

Army astronaut teaches, learns at Army War College

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Army Col. Andrew "Drew" Morgan, M.D., is a NASA astronaut, Army War College Distance Education student, and guest speaker this week for Col. Ben Ogden's resident student elective, 'Foundations of Space Power for Senior Leaders.'

The U.S. Army War College invites leaders and subject matter experts to guide students' understanding about integrating space operations into operational and strategic planning. Army Col. Andrew "Drew" Morgan, M.D., is a NASA astronaut, Army War College Distance Education student, and guest speaker this week for Col. Ben Ogden's resident student elective, 'Foundations of Space Power for Senior Leaders.'

From July 2019 through April 2020, Morgan flew in space as a flight engineer aboard the International Space Station. He called on his first-hand perspective to discuss the diplomatic role of human spaceflight, as well as NASA's relationships with partners in the Department of Defense and the commercial sector. He offered insights about how they work synergistically as instruments of power.

During class, Morgan addressed students' wide-ranging questions, from national security to the scientific research conducted in space. and his

experiences living in space for nine continuous months.

“Spaceflight combines the things I love -- military service, medicine, and space exploration. But my first love was always military service,” said Morgan. “I’m a Soldier first.”

“Military officers make great astronauts because we already have experience working in high-risk operational environments, leading people, assessing and mitigating risk, and representing the organization publicly. All things that are part of military service and equally relevant to being an officer,” he said.

Morgan is also working to maintain Army currency, as a student in the Army War College’s Distance Class of 2022, serving as the class president. “I think PME is vital to officer professional development, and I wanted to set a good example as an astronaut and officer by undertaking the challenging, rigorous educational program like the Army War College,” he said.

As an astronaut on board the ISS, Morgan focused on science, ranging from physics and materials science to biology and medicine. He conducted experiments that will have impacts for healthcare, he said -- “from developing and testing vaccine technologies to understanding the physiological impacts of being in space for long periods of time.

“The science we perform on the ISS has implications for improving life on earth, and furthering space exploration,” said Morgan. “Sometimes the science that we do is just answering the big questions of the unknown, about the origins of the universe.”

Morgan participated in seven spacewalks while on the ISS. His last four spacewalks were to repair the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer, a particle detector outside of ISS that searches for dark matter and answers to the origins of the universe.

Although Russia remains one of our biggest competitors, it is a crucial U.S. partner aboard the ISS.

“We have been working with Russia in space for more than two decades. It is one of the most important relationships in our civil-space program right now, said Morgan. “Astronauts and cosmonauts maintain a great working relationship in training and while living on the ISS as crewmates.”

Morgan is current the Army NASA Detachment Commander at NASA’s

Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. He was recently selected by the Army for colonel-level command, in 2023. "I am honored that the Army would offer me such an important opportunity to lead in the Army again."

Morgan earned a B.S. in Environmental Engineering from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, in 1998, and a doctorate in Medicine from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in 2002. He completed a residency in emergency medicine at Madigan-University of Washington, 2005, and a fellowship in primary care sports medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013. He will complete the U.S. Army War College master's degree in Strategic Studies in July 2022.