



## Information Paper, CGSC Art of War Scholars Program, June 2024



**Program Description:** CGSC's Art of War Scholars (AoWS) program offers a small number of competitively selected officers an opportunity to participate in intensive graduate level seminars and in-depth personal research focused primarily on understanding strategy and operational art through the lens of modern military history. The **purpose** of the program is to produce officers with highly refined critical thinking and communication skills and an advanced understanding of the **art of warfighting**. These abilities will be further honed by **reading, researching, thinking, questioning, debating and writing** about complex issues across the full spectrum of modern warfare, from the lessons of the Russo-Japanese war through operations in the joint contemporary environment, while beginning to understand the 21<sup>st</sup> century evolution of the art of war. A significant distinguishing characteristic of the program is the production of a **scholarly master's thesis** that contributes to the body of professional knowledge.

**Students must be enrolled in the Master of Military Art & Science Degree program to be eligible** to apply and must base their **thesis on an approved art of war related topic**. A history thesis is not required. Once selected, **everything in the program orients to successful completion of a publishable and academically reputable thesis**. Art of War Scholars qualify for the Strategist 6Z and the Historian 5X identifiers. With the high level of **enabled scholarship and research education for Art of War Scholar theses**, a carefully selected few are published by Army University Press as **Art of War Papers**. Almost all thesis findings are circulated, and many AoWS are recognized during graduation for their exceptional contributions to the profession. Art of War Scholar graduates are well prepared for SAMS, SAASS, SAW, JAWS, senior service college fellowships and ASP3. Results suggest that Art of War graduates are highly competitive for command and well prepared for PhD work.

The **main theme** for the seminars is the art of warfighting, based on analysis of the recent history of warfare, while **including seminars** with direct engagement of capstone doctrine writers, graduate discussion of national strategy, organizational-level leadership & command, visits to key combined arms agencies, combatant commands, think tanks & selected archives, a series of staff rides. Scholars have opportunity for direct engagement with significant history scholars, notable art of war 'practitioners' and combined arms leaders. There is normally a **distinguished guest for each seminar**. Blocks of instruction include National Ways of War, Total War, Doctrine, Cold War, COIN Theory & Experience, Art of Command, and Current & Future Experience. There are one hundred graduate level seminars in this curriculum, with an intensive reading load in preparation for most. The workload is challenging but doable and rewarding. Scholars have time to read, reflect and write. Their significant investment reaps great lasting professional benefit.

The AoWS Seminar consists of **no more than a dozen joint and combined Scholars** and is led by the College's Ike Skelton Distinguished Chair for the Art of War. The **program begins after the completion of the Common Core curriculum and takes the place of** the Advanced Operations Course and the elective periods. Scholars take no electives. They follow their own unique curriculum. **Selection** is highly competitive, considers the applicant's academic performance during the CGSOC core curriculum and early progress on the MMAS thesis. The staff group advisor, team leader, and thesis committee chair assess the ability of the prospective scholar to complete a high-quality thesis, contribute to graduate level seminar discussions, and work as a member of a team. Screened candidates are interviewed, assessed for professional potential, then nominated by a board of CGSC leaders. The Deputy Commandant approves the selections. Experience shows that those officers who go through all the steps of submitting a complete application portfolio are competitive for selection. The Ike Skelton Chair leads the application process.

**Graduates of the program develop** an advanced perspective on organizational leadership, national ways of war, national and military strategy, evolving U.S. Army doctrine, campaign planning, complex leadership challenges, innovation and adaptation on the modern battlefield, future war, and the complex linkages between the levels of war. The performance of Art of War Scholar graduates in the field shows they are **exceptionally well prepared for** selection to academic fellowships, nominative assignments, doctoral programs, and a variety of future strategic and operational leadership roles including command.