



UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Newport, Rhode Island



International Programs

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International Programs

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An Education Like No Other

The International Maritime Staff Operators Course (IMSOC) prepares mid-grade international maritime officers, and personnel from other uniformed services and government agencies, to support the planning and execution of complex maritime operations in a coalition environment.

This 11-week unclassified course is taught at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island and utilizes the U.S. Navy Planning Process (NPP) and Maritime Operations Center (MOC) construct. The IMSOC was established in response to maritime partners' demands for a course like the US-only Maritime Staff Operators Course (MSOC). IMSOC typically convenes twice a year, March to May and July to September.

The IMSOC is open to all uniformed military officers in the rank/paygrade of O-2 to O-5 (NATO OF-1 to OF-4). It is taught in English, so attendees must obtain a minimum score of 80 on the English Comprehension Level (ECL) Test. A typical course includes students from all global regions. Countries as large as Indonesia and as small as the Republic of Seychelles have registered in the past.

The course is designed to provide graduates the requisite knowledge and skills needed to 1) perform as a staff officer on a national or multinational/combined maritime staff, 2) apply the fundamental concepts at the Operational Level of Warfare in developing plans and conducting operations in a multinational maritime environment, and 3) perform as a member of an Operational Planning Team (OPT).

Students initially receive lectures that serve as building blocks to understand fundamental concepts and ideas related to the maritime environment and the operational level of warfare. Then, a thorough examination of Operation NEPTUNE allows students to understand how operational concepts are put into practice. Finally, drawing on all previous lessons, students are given an opportunity to develop their own Operational Order to address a fictitious international crisis.

Graduates receive an IMSOC Certification of Completion and a special pin to wear on their uniform.



Course Structure and Phases

Foundations

Students build the maritime operational knowledge required to understand the operational level of warfare with approximately 45 lectures. Topics range from an Introduction to Combined Maritime Operations to Operational Law, Warfare Capabilities, and Multiculturalism. U.S. doctrine is the predominate focus of the class; however, students will also be exposed to other multinational concepts and planning processes (UN, NATO, and Interagency).

Navy Planning Process (NPP)

This portion of the course requires students to work through the steps of the Navy Planning Process developing the same products required for real operations.

Execution Phase

During the execution portion of the course students will rotate between typical Maritime Operations Center (MOC) cells and working groups. This rotation helps reinforce the knowledge gained in the foundational and NPP portions of the course.

Reflections

Students end their time in the course with one-week dedicated to a review of the entire course. They also receive lectures on other planning processes, exercise planning, and learn about case studies relevant to their Command Post Exercise (CPX) experience. Additionally, students interact

with the Naval War College's Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Distinguished International Fellows. They are retired alumni of the College who rose in rank to serve as the commander of their naval service. These in-resident senior international officers mentor students and lead discussion panels focused on leadership as well as the challenges found serving on a coalition staff.

Field Studies Program (FSP)

Designed to ensure students gain an understanding of the responsibilities of governments, militaries, and citizens to protect, preserve, and respect the rights of every individual.

Operational Capability Workshops (OCW)

In support of the core objectives of this course, the OCW consists of a visit to a Navy or Coast Guard Station/Joint Expeditionary Base, where students receive briefs and tours related to the operational level. This trip may include a visit to the Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence (CJOS COE) or a U.S. MOC subject to availability.

Foundations

19 days

This portion welcomes students to the U.S. Naval War College and frames the course around the operational level of warfare in the maritime environment.

Students are introduced to concepts and ideas developed by preeminent Naval Theorists Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sir Julian Corbett. Using this foundational material, it frames for students how Navies shaped the past, operate in the present, and may influence the future.

Subsequent sessions build an extensive operations vocabulary for the students. These concepts are further developed by examining Operation NEPTUNE, the maritime component of Operation OVERLORD during World War II.

Students begin to work in breakout sessions by examining Operational Factors and Functions using the assigned historical case study.

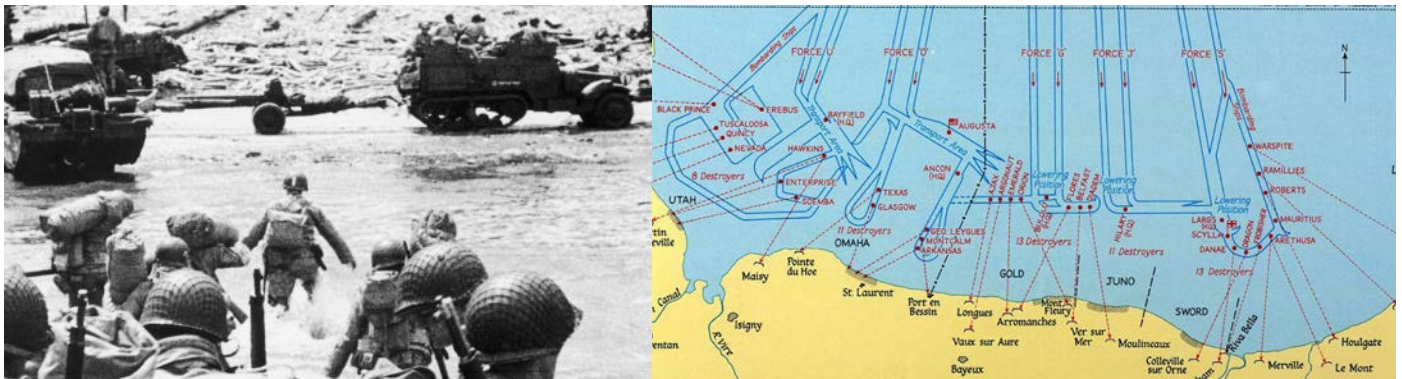
Sessions

- Welcome and Course Overview
- History of the Naval War College
- Classic Naval Theorists

- Multiculturalism
- Levels of Warfare
- Mission Command
- Commander's Decision Cycle
- Principles of Joint Operations
- Operational Factors
- Operational Functions
- Combined Maritime Operations
- Operational Warfare at Sea
- Warfare Capabilities
- Noncombatant Evacuation Operations
- Center of Gravity Analysis
- Operations in the Information Environment
- Cyberspace Brief
- Ethical Leadership
- Maritime Security Operations
- Maritime Domain Awareness

Specials

- Base Windshield Tour
- Newport Walking Tour
- Welcome Lunch and Restaurant Culture
- Ice Breaker Social and Bowling
- Class Photo
- Trafalgar Wargame



U.S. Navy Planning Process (NPP)

26 days

The heart of the course takes place during the NPP Phase. Students take what they've learned during the Foundations Phase to analyze and solve an international crisis involving a fictitious group of nations called "Rainbow Atoll."

Students draft an Operations Order for the Coalition Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC). In the process, the students spend several days working on each of the six steps that comprise the NPP.

In this phase, students are given much more autonomy as they are divided into groups that they organize and lead. Faculty mentors closely manage student progress and continue to instruct as needed.

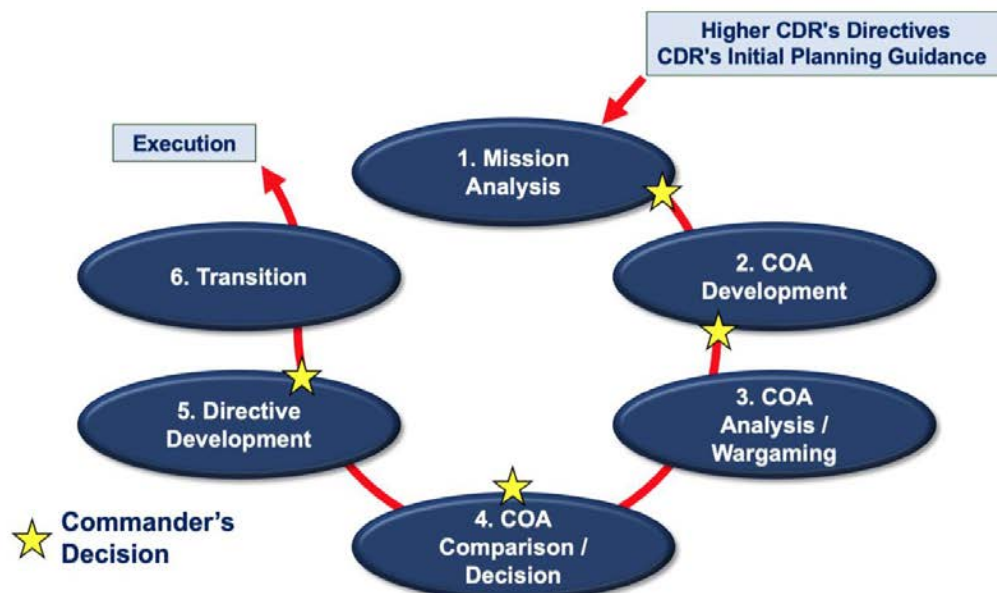
Students gain academic confidence, develop their analytical thinking skills, and learn how to function effectively as a team to accomplish a common objective.

Sessions

- Operational Planning Team
- Risk Assessment
- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
- Operational Law
- Operational Assessment
- Operational Art and Design
- Information Management
- Targeting Overview
- Decision Support Matrix and Template
- Commander's Critical Information Requirements
- Commander's Intent and Guidance
- Staff Estimates
- Roles and Functions in a Maritime Operations Center (MOC)

Specials

- Concept of Operations Brief



Boston, Massachusetts Field Trip



The first two-day trip of the course usually takes students to Boston, Massachusetts. Officially, the City of Boston, it stood witness to several key events of the American Revolution and the nation's founding.

Students visit the famed Freedom Trail and USS Constitution, also known as "Old Ironsides," the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat. Both venues have a deep historical connection and significance to the founding of the United States.

Additionally, students are exposed to other historical societies, law enforcement authorities, and local businesses. The trip concludes with dining at a local restaurant to help further understand what life is like in the New England region.



Norfolk, Virginia Field Trip



The second and longer trip typically occurs in Norfolk, Virginia. This city is home to the country's largest naval base and several of the nation's most important historical battlefields. The unique combination of historical and modern military sites encourages students to reflect on the evolution of naval missions over time.



As part of the Operational Capabilities Workshop (OCW), students visit Maritime Operational Centers (MOC) to receive briefings and tours to better understand the MOC concept. The second half of the trip focuses on the Field Studies Program (FSP) where students visit local Maritime and Battlefield Museums, both reinforcing America's founding roots. Like Boston, there are cultural opportunities that showcase life in the mid-Atlantic region.



COMMAND POST EXERCISE (CPX)

5.5 days

The CPX asks students to operate in a complex multinational environment in which the countries of the fictitious Rainbow Atoll face many complex, interwoven, and simultaneous maritime threats.

Students working as a multilateral task force in a Maritime Operations Center must use their learned operational planning skills to grapple with threats including; a violent extremist organization that is active at sea, weapons smugglers, and environmental and natural hazards.

By the end of this practical, students will have the opportunity to put their Operations Order into action, rotate through the various MOC cells, and respond to an unexpected crisis event.

MOC Functions and Tasks

- Current Operations (COPS)
- Future Operations (FOPS)
- Future Plans (FUPLANS)
- NPP Crisis Action Team (CAT)
- Develop Fragmentary Order
- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HA/DR)
- Protection Working Group



REFLECTIONS

4.5 days

The final week synthesizes the information, lessons, exercises, and experiences gained throughout the IMSOC. It is also an opportunity to learn about other planning processes and how to plan an exercise.

Students participate in rich panel discussions with the U.S. Naval War College's Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) International Fellows. These Admirals reached the pinnacle of their respective careers and continue to service by sharing their invaluable leadership insights gained through a lifetime of outstanding service. Senior international officers in-residence also discuss their experiences and leadership lessons.

The week ends with a graduation ceremony inside the U.S. Naval War College Museum, the building that housed the College when it was established in 1884.

Sessions

- Coalition Staff Officer Discussion Panel
- Leadership Challenges Discussion Panel
- Coalition Exercise Debrief
- Other Planning Processes
- Cyberspace Brief
- Fundamental Concepts Review
- Course Summary



INTERNATIONAL MARITIME STAFF OPERATORS COURSE
CLASS OF 24-02 | NOVEMBER 15, 2024



Current as of February 2025