Department of Social Sciences

Civil-Military Relations Faculty Series

The Civil-Military Relations Faculty Series is a SOSH Department venture that seeks to develop junior rotating faculty on their knowledge of civil-military relations as they prepare to take on field grade officer responsibilities and greater leadership roles in the operational Army. This is nested within the Dean’s theme of AY 2023, “Called to Serve: Military Leadership in a Democratic Republic.” The venture also seeks to capitalize on the knowledge and expertise of civil-military relations within the SOSH Department and share that across the board.

The series this fall will begin with four lunchtime discussions. Each session will host a speaker who will present their experiences or research in civil-military relations, with a focus on lessons for field grade officers, and then it will open to a broader discussion and question and answer session. This series is open to all—civilians and military of all ranks. Each session will take place in the SOSH Conference Room, LH100, from 1200-1300. Feel free to bring your lunch.

If you’re interested in hosting a discussion yourself or if you have a recommended civil-military relations topic, please contact MAJ Hannah Smith at hannah.smith@westpoint.edu.

Wednesday, October 26th
“Reflections from the Stewarding the Profession Leader Symposium”
MAJ Adam Barsuhn
MAJ Adam Barsuhn will discuss a report produced following the Dean’s Leader Symposium on August 31, 2022. This symposium consisted of involved retired general officers, senior civilian leaders, academics, and Academy leadership participating in four panels on a variety of civil-military topics. While the discussion was non-attributional, the Dean’s office produced a report that summarizes the discussion, along with commentary about the current state of civil-military relations. MAJ Barsuhn will reflect on relevant insights for field grade officers.

Monday, November 7th
“Plausible Military Leadership and Civilian Control”
MAJ Pat Kelly
MAJ Pat Kelly will discuss some implications of his research into civil-military relations and the resolution of long-running, costly wars. The presentation will encourage reflection on two simultaneous imperatives for military leaders: perceiving war in terms of its “political” ends rather than its purely military objectives, while supporting civilian leaders’ control of the military. MAJ Kelly hopes to motivate a conversation about field grade officers’ self-development as well as their education of our future officers.

Thursday, November 17th
“Army Leadership in a Politically Polarized Environment”
MAJ Joe Amoroso and MAJ Paul Merklinger
MAJ Joe Amoroso and MAJ Paul Merklinger will share their insights on leading Army units in a polarized environment. Drawing upon research related to civilian military relations, societal perceptions of the military, veterans and elections, and contemporary polarization they will present a concise coupling of scholarly information and practical applications to field-grade leadership amidst the current divisions within society.

Wednesday, November 30th
“Lessons from a Deployment to the National Capital Region”
CPT(P) Andrew Webster
CPT Andrew Webster will share his experiences from a no-notice deployment to the National Capital Region on June 1, 2020 in response to protests outside the White House. The discussion will touch on the legal authorities for the domestic use of active-duty personnel, serving in a hyper-partisan operational environment, and the unique leadership challenges that arose from deploying domestically.