

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 Joint Strategic Planning System, the Adaptive Planning and Execution System, Design Thinking, Joint Planning, Risk Analysis, 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 policy analysis paper is prepared in a limited time, on a topic selected by faculty, from current defense policy think tank research. The challenges and opportunities paper allows the students to choose from operational issues that influence strategic capabilities or priorities, joint force development and training, or procurement issues, among other potential topics.

The JW course engages all four of MCWAR's program outcomes, most directly Program Outcome #3, to "Serve as joint warfighters, able to evaluate the changing character and enduring nature of war; and apply the art and science of planning and conducting campaigns and major operations in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment."

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

1. Evaluate joint warfare processes, strategies, and operational plans.
2. Demonstrate strategic perception by evaluating 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.
4. Evaluate ambiguous environments and create effective structures and mental frameworks to operate within them.

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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 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, and Normandy.

2. **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.

JOINT WARFARE LIST OF CLASSES	
8801	Joint Warfare Case Studies
8811	National Strategic Direction: The Role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Joint Strategic Planning System (Strategic Level)
8812	National Strategic Direction: The Role of the Combatant Commanders, Service Component Commanders, and Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (Operational Level)
8813	Department of Defense Budgeting
8821	Design and Planning of Joint Operations
8824	Operational Contract Support
8831	Topics in Multi-Domain Warfare
8832	Future War
8861	Pentagon Field Studies
8865	COCOM Field Study
8880	Campaigning for Strategic Effect
Assessments	
8899A	Joint Warfare Fall Assessment
8899B	Joint Warfare Spring Assessment

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	26		56	6	73.5	162.5

ASSESSMENT MEASURES: Student grades will be calculated as follows:

- Student seminar contributions (30%)
- JW Policy Analysis Paper (30%)
- JW Strategic Challenges and Opportunities Paper (40%)

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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.