

**Marine Corps War College**  
*Joint Warfare*

**Joint Warfare: Course Overview**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The Joint Warfare (JW) course complements the War, Policy, and Strategy and National Security courses of MCWAR by connecting strategic ideas and concepts to the application of military force in pursuit of national strategic objectives. Drawing heavily from joint doctrine, discussions with key senior leadership, and examination of historical case studies, the JW course explores the nexus between strategy and operations, to aid students in the development of the analytical tools required to think critically and act decisively within an ambiguous environment.

Topics within JW include the organization of the Department of Defense, services, and the joint force, the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS), Joint Planning, Operational Contract Support, and future warfighting concepts. JW is not a military planning course; rather it builds on the previous military and civilian experience of students to foster a deeper understanding of how the instruments of national power combine to accomplish national strategic objectives at the theater and higher level.

Upon graduation from MCWAR, many students will immediately face the challenges associated with service as a senior officer on a joint or service staff. Accordingly, the JW learning assessments focus on ensuring students demonstrate a capacity for cogent and critical thought, clearly expressed both verbally and in writing. The first paper will be due at the end of the first semester, and it is to be an analytical paper. The assignment is to choose a historical event or policy and to provide a critical analysis. The second paper, due near the end of the second semester, will incorporate a theoretical evaluation of strategic decision making that affects the joint force structure or a procurement issue, among other potential topics. The faculty will assist in coordinating a topic for each paper.

Each week, students will email me an article about a current strategic issue by Friday at 1600 adding, "Of what is this an instance?" I will review your submissions and select one or two for distribution. Students are to not only read the article, but to consider how one can understand the event in terms of international relations theories, strategic analysis, or joint operations. This regular assignment is an in-class, or online, exercise in the application of the concepts and theories of the Joint Warfare course, which I expect students to exhibit in their research papers. Keep in mind that there are no "right" answers for this weekly exercise. The purpose is to stimulate your mind, to encourage you to consider issues in strategic context, and to develop the habit of asking critical questions about contemporary global strategic issues.

**JOINT WARFARE LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Each lesson will contribute to the students achieving the following JW Learning Outcomes:

1. Evaluate joint warfare processes, strategies, and operational plans.
2. Demonstrating strategic perception, evaluate current and future joint topics in terms of an ends/ways/means/risk construct.
3. Evaluate, explain, and effectively advocate for positions on strategic and operational issues.

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4. Evaluate and characterize ambiguous environments and create effective structures and mental frameworks to operate within them.

**TEACHING METHODOLOGY:**

1. **Overview.** The JW course combines seminar with extensive opportunities to interact with senior military and civilian leadership both in person and via secure video teleconference (SVTC), subject to speaker availability. Previous guest speakers have included General Dunford, Deputy Secretary of Defense Shanahan, General Neller, General Milley, General Goldfein and the Commander, US Special Operations Command, General Thomas.

As part of the JW course, students may travel to visit COCOM headquarters and, in cooperation with the War, Policy, and Strategy course, conduct battlefield staff rides at locations such as Gettysburg, Antietam, the Wilderness, and Normandy.

2. An emphasis will be placed on providing the student the opportunity to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize real problems and potential alternate solutions through the case study method. This requires extensive preparation, student collaboration, and class participation. The key to a successful and fulfilling learning experience is avoiding one-way information flow, and for the students to be placed in the role of decision makers and asked how they might resolve a particular problem or dilemma.

3. **Lesson Sequence.** 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.

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Lesson Title</b>
8800	Joint Warfare Overview
8811	Roles and Missions of DoD, Joint Staff, and the Services
8801	Joint Warfare Fall Case Study
8814	The National Military Strategy ©
8815	The Joint Strategic Planning System ©
8861	Pentagon Field Studies
8813	Department of Defense Budgeting
8823	Joint Planning/Operational Design: Achieving Strategic Ends
8833	Joint Intelligence Support Decisionmaking ©
8865	Combatant Command Field Studies ©
8899A	Joint Warfare Fall Assessment
8831	Emerging Joint Concepts and Issues / Domain Awareness
8824	Operational Contract Support
8837	Joint Warfare Spring Case Study
8880	Campaigning for Strategic Effect
8832	Future War
8834	Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) Case Study
8835	Building the Joint Force of the Future
8838	Arctic Security Case Study: Avenues of Approach
8836	Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction ©
8899B	Joint Warfare Spring Assessment

© = Class likely to be held US only – TS Clearance Required

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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
1	38		50		123	212

**ASSESSMENT MEASURES:** Student grades will be calculated as follows:

Student seminar contributions (20%) (This includes participation in our weekly exercise called “Of what is this an instance?”)

JW Fall Paper (40%)

JW Spring Paper (40%)

**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.