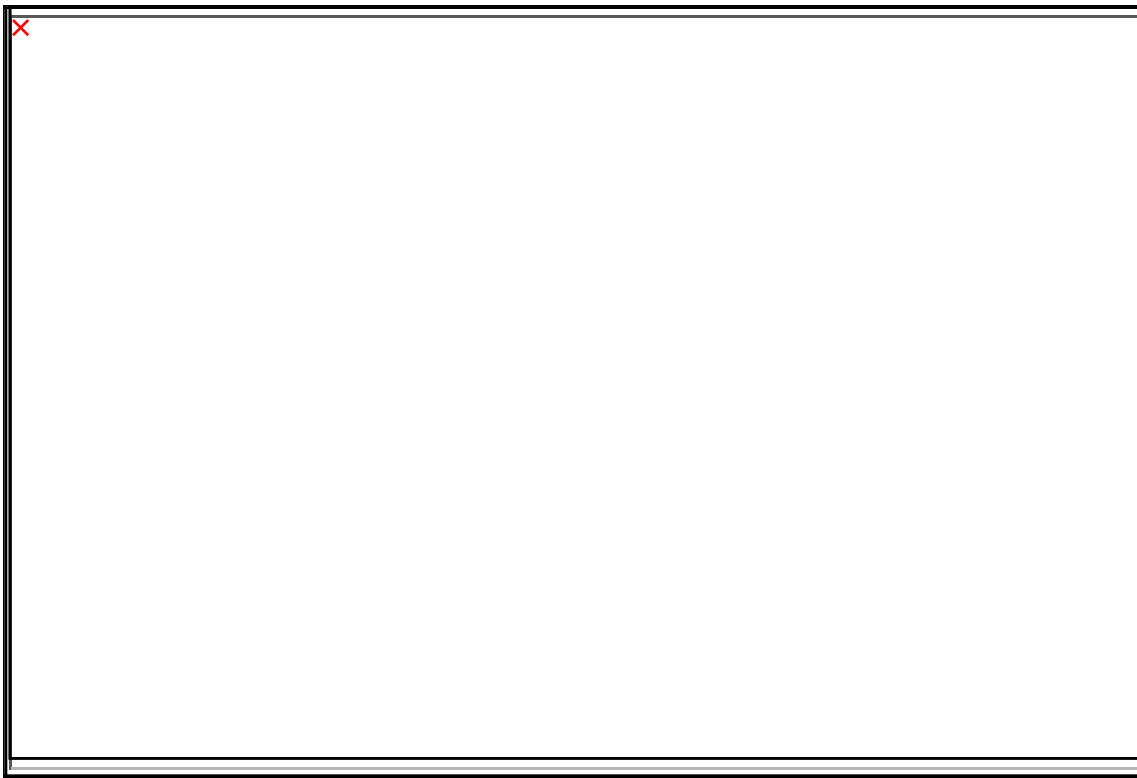


Business suits: they're uniforms not just fashion

Business suits: they're uniforms not just fashion

If you've worn an issued uniform to work every day for twenty years, fashion might not have been your primary concern each day. However, upon entering the strategic world in which counterparts are not wearing an issued ensemble, you'll need to shift focus, slightly, to your outward appearance.

Master tailor and image consultant Rita Gworek gave senior military officers a dose of business fashion advice during a presentation to USAWC Thursday Aug. 18, 2016.



Military members have always taken great pride in the appearance of uniforms, and that pride should carry over into the offices and conference rooms that await in the Army War College

students' futures, she said.

Rita Gworek, master tailor and image consultant, shows a USAWC student the proper way to wear a suit coat, bottom button never buttoned, during a presentation in Bliss Hall on Aug. 18, 2016.

"It helped the audience realize business attire is actually a uniform," said Christina Daily, who organized

the event. "I think that really resonated with them, and some had an 'ah ha' moment and thought, 'that's right, it is a uniform.'"

Gworek made three key points for men.

- 1) The fit of your clothing is more important than the cost. Simply put, if your clothing doesn't fit correctly it doesn't matter how nice or expensive the suit: it won't look good unless it fits properly. An investment in tailoring will pay off.
- 2) The colors you choose say a lot about your "rank" in an office setting. As strategic thinkers, blue or gray suits should be your choice with a white shirt and either a red or blue tie, she suggested. Again, the fit is important. Your tie should not be wider or thinner than the lapel of your jacket.
- 3) Pay attention to the dress code for the setting you're walking into, and remember it's easier to dress down than it is to dress up. Always wear a tie with a collared shirt; if the situation doesn't call for a tie, you can always remove it. The tie's design should incorporate the color of your pants, she noted.

Women in the audience would have noticed that the "rules" are more flexible, as women's fashion can vary from quarter to quarter, but Gworek encouraged the ladies to mirror the men as best they can, minus the tie.

"I thought it was great," said Francy Mueller of Arkansas City, Kansas. "I learned a lot. I didn't know about the tie matching the pants, and the width of the tie matching the lapel for the men."

The business dress program is a popular annual element of the USAWC Military Family Program, which tailors its programs and workshops to prepare senior military officers, civilian leaders, and spouses for the anticipated demands of senior-level assignments. Rita Gworek is the founder of ImagebyRita.