

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS



West Point
READY 
READY TO SERVE. READY TO LEAD.



Civil-Military Operations (CMO) are defined as the activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a

friendly, neutral, or hostile operation area in order to facilitate military operations, to consolidate and achieve operational U.S. objectives.

The mission of the Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations (CSCMO), is to develop all West Point leaders so that they are prepared to employ an understanding of Civil-Military Operations within the framework of the broad spectrum of challenges they will face in military service; to support transformational changes to professional military education across the Department of Defense and partner organizations, and to establish West Point as the wellspring of professional military education in the realm of CMO.

CSCMO accomplishes its missions by connecting our cadets to the Civil-Military Operations environment through Four Pillars. Each domain provides a wealth of learning that accompanies their own cadet transformations from entering civilians, to military students, to Civil-Military Practitioners as they embark on a path to leadership in support of the US Army.

Syllabus Integration

The Center for the Study of Military Operations supports the Academy's mission to Build, Educate, Train and Inspire cadets by working to integrate education on CMO at the main effort of West Point, in the classroom. Cadets have the opportunity to interact in small group and classroom settings with preeminent researchers and scholars, both military and civilian, from government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Curriculum will focus on frameworks and strategies for understanding the relationship between civilian and

military leaders and their organizational interests. It will make cadets understand how CMO effectively engages relevant actors in designing and implementing a comprehensive approach to fragile and conflict-affected states. In concert with our hosting department and the discipline of Geography, we will focus on the centrality of geocultural assessment frameworks in understanding complex, dynamic Operational Environments. There is also collaboration across the spectrum of West Points Departments and Centers to facilitate integration into their respective courses and academic foci. This multidimensional approach allows cadets to see the coordinated effort that is required to achieve policy objectives, illustrating the material that they learn in class. CSCMO has been able to increase the subject matter knowledge of cadets by bringing in speakers that have served in CMO capacities overseas as well as non-governmental organizations whose presence has become more and more important on the modern battlefield, providing resources and knowledge that supports stability for civilians in conflict zones and whose presence provides Army leaders with additional assets and capabilities to resolve the problems they face. A myriad of speakers have come in to discuss the value added by these organizations as well as the environment in which the cadets may soon operate. The guest lecture program ensures that the next generation of Army leaders are prepared to face the complexities of the modern battlefield as they advance U.S. policy objectives across the globe.

Scholars and Scholarship

CSCMO solicits research proposals to support continued research on relevant topics to both benefit the intellectual development of faculty and cadets as well as make significant scholarly contributions to the field of study. The pursuit of a knowledge in scholarly research is a critical path to advancing awareness for cadets, the Army and the community of practice beyond. CSCMO provides the infrastructure and focus necessary to tackle the nation's and the world's most challenging problems, bringing context to the classroom. Cadets, mentored by faculty, staff and collaborating enterprises, connect West Point to the Army and to the Nation through research exchange.

Scholars produce a wide portfolio of products, from cadet honor's theses, cadet and faculty paper presentations at national and international graduate-level conferences, and grants and fellowships that support collaboration with partners in the CMO community.

Symposia & Sharing

Though hosting and participation in national and international conferences, CSCMO brings together and collaborates with communities of cadets, faculty and thought leaders introducing a wide variety of knowledge and views in a liberal arts setting. These conferences and workshops showcase subject matter experts to discuss topics pertinent to CMO, allowing students, faculty, and panelists to profit from a vast body of knowledge shared at these events. Accordingly, as groups and as individuals, these participants contribute to their respective communities from different angles. There are many common denominators to be found amid the conversation, with similar questions like best practices or the evolving use of technology to enhance efforts. The aim is to support venues where participants engage in fruitful discussion on mutual interests regarding contemporary environments and solutions for some of the most daunting Civil-Military challenges. At West Point, our participatory conferences and workshops provide such a forum for our cadets to learn alongside their civilian peers and alumni in concert with intellectual input that addresses their questions through expert presentations. The outcomes have them return to their classrooms armed with acquired knowledge and fresh ideas to tackle the most complex future challenges.

Service Learning

The Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations provides cadets with immersion/internship opportunities, giving them practical, hands-on experience in the realm of Civil-Military Operations as an extension of their classroom experience. The desired end state is that participation provides these cadets with real-world experience and practitioner knowledge of the CMO environment including operating principles, observing the participation of institutions, and understanding how their future leadership can influence positive outcome. Many organizations in the public and private sectors host cadets for two to six weeks, allowing

cadets to contribute to the organizations that host them by completing projects pertinent to their academic interests and the goals of the organization. Cadets bring these lessons back to West Point, applying them in the classroom and educating their peers on current issues in CMO. CSCMO has also provided hundreds of opportunities for cadets to perform long summer internships in a variety of international and non-governmental agencies. The three-to-five-week immersions and internship opportunities range through every Geographic Combatant Command area of responsibility, across the hierarchy of tactical/operational/strategic environments and have placed cadets on all seven continents. Through the generous support of the Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations, cadets integrate meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich their learning experience. The activities add value not only to the education of the cadets that participate, but also to the communities that they support.



Cadets attend the Class of 1978 Civil Military Operations Student Workshop in 2024.

"No matter the challenges graduates will be asked to face, the Academy's Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations is working to make sure they are equipped to work with international and domestic agencies outside of the Department of Defense as well as the civilian population in the areas they deploy to. Beyond the government, it is becoming increasingly important to understand the roles, customs and cultures of non-government organizations as they interact in the field."

— Mr. John Melkon, Director of the Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations



Photo: Lee Ross '73

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations\$1 million

MARGIN OF
EXCELLENCE



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