

New course adds travel, deepens international perspective

By Curt Keester 23 March 2018



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CARLISLE, Pa. (March 23, 2018) – A new course at the Army War College bundles studies and travel for students who will collaborate firsthand with counterparts in regions of the world like the Middle East and Latin America.

Every War College student takes one of seven Regional Studies as part of the core curriculum, choosing to focus on the Middle East, Eurasia, South Asia, East Asia Pacific, Europe, Africa, or the Americas. The new Advanced Regional Studies elective course is a follow-on program for more intensive study and travel to the region. This year, it's offered for the Middle East or Latin America.

Regional studies courses here are a rich broadening experience because of the faculty's expertise and the contributions of international officers from the area under study, said Col. Ian Lyles, director of the Regional Studies

Program. But, travel to the region will offer a deeper level of engagement altogether, he said.

One section of the Advanced Middle East Regional Studies will travel to Israel and Jordan for about a week each. The schedule for each field trip is crowded with engagements with foreign diplomats, ministers of foreign affairs and economic planning, academics and military leaders. In each country, the students will meet with military officers and senior officials who are graduates of the Army War College.

“What we’re trying to do, is to get them to look at how politics, economics, the press, the universities, as well as the military and national security organizations in Jordan and Israel combine to shape national policy,” said Larry Goodson, Professor of Middle East Studies.

A day at the U.S. Embassy will be an opportunity to interact with the country team representing the United States in economic, military and other areas.

“We looking to give students more depth in understanding the external environment,” said Lyles. “We want the students to apply tools of strategic appraisal, said Lyles, about the immersive studies. They’ll listen, observe, and experience how other countries or other actors in the international perceive issues, and compare with U.S. interests and values.

“In the case of the Americas, we will be traveling to Colombia and Chile,” said Lyles. “We’re going to set the students up to have strategic engagements with foreign counterparts that operate at the international or strategic level, whether they’re in the political realm, security or economics. We also want to investigate the country’s culture and history.”

Goodson noted that some of the students in the Advanced RSP expect to work with one of these countries post-graduation. “I think it’s going to be something that every previous student who went on to those assignments would have wished they could have had,” said Goodson. “Hopefully in the future we’ll have this opportunity ... in the other regions, as well.”