

## International faculty add experience, strategic empathy to Regional Studies

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 09 June 2021



*Spanish Army Col. Felipe Quero joined the War College faculty in 2018, teaching the Regional Studies Course on Europe.*

Students at the Army War College learn through reading, writing, experiential education – and from the wisdom and experience of others. International faculty enrich students’ understanding of the international security environment and the value of U.S. military partnerships. Three faculty members this year shaped students’ insights in core courses and, especially, in Regional Studies.

**Spanish Army Col. Felipe Quero** joined the War College faculty in 2018, teaching in the Department of National Security and Strategy. He taught two core courses: War, Policy and National Security and Regional Studies-Europe; and for students who seek deeper knowledge, two elective courses: Leading in Multinational Organizations and Advanced Regional Studies-Europe.

A 2009 graduate of the NATO Defense College, his military career in light and heavy infantry units started with Spain's military academy, completed in 1987.

Working for Spain's Joint Chief of Staff for six years, Quero led strategic planning for operations in Afghanistan and Somalia, and all military operations where Spain was sending troops or providing support. After that position, he spent three years at NATO Command Transformation in Norfolk, Va. And for another 4 years, he worked for the Minister of Defense at Defense Planning Directorate in charge of strategic relationships with NATO, the United Nations, the European Union, and strategic bilateral relations.

"The experience of working with different nationalities ... opens your eyes to different approaches," said Quero. "Working with NATO, working with European Union, and working especially for the U.N., helped me to understand why the others think in the way that they are thinking.

"This is the expertise I would like to pass to my students. It is what we call strategic empathy," said Quero. "Forming partnerships with other nations is not given. So, you have to cultivate day-by-day the friendships, alliances, and partnerships. You have to work that."

"Even with [my] multiple years' experience living in Europe, this elective gave me greater insight into the transatlantic relationship between the U.S. and Europe, and how NATO and the EU are essential partners," said Jo Dempsey, an AY21 student who took Quero's Europe course.

The Regional Studies-Europe course examines the history, culture, and geography of the region. This year, the course explored security implications of terrorism, the pandemic, climate change, energy, and illegal immigration. Students examined European nations' relationships with Russia, Turkey, and China. The objective was a holistic perspective of the region, to better understand how strategic leaders can develop strategic choices and implement strategies and policies.

"At this [strategic] level, the problem isn't always a military problem," said Quero. "It is broader than that. It is an economic problem, a diplomatic problem, and an informational problem. If the problem is not just a military problem, the solution should not only be a military solution.

"To solve the problem, you need partners and allies, a more multilateral approach to grand strategy," said Quero. The U.S. national strategy will operate more effectively if strategic leaders better understand its partners and adversaries, he noted. "This course is the center of gravity to do that."

"He provided us with great insights about the E.U. from a strategic perspective . . . it was truly beneficial for students' development and a better understanding of European geostrategy," said Croatian Army Col. Davor Babic, about Quero's influence in the Europe course.

Quero and his student recognized the value of collaborative learning. "The way the Army War College

approaches teaching is outstanding," said Quere. "The Socratic method is not about teaching. It is about helping students to understand to discuss a topic at the strategic level. For me, this is something new and helps us to grow professionally."

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**Brazilian Army Col. Julio Toledo**, a 2019 graduate of the Army War College, completed his first year as a faculty instructor for the Department of National Security and Strategy the following year. He co-teaches the course on the Americas. His expertise is Latin American Security Affairs.

Toledo has 31 years of service in the Brazilian army as an Infantry officer. His military career began in 1990, and he graduated from Brazil's Military Academy (AMAN) in '94. At the Command & General Staff College (ECEME) in 2011, his area of concentration was Joint Operations. In 2014, as part of an exchange program, he attended the General & Staff College in Quetta, Pakistan.

Across his military career, Toledo worked with Special Forces Operations, commanded of the Headquarters Company in Manaus, 2007-2008, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Battalion, 2016-2017. He taught at Brazil's Military Academy, 2006-2007 and 2012, and at his country's General Command & Staff College, Toledo, in 2014-2015.

Like the other international faculty, Toledo said he works to break down biases.

"We have several biases toward people who are different from us," said Toledo. "These develop at the individual and group levels. When strategic decisions may be being made based on biases, the main capability is working with the individual to make the difference in their groups and subsequently in their levels of decision."

"This is the main end of a program like this," said Toledo.

His experience in cross-cultural management, Toledo said, prepared him to do this work of challenging biases. "Brazil is a huge country, so we have in our regions all kinds of people, all kinds of cultures, so if you are leading in Brazil, you learn how to develop good relationships with different people," said Toledo. "In our military careers, we have years to do this because we move with our families, and we belong to those local communities."

"The value I personally received was the importance of having strategic empathy and understanding the interests and concerns of our friends and regional partners," said Navy Capt. Michael Jackson, AY21 student about Toledo's Regional Studies Latin American course.

The Regional Studies courses provide deeper insight that what can be found in books or on the internet alone, said Toledo.

This is also an enriching experience for the international faculty. "The war college is the place where the next strategic leaders will come from," said Toledo. "I get to sit next to them and learn how they think about their Army, families, and futures."

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Chilean Army Col. Alejandro Amigo joined the war college faculty in January 2021 to co-teach the Regional Studies-Americas.

“My military experience allows me to understand U.S. military officers, the environment, their ideas, and how they act,” said Amigo. “My academic experience has shown me how one should conduct a class in this level of studies.”

Like the students he instructs, Amigo has more than 25 years of experience in his military. His military career began in 1990 when he entered Chile’s military academy. Amigo became an army officer in 1993, serving in the Signals Corps. He served as the Future Operations Officer, Joint Argentinian Task Force for the United Nations Forces in Cyprus, 2003. He was the Chief of the Strategic Planning Group in the Chilean Army H.Q., 2015-2017.

He graduated from Chile’s war college and earned a master’s degree in Security Studies at Georgetown University in 2014.

In class, Amigo worked to challenge some of the biases, misconceptions, and ideas students had about the Americas by sharing his own experiences, he said.

By challenging the students, Amigo hoped to foster a sense of strategic empathy among the students and their interactions with those from different regions. “It is being put in the other’s place, trying to think of yourself as the other,” said Amigo.

“... [L]ook at your neighbor and try to understand them in a better way,” said Amigo, explaining why it is important to learn not only about U.S. national security interests but other those of other countries. Students learn to understand how the U.S and other countries can be better partners.

One needs to know the environment in order to execute the strategic mission, said Col. Barbara Fick, director of Americas Studies. The course teaches students how to scan their environment, a crucial aspect to understanding how partner nations can best work together.

“[S]tudents gain a deeper appreciation of strategic issues in a given region of the world,” said Danielle Spinard, a student who took the Americas course. “The program offers a more nuanced perspective of the history, motivations, and socio-economic realities of different countries.”

“This information is invaluable to better understand the operational environment ... making strategic decisions involving global alliances,” said Spinard.

International faculty draw on their military and academic experiences, teaching students about their region’s culture, economics, military structure, and relationships with surrounding regions. At the same time, this is a tremendous opportunity to learn from interactions with students and fellow faculty members, said Amigo.

“The U.S. military is always on the groundbreaking in the military doctrine and technology. If you want to learn and see how the future war fighting will be, always look to the U.S. Army,” said Amigo. In turn, the international faculty can apply that knowledge to the military forces in their home country, he added.

War college students consider their professional and personal interests in selecting one of seven regions for an in-depth study: East Asia, South Asia, Europe, Eurasia, Africa, Middle East, and the Americas.



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