

Distance Education Program class of AY19 completes first year studies

By Curt Keester 18 June 2018



The Army War College welcomed the 372 Distance Education Program students for their First Resident in Bliss Hall June 18. The Class of 2019 represents a Total Force of U.S. Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force; federal agencies.



Dr. Clayton Chun the Chair of the Department of Distance Education at the Army War College welcomed 372 Distance Education Program students during an address in Bliss Hall June 18.



Dr. Hal Brands, Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins University, discusses, "Stress testing American Grand Strategy," during a lecture in Bliss Hall June 19.

CARLISLE, Pa. (June 29, 2018) – Their presence at Carlisle Barracks the past two weeks was the halfway point on their two-year journey toward a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies, and their departure June 29, marked the completion of their first year studies.

Dr. Clayton Chun the Chair of the Department of Distance Education at the Army War College welcomed the 372 Distance Education Program students of the Class of 2019 during an address in Bliss Hall June 18. As Chun welcomed the students, he provided perspective on the past year, saying the past can provide a good indication of where the students might go in the future.

The two-week First Resident Course was the capstone event of the first



Panel moderator, Col. John Mowchan, leads Anthony Cordesman, Thomas Callender and Ryan Hass in a discussion as they share their insights on key aspects of China's strategy in the South China Sea in Bliss Hall June 21.

year in the two-year graduate level distance-learning program. Throughout the two weeks guest speakers, subject matter experts and educators lectured students on subjects that correlated to the course material presented in the first year. Guest lecturers included Dr. Leonard Wong, Dr. Hal Brands, Dr. Peter Feaver, Dr. Kevin Weddle, Daniel Kimmage, Laurie Blank, Daniel Kurtzer and capstone speaker Dr. Michael O’Hanlon.

O’Hanlon’s lecture, on the future of landpower, marked a transition for the students from the foundational courses of their first year to the practical application of strategic leadership in their second year. Over the course of the next year, they will develop new skills in critical thinking, strategic leadership and understanding of geopolitical topics.

Before moving into the second year however, the First Resident Course provided students an opportunity to meet and develop relationships with the classmates with whom they will spend the next year collaborating. Throughout the year, while on lunch breaks, in the late hours or after children have gone to bed, they will critique one another in online forms, discussions and case studies.

“I see this as an excellent continuation of development within the profession of arms,” said U.S. Army Reserve Lt. Col. Bettina Avent. “Within the U.S. Army we have opportunities at different points to continue our professional education, and being here today allows us to refocus and identify some significant topics that we can take back and implement in our organizations.”

Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession

Dr. Leonard Wong a researcher at the Strategic Studies Institute delivered the first academic lecture of FRC in Bliss Hall. He discussed, “*Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession*,” and said that as reporting requirements have increased in the Army a culture of ethical fading has developed with it. He gave examples of how inaccurate and inflated reports negatively influence the credibility and readiness of the Army. Wong encouraged FRC students to do three things as they advance in their Army careers: acknowledge the problem, exercise restraint and lead truthfully.

“The students who are going through now are in a very unique position,” said U.S. Army Reserve Col. Jeanine Jacob an instructor within the Department of Distance Education. “They are in a position where they can influence both ends of the spectrum. They can influence the junior officers by the questions they ask, the answers they accept, and the amount of



Dr. Peter Feaver, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University, discusses civil-military relations during a lecture June 19. Feaver discussed the military institution and the civil-military relationship at a strategy level.



Dr. Kevin Weddle, Professor of Military Theory and Strategy, introduces history as a critical thinking tool as he prepares Distance Education Program students for a staff ride to Antietam National Battlefield June 20.

RELATED ARTICLES

11 Jul 2018

[USAWC reinforces strategic lessons through real world scenario](#)

guidance and mentorship they give to those junior officers to remember what is right and what is wrong.

“And with their senior leaders, they can take a stand and say, ‘Sir, this is the truth, Ma’am, this is the truth, and I can’t tell you anything but the truth. I can tell you how to fix it. I can tell you what our plan is to get there, but this is the truth.’ They’re in a unique position. They have all that experience and maturity behind them to be able to say that with credibility, and they have to take advantage of that.”

American Grand Strategy

Dr. Hal Brands the Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies discussed, “*Stress testing American Grand Strategy*,” during his morning lecture to Distance Education Program students in Bliss Hall June 19. He said testing key assumptions about America’s foreign policy is a useful way to determine how healthy and resilient U.S. foreign policy is. Through identification and testing their validity can be determined.

Civil-Military Relations

Dr. Peter Feaver a Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University discussed civil-military relations during his afternoon lecture to the First Resident Course in Bliss Hall June 19. Feaver talked about civil-military relations from two perspectives. First, he discussed the military institution from a broad societal vantage point and noted society’s high regard for the military. Second, he looked at the civil-military relationship at the policy/strategy level.

“I thought Dr. Feaver’s unique insider’s perspective on civ-mil relations in the Executive Branch and subsequent advice he conveyed to us for our effectiveness at the strategic level were invaluable,” Marine Lt. Col Brad Anderson. “We took back to Seminar 5 valuable insights into the delicate nature of societal perceptions of the military, civ-mil relationships at the policy level, the impact and effects of political partisanship, and the general attitudes and perceptions common in our elected civilian leadership.”

Strategy Development Exercise South China Sea

A three-member panel discussed strategic aspects associated with the South China Sea as part of a strategy development exercise related to the South China Sea in Bliss Hall June 21. The panel members were: Anthony Cordesman, Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Thomas Callender, Senior Research Fellow for

Defense Programs at the Heritage Foundation, and Ryan Hass, David M. Rubenstein Fellow in Foreign Policy, Center for East Asia Policy Studies. The three members shared their insights on key aspects of China's strategy in the South China Sea in preparation for a strategy game simulation later in the day. The three discussed Chinese military capabilities and their implications on the South China Sea and policy options for other actors in the region.

Following the panel's discussion the distance education students adjourned to participate in a strategy game simulation based on current events in the South China Sea. The students divided into small groups representing different countries with interests in the South China Sea and were responsible for implementing strategic goals while adapting to actions of rival countries.

U.S. Army Reserve Lt. Col. David Okimoto said the strategy game was helpful in applying lessons learned to formulating a strategy, while taking into account multiple perspectives in order for his country to succeed in the game. "I think the war gaming aspect we're doing with this game definitely helps in understanding the action/reaction/counteraction mentality from a strategic perspective," he said.

Seeing how other strategies collide has been very interesting said U.S. Army National Guard Col. Patrick Pardy. "The more experience you get at anything it becomes a little more natural. You start thinking more at a strategic level, second, third order effects, sequels.... It's a practical exercise that makes you think about all the principles you've been reading about."

Information as an Instrument of Power

Daniel Kimmage the Acting Special Envoy and Coordinator for the Global Engagement Center of the Department of State discussed information as an instrument of power during a lecture June 25. Kimmage looked at the history and future of information as an instrument of national power, and used his current role at the Global Engagement Center as a way to address the broader subject in context of information operation in the world today.

"I liked how he highlighted how language, history and culture have a major impact in information operations," said U.S. Army Reserve Lt. Col. Tanya Simmons. "Most of the time we think about information operations as things we see today, computers, social media and the worldwide web. I like how he took it a couple of steps back to let everyone know it's more than just

that it's a number of things that have to be taken into consideration.

Especially when you're talking about instruments of national power, and in this case information operations.”

National Security Staff Ride to Washington, D.C.

As part of a National Security Staff Ride to Washington, D.C., June 26, First Resident Course students explored diplomatic, informational, military and economic avenues of national power at a strategic level and met with individuals whose experience in government, national and international relations added depth and perspective to the Army War College Distance Education Program curriculum.

The students divided into small groups and visited different areas of Washington to include Capitol Hill, U.S. governmental departments and agencies, foreign embassies, think tanks and national media outlets. During their visits, the small groups were exposed to the workings of government, interagency relationships and possible roles in future assignments as strategic leaders and planners.

“Communication can solve a lot of problems,” said U.S. Army Col. Hugh McLean. “We all have our perceptions, but so does the person sitting across from you at the table. If you can understand their perception, you can end up working together ... by sitting across the table from someone else and hearing them out the result is much more positive.”

After returning to Carlisle, the students discussed their experiences in class and shared their impressions after the staff ride June 28. Seminar 18 discussed international issues, as seen by other countries, and noted how other country's interests and issues differ from the U.S. They talked about the need for dialogue, networking and negotiations with foreign partners and allies on international issues such as trade, boarder disputes and the economy.

Ethics

Laurie Blank, Esq. a Clinical Professor of Law and the Director of the International Humanitarian Law Clinic at Emory University School of Law discussed military ethics and leadership during her lecture June 27. Blank talked about the application of military force, morally justifiable war, the law of war and the result of the use of force within a legal ethical framework.

U.S. Army National Guard Lt. Col. Peter Fiorentino said the framework of

ethical law within the world body is strong, but all countries need to adhere to the framework in order to promote ethical and humanitarian behavior.

“We talk about law of war, strategy, theorists and why war starts and conflict termination, all of that has to do with that ethical process in going to war,” Fiorentino said. “... I think all that she discussed applies to the rational leading up to going to war.”

American Diplomacy

Former U.S. Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer, the S. Daniel Abraham Professor of Middle East policy studies at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, focused on the critical issues faced in diplomatic engagements as they relate to the national security mission during his lecture June 28. He discussed diplomacy as one of the key factors in the prosecution of national interests, and said how all of the components of national security work together to advance and enhance our national interests abroad.

Civilian student Russell Vane said he was impressed by the Department of State's ability to wield American influence on other nations through its diplomatic mission and efforts to build networks of contacts in countries that may eventually become partners and allies. “We need to remember that diplomacy is an important element of D.I.M.E. (diplomacy, informational, military and economic), and we need to understand how that needs to be sculpted,” he said.

The Future of Landpower

Dr. Michael O'Hanlon a senior fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, talked about the future of landpower and land warfare during the final lecture to the FRC students June 28. He said there is a lot of good happening the world, but the progress is fragile and cannot be taken for granted. Progress he said requires a strong United States, a strong Army, strong ground forces and broad U.S. led coalitions of partners, allies and like-minded countries working together in common pursuit of goals they agree on in principle.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Lee said O'Hanlon impressed him with his foresight and real world experience from the Peace Corps. He said he appreciated O'Hanlon's ability bridge gaps and see big issues from not only the strategic level, but the tactical as well. “In his strategic discussion he was able to relate to each of these students ... He touched on core areas that we have vested interests in, and that generated a lot of

discussion," he said.

U.S. Army War College News Archives