United States Marine Corps
School of Advanced Warfighting

The School of Advanced Warfighting develops lead planners and future commanders with the will and creative intellect to design and execute joint campaigns and naval expeditionary operations.

Overall classification: Unclassified
Current as of: 22 July 2022
Curriculum Overview

Three concurrent, student-centered courses to develop lead planners and future commanders with the will and creative intellect to design and execute joint campaigns and naval expeditionary operations.

- **7100: Operational Art**
- **7200: Operational Planning**
- **7300: Changing Character of Conflict**

**SAW Graduate**
Adaptive Planner / Leader
Creative Problem-Solver
Expert Operational Artist

- 48 weeks in the academic year
- Approximately 105 x 2-hour seminars
- 9 weeks of planning exercises
- 7 weeks of staff rides (3 events)
- Oral comprehensive exams (fall semester)
- Approximately 500 pages of individual and group written products
- Approximately 24,000 pages of reading including historical texts, publications, and journals

- Education Focus: Operational Level of War
- Graduates earn Masters in Operational Studies
- US Marine Students are awarded the 0505 (Operational Planner) and 0506 (Red Team) occupational specialties. Equivalent designations awarded across DoD services
### Curriculum Design
Three Concurrent Courses

#### 7100: Operational Art

**18th Century**
- Emergence of Modern War
- Seven Years War
- French-Indian War

**19th Century**
- Great Power Conflict
- American Revolution & Napoleon
- Theory: Clausewitz, Jomini, Mahan, & Corbett

**20th Century to Present**
- WWI
- France & Mid-East
- Total War: WWII ETO & Pacific
- Dissolving Empires: Korea & Vietnam
- Post-Cold War: Iraq & Afghanistan

- Campaign analysis focused on planning and command.
- Alternate solutions with historical examples.
- Theory & Doctrine in the historic context.

#### 7200: Operational Planning

- Conceptual Planning
- Critical Thinking
- Red Team
- VEO, Iran
- Italy (Historical)
- China

- Functional Planning
- MEF Ops
- Strategic Direction
- Global Integration
- Competition
- CCMD Campaign Plans
- Maritime Campaigns
- CCMD Contingency Plans

- Provides depth, understanding and appreciation of Service and Joint planning processes.
- Design campaign plans against trans-regional, all-domain, all-functional military problems across the competition to conflict continuum.

#### 7300: Changing Character of Conflict (3C)

**Future War Project**

- What is Military Power?
  - China Case Study
- What is Military Innovation?
  - Russia Case Study
- What is Competition?
  - What are Battle Networks?
  - Cyber, Space Case Studies
- What is the Character of Irregular Threats?
  - Insurgency, Terrorism Case Studies

- Study contemporary great power competition and conflict to develop campaign plans.
- Explore how modern militaries generate power, respond to change, and create response options.
- Generate planning products from an adversary perspective.

### SAW Themes
Great Power Competition; Nature and Character of War; Political Aim; National and Military Culture; Leadership and Command; Learning and Adaptation; Operational Environment; Resourcing Military Forces; Single Battle Concept; Military Force Below Armed Conflict

### Continual Assessment
- 21 Written Assignments
- Fall Comprehensive Exam
- 7 Planning Exercises
- 10+ Wargames

- Quarterly CCRBs
- Student feedback to faculty
Staff Rides complement the planning problems and serve as a venue to examine campaigning at the operational level

- 7 weeks in duration (15% of curriculum)
- ~6 countries; 12 campaigns; Adapted Staff Ride Program for AY21 and AY22 IOT account for the COVID environment (Civil War, Israel, Italy)
- Ongoing planning for AY23:
  - Euro-trip: Turkey, Italy, France
  - Asia-trip: Vietnam, Philippines
Wargaming = Active Learning

NEW HORIZON (CENTCOM)
Starting in AY 21, SAW designed a scenario replicating a JFEO to seize an airfield, interdict Houthi ASCM/SSM/SAM sites, and block rebel forces. Students also have to address Iranian and Russian forces in the Gulf IOT deter their involvement and establish sea control in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden IOT isolate the objective.

HISTORICAL WARGAME SERIES
Starting in AY21, SAW began building operational decision games and wargames based on historical cases in the Operational Art of War IV software. These cases allowed students to “reenact” historical campaigns and battles” and explore alternative COAs as a means of advancing their understanding of operational art.

AGILE SERIES (INDOPACOM)
Starting in AY20, SAW used Command software to model a scenario fighting the Chinese PLA Southern Theater Command (STC). The scenario includes unclassified/open-source replication of the new force design. Students fight other students replicating the STC based on studying the PLA.
Red Teaming & Alternative Analysis

Students will:

- Learn advanced analytical and alternative analysis techniques that support operational planning through seminars and practical applications.
- Incorporate red teaming techniques into planning exercises.
- Generate individual red team assessments at the conclusion of planning exercises and...
# Class Composition

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