tool for exploring the problems of war. Of course, history can be a guide but it is not the reading of history that makes great military leaders and statesmen. Instead, it is the active analysis of historical cases that provide the material from which superior military leaders emerge.

WAR, POLICY, AND STRATEGY LEARNING OUTCOMES: Each lesson will contribute to the students achieving the following WPS Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply traditional and non-traditional principles of war at the strategic and operational levels of war.
2. Analyze national security policies, national military strategies, and associated theater campaigns and operations.
3. Analyze the relationship between elements of national power and the achievement of strategic end states.
4. Analyze the impact of cultural, social, and political factors on the design, development and execution of military strategy.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY:

1. **Overview.** The War, Policy, and Strategy (WPS) course provides the student with an extensive set of seminars dealing with topics that shape the strategic milieu and the process of strategic assessments within the milieu of strategy as it is practiced today. Each lesson contributes to the students understanding of this complex of ideas.
2. **Lesson Sequence.** Potentially topics are subject to change due to guest speaker availability and current events. Although these changes will be flagged, it is the students’ responsibility to regularly check the MCWAR calendar for updates.

THE FOUNDATION	
8100-01	War, Policy, and Strategy: Overview and The Basic Concepts
8102	Geography and Strategy
8103-04	Thucydides: Overview and Strategic Analysis with Peloponnesian War Strategic Simulation
8105	Strategic Landpower: Human Domain/Dimension
8110	Strategic Factors in the Outcome of the American Civil War: Antietam-Gettysburg Field Study with Civil War Strategic Simulation
8199	War, Policy, and Strategy Writing Assignments
THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF WAR	
8107-08	Clausewitz: Books 8 and 1
8111	Asian Military Thought: Sun Tzu to Mao
8115-16	The Collapse of Strategy with July Crisis Simulation and Path of Glory: WWI Simulation

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8119-20	Douhet, Mitchell, Mahan, and Corbett
8122	Geopolitics Between the Wars, Coalitions with Triumph and Tragedy Simulation
8123	Axis Strategic Issues with Casablanca Wargame
8124	War Termination
8125	The Cold War
8126	The American Experience with Insurgencies with ISIS Simulation and Mindanao Simulation
8128	Vietnam: A Strategic Examination
8129	Power Transitions in History
8130	Grand Strategy
8133	The Return of Geopolitics with Iron Ghost Simulation
8134	Coalition Warfare with Diplomacy Simulation
8135	Strategic Culture
8136	The Story So Far...

3. **Summary Course Hours.** All hours are approximate and subject to change. See individual lesson cards for specific hours.

Lecture	Seminar	Practical Application	Field Study	Exam	PSPT	Total
3.5	64	42	10	0	183	302.5

ASSESSMENT MEASURES: Student grades will be calculated as follows:

- Student seminar contributions (50%)
- WPS Writing Assignment #1 (25%)
- WPS Writing Assignment #2 (25%)

Notes: In seminar, quality of the contribution is of greater importance than the quantity; likewise sustained contribution is more important than sporadic involvement.

RECURRING THEMES:

1. The character of war changes over time, but the nature of war is enduring.
2. The “human dimension” is central to war, politics, and diplomacy; consequently, the subjects of leadership, morality, ethics, and the art of command are central to an understanding of the profession of arms.
3. Context matters; many factors (social, cultural, economic, geographic, etc.) shape the way that states and non-state actors use force or threaten to use force to achieve political objectives.
4. The national security environment is inherently complex, dynamic, and unpredictable; not all strategic problems have a solution and every solution is temporal.
5. Consistent success in war and peace requires the integrated application of all instruments of national power.
6. Effective strategists understand the relationships between ends, ways and means in pursuit of political objectives.

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STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION: 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. Surveys are electronically tallied, studied by faculty including members engaged in courseware revision, and eventually archived for use in future institutional research.