

Maritime Security & Governance Staff Course

The Maritime Security and Governance Staff Course (MSGSC) is a condensed unclassified five-month alternative to other year-long military staff courses. Tailored to rising international maritime leaders, MSGSC focuses on complex strategic and operational maritime challenges such as piracy, trafficking and smuggling, maritime migrant interdiction, IUU fishing, and terrorism at sea. MSGSC is a critical investment for global security, making America—and its partners—Safer, Stronger, and More Prosperous at Sea.

Eligibility

- This course is designed for mid-grade officers from international navies, coast guards, and other armed services or law enforcement agencies with significant maritime missions. Most students hold the rank of O3-O5 or NATO OF2-OF4, though officers above or below this band are considered on a case-by-case basis. Students must obtain a minimum score of 80 on the English Comprehension Level test.

Location & Duration

- Starting in late September, the five-month curriculum is taught at the U.S. Naval War College (NWC) in Newport, Rhode Island.

Learning Format

- The course is conducted in a seminar format with substantive presentations by leading international experts, augmented by team planning exercises, tabletop discussions, case studies, and on-site visits.

Outcome

- Graduates receive staff course credit and the same diploma awarded to most international graduates of the 10-month Naval Staff College (NSC) and Naval Command College (NCC). Students of the course examine the criticality of international and domestic legal and policy requirements as well as effective regional, bilateral, and intra-government collaboration in achieving their maritime security and governance goals.

General Program Overview

Orientation for New Students | Required

New students are welcomed to the college, taught the naval theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan, and provided guided tours of the campus, the Newport Naval Station, and city of Newport.

Course Introduction | Required

Lectures and discussions are structured around strategic and operational aspects of maritime security, maritime governance, maritime law, and maritime operations.

Examination of Cross-Cutting Substantive Topics | Required

The MSGSC delves into key cross-cutting themes on Counter-Narcotics, Crime & Terrorism, Fisheries Enforcement, Gray Zone Competition, Illicit Maritime Trade, Interagency Law Enforcement, Marine Safety, Migration & Trafficking, Piracy & Armed Robbery, and Ports & Cyber Security amongst other topics.

Examination of Maritime Security Missions | Required

Global experts from the U.S. Coastguard, U.S. Navy, UN, private sector, academia, and NGOs present and discuss maritime security issues. Guest naval leaders, including the College's Distinguished CNO International Fellows, provide international lectures and perspectives on naval operations, maritime domain awareness, and interagency cooperation.

Field Studies Programs & Curriculum Field Trips | Required

Students will conduct multiple trips to locations throughout the United States that are designed to add experiential field learning to reinforce topics covered in the course and show students American perspectives on the responsibility of governments, militaries, and citizens to protect, preserve, and respect the rights of every individual.

Additional Opportunities | Optional

Students will have the opportunity to receive an additional three months of training in United States naval planning doctrine through the International Maritime Staff Operators Course (IMSOC) before or after MSGSC.