

MS 360: Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (SOLIC)

Course Overview

Since the end of the Cold War, Low Intensity Conflicts have propagated dramatically, and U.S. military involvement in them has increased as well. Today, the war on terror has remained almost entirely within this spectrum of warfare, regardless of location or preferences. Special Operations Forces have always been key players in these types of conflicts, and today's war is no different.

USMA graduates of all ranks have been among the thousands who have deployed to places like Bosnia, Colombia, Haiti, Somalia, Rwanda, Iraq, Liberia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and countless other locations around the globe. Some worked for the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), others supported it, and still others worked alongside it. Regardless of for whom they worked, these soldiers operated in Low Intensity environments. Today's war on terror increases the likelihood that USMA graduates will continue to interface with the special operations community. Most importantly, it guarantees that they will all function in a low-intensity environment. Understanding low-intensity conflict and special operations directly prepares cadets to fight, survive, and win as officers in a wartime army.

Course Goal

MS 360 supports the Academy's mission:

To educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character who is committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country. Furthermore, these values are exemplified by each graduate's commitment to a career in the United States Army and a lifetime of service to the nation.

Specifically, MS360 will prepare cadets to fight, survive, and win as officers in a wartime army by meeting its terminal learning objectives:

1. *Demonstrate an understanding of U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF), their missions, capabilities, cultures, and limitations in an unclassified learning environment.*

2. *Demonstrate an understanding of Low Intensity Conflict,*



its traditional characteristics, and its likely components, as well as how SOF typically operate in a LIC environment.

3. *Understand and apply analytic models for the use of Special Operations and the costs and benefits to their use.*
 4. *Improve oral and written communication and presentation skills.*
 5. *Demonstrate an understanding of Low Intensity Conflict, its traditional characteristics, and its likely components, as well as how SOF typically operate in a LIC environment.*
 6. *Understand and apply analytic models for insurgency and counter-insurgency operations in an academic environment.*

Course Method and Organization

The intent of this course is to determine what makes a unit or mission special. To achieve this the course is divided into three parts. The first block examines core issues regarding special operations missions and units. Key questions discussed include: What constitutes a special operation? Can a generalized answer be developed to derive the conditions for success? Does the formation of elite forces optimize the allocation of the state and its resources? Second, the course examines the organization, composition, methodologies, capabilities, and limitations of U.S. SOF forces. Also present is an investigation of four of the nine SOF missions. The third block examines models of LIC. After reviewing the characteristics common to LIC environments, the course explores traditional forms of LIC. Throughout the course, historical case studies are used to

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demonstrate the military and political utility of special operations and , at least two models for understanding today's insurgency and counterinsurgency strategies.

1. Grading

The following table presents the standards for grading in this course.

Grade Earned	Percentage		Subjective Interpretation
	Min	Max	
A+	97.0	100.0	Mastery of concepts
A	93.0	96.9	Can apply concepts to new situations
A-	90.0	92.9	Solid understanding of concepts
B+	87.0	89.9	Strong foundation for future work
B	83.0	86.9	Moderate understanding of concepts
B-	80.0	82.9	Basic understanding of concepts
C+	77.0	79.9	Acceptable Understanding
C	73.0	76.9	Questionable foundation for future work
C -	70.0	72.9	Doubtful understanding
D	67.0	69.9	Weak foundation for future work
F	< 67.0		Failed to demonstrate understanding

2. Requirements

Students will receive their grades based upon their performance in the following course requirements:

WPR	175 points
TEE	250 points
Research paper	250 points
Homework/Quizzes	175 points
Instructor points	150 points
TOTAL	1000 points

3. Course Materials.

Readings will be posted on the Blackboard webpage.

4. Academic Integrity and Documentation:

Academic Integrity is an inherent responsibility of each cadet and is an extension of the seven Army values. Academic integrity ensures that each cadet is graded against his/her own work. According to guidance from MS instructors, cadets may collaborate with each other; however, DMI requires that each cadet submit his/her own work. In other words, cadets may discuss and share ideas with one another, but each cadet must physically type/write his/her own product.

According to the Dean's Documentation of Written Work (Aug 2001), documentation "identifies the sources of ideas, words, and data obtained from another person or the products of another person to such a degree of specificity and accuracy that an

observer knows clearly what ideas, words, data, and products to attribute to the authoring cadet and what ideas, words, data, and products to attribute to sources other than the authoring cadet." (p. 3). Common problems with documentation include insufficient documentation that fails to clearly identify the above situation, incorrect documentation, and plagiarism whether accidental or deliberate. Any of these problems *may* result in a lower grade, resubmission requirement, possible disciplinary action or referral to the Cadet Honor System.

MS courses utilize both Army manuals and customized course textbooks. Although information in Army manuals is considered common knowledge for active and reserve component soldiers, DMI requires cadet to cite these sources in written essays. This reinforces the educational goal for cadets to become familiar with Army reference tools. DMI customized course textbooks include "ideas, words, data and products" from various sources; cadets also must document these sources and any additional assistance so that the instructor clearly understands the sources.

5. Instructor Information.

My email is kelli.moon@usma.edu and my office is in room WB-4133. My office phone is (845) 938-0448, and my cell phone is (850) 855-6872. You are welcome to call me anytime at work or at home. I have an open door policy, so please feel welcome to stop by the office at anytime, but appointments are preferred.

6. Lesson Plans

BLOCK I: U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Lesson 1 :

TOPIC: Introduction and Course Overview
ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES; VIDEO (11 MINS)

Read the syllabus

Learning Objectives:

1. Develop an understanding for the need to study Special Operations as professional warriors in today's army.
2. Recognize how this course represents one of very few opportunities in the Department of Defense to pursue rigorous and formal education about irregular warfare.
3. Understand qualities of special operations.
4. Understand how the course is organized, what CPT Moon's expectations of the students are, and what the students can expect from CPT Moon.

Lesson 2:

TOPIC: Legislating Change

READING: Boykin, *The Origins of the United States Special Operations Command* 1-19

Dietz, *The Guts to Try*, 1-2

Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand how mission failure in Desert One changed the structure of Special Operations
2. Determine what obstacles existed for reformers of SOF

Lesson 3:

TOPIC: USASOC Organization and 1st Special Forces Regiment

READING: Blackboard: SOF Reference Manual, pp 3-7 to 3-16;

Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand the organizational structure and missions of USASOC.
2. Understand the organization, missions, culture of the 1st SFR
3. Understand the unique training and preparation of SF units

Lesson 4:

TOPIC: 75TH Ranger Regiment Organization and Missions

READING: Blackboard: SOF Reference Manual, pp 3-2 to 3-6

--Ranger Panel--

Lesson Objective:

1. Understand the organization, missions, and culture of the 75th Ranger Regiment

Lesson 5:

TOPIC: AFSOC Organization

READING: TBD

Lesson Objectives:

1. Identify the role of USAF Special Operations
2. Understand the organizational structure and missions of AFSOC

Lesson 6:

TOPIC: FID Missions

READING: Blackboard: JP 3-07.1 Chpts 1 & 2 and Appendix B (pgs I-1 to II-16, and B-1 to B-5); Bailey, OPATT, Blackboard

Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand what constitutes a FID mission
2. Understand the 3 conditions under which FID missions occur and why
3. Understand the key limitations to FID missions
4. Understand how other government agencies are important in FID planning and execution
5. Understand the concept, functions and principles of IDAD and how FID can assist them
6. Understand how SOF units assist in FID operations

Lesson 7:

TOPIC: The History of NAVSPECWARCOM

READING: Kapusta, 77-102

Lesson Objective:

1. Understand the history and development of Naval Special Operations

Lesson 8:

TOPIC: The Origins of Special Forces and SEALs

READING: Adams, *SOF in Action*, 54-77; Kapusta, pp 33-76

Learning Objectives:

1. Determine the role of Special Forces following WWII and if it was appropriate
2. Understand the implications of specific laws in providing appropriate manpower to SOF
3. Determine if there would have been more appropriate policy decisions to achieve Success

NOTE: Turn-in milestones of your research paper in class. For specifics, see notes on blackboard under course documents

Lesson 9:

TOPIC: MARSOC

READING: TBD

Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand the organization structure and missions of MARSOC
2. Evaluate the addition MARSOC has made in the SOF community
3. Determine if the value has met its intent

Lesson 10:

LESSON DROP FOR RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 11:

TOPIC: SOF in the Late 70s and preserving the force

READING: Marquis, 60-89

Lesson Objectives:

1. Identify the role political climate had on the effectiveness of SOF
2. Determine how the capabilities of SOF were maintained in non-wartime environments
3. Understand the Historical context for the current issues confronting the DoD

Lesson 12:

TOPIC: Special Mission Units

READING: Waller, Douglas C., *The Commandos*, CH 4

Lesson Objective:

1. Understand the capabilities and intent of Special Mission Units
2. Determine the strategic necessity of Special Mission Units
3. Understand limitations of Special Mission Units

Lesson 13:

TOPIC: UW within other agencies

READING: Charlie Wilson's War, 285-306; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 3-17

Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand scope and capabilities of alternate UW missions
2. Determine the legal boundaries for military assistance in UW
3. Understand how OGA can contribute to UW campaigns

BLOCK II: FOUNDATIONS OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Lesson 14:

TOPIC: Defining Special Operations

READING: Cohen, Elliot, *Commandos*, Introduction & "The origins of Elite Units"

Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand the definition and qualities of special operations.

2. Understand the employment of special operations across the range of military operations.
3. Understand the characteristics of special operations.
4. Understand the nature of special operations.

Lesson 15:

TOPIC: The Purpose and Utility of Special Operations

READING: Adams, *SOF in Action*, "What are Special Operations all about"

AUSA Background Brief. Number 42. Special Operations Forces: A Primer Link:

<http://stinet.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA277957&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the terms and units associated with Special Operations Forces.
2. Understand the complexity of trying to define the role of SOF on the modern battlefield.

Lesson 16:

TOPIC: The Theory of Special Operations

READING: McRaven, Chapter 1

Supplemental: Witkowski, *Glider assault on Eben Emael*

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand McRaven's principles to successful Special Operations missions
2. Understand the Term "Relative Superiority"
3. Identify why McRaven thinks that developing a theory of Special Operations is important.
4. List and explain McRaven's six principles of special operations.

Lesson 17:

TOPIC: When do Special Operations Succeed and Fail.

READING: Gray, "Handfuls of Heroes and Desperate Ventures: When do Special Operations Succeed?"
Vandenbrouke, *Perilous Options*, "Patterns of Failure.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the conditions that favor success in Special Operations
2. Understand the policy implications for using Special Operations
3. Understand the causes for Special Operations failure.

Lesson 18 :

TOPIC: Geographic and operational effects on special operations.

READING: Hoffman, *Commando Raids*;

Supplemental: Kreisher *Desert One or*

http://iran.theatlantic.com/interactive_article_page_1.html

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the advantages to using commando raids.
2. Understand the effects of Transportation on the success of commando operations.
3. Understand the effects of geography on the success of commando operations.
4. Understand the effects the type of operation has on the success of commando missions.
5. Determine if the unit size has implications for mission success.

Lesson 19 :

TOPIC: Relational Maneuver

READINGS: Luttwak, "Notes on Low – Intensity Warfare"

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the term "Relational Maneuver"
2. Identify why technologically advanced militaries favor attrition warfare
3. Identify the organizational remedy for low-intensity conflict.

Lesson 20 :

TOPIC: Barriers to utilizing Special Operations

READINGS: Schultz, *Showstoppers*; Bolger, *Element of Surprise*

Supplemental: Hunter, *Acid Gambit*

Learning Objectives:

1. Define the nine reasons SOF was never used before 9/11
2. Understand the political environment of conducting SOF missions.
3. Determine which of the nine factors are still relevant to SOF employment

NOTE: Turn-in milestones of your research paper in class. For specifics, see notes on blackboard under course documents.

Lesson 21 :

TOPIC: Application of the Theories

READINGS: Doolittles Raid; Taranto, Eldarado Canyon

Learning Objectives:

1. Demonstrate ability to synthesize the theories studied and apply them to case studies

Lesson 22:

WPR

BLOCK III: SELECT SPECIAL OPERATIONS MISSIONS**Lesson 23 :**

TOPIC: Unconventional Operations in the Big Conventional War

READING: Brown, *The Last Hero*, 426-442

Learning Objectives:

1. Determine If the OSS contributed significantly to the Allied effort
2. Identify The role of the OSS in Operation Noah's Ark
3. Determine the Strategic Utility of UW in large conventional wars

Lesson 24:

TOPIC: SO in the Western Hemisphere

READING: Vandenbrouke, *Debate at the Beachhead*.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify where the failures were in the the Bay of Pigs
2. Determine how Political Atmosphere shapes the decisions of key leaders
3. Determine if the CIA was the appropriate agency to conduct this operation.

Lesson 25:

TOPIC: SOF use in Indochina

READING: Schultz 75-128

Learning Objectives:

1. Determine the shortcomings of US covert ability in SE Asia
2. Identify How the programs in place could have been improved
3. Determine if there would have been more appropriate policy decisions to achieve success.

Lesson 26:

TOPIC: SOF use in Indochina

READING: Adams, 78-115

Learning Objectives:

1. Determine if the mission met the strategic goals of the US in SE Asia
3. Identify How the programs in place could have been improved
4. Determine if there would have been more appropriate policy decisions to achieve success.

Lesson 27 :

TOPIC: Operation Urgent Fury

READINGS: Marquis, 91-105

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the role of Special Operations in Operation Urgent Fury
2. Determine the shortcomings of the SOF units in the operation
3. Determine if there was a different role for the SOF in the conflict

TOPIC: Operation Just Cause

READINGS: Robinson 37-55

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the role of Special Operations in Operation Just Cause
2. Determine the shortcomings of the SOF units in the operation
3. Determine if there was a different role for the SOF in the conflict

Lesson 28 :

TOPIC: Operation Desert Storm

READINGS: Marquis, 227-249; Robinson 57-86

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the role of Special Operations in Operation Desert Storm
2. Determine the shortcomings of the SOF units in the operation
3. Determine if there was a different role for the SOF in the conflict

Lesson 29 :

TOPIC: SR Case Study

READING: Reader: excerpt, Bowden (*Killing Pablo*, pgs. 70-78 and 167-175)

Blackboard: FM 31-20-5, Preface, Chapters 1 and 3, Appendixes A and B (pp. iv [SR's definition in the first paragraph]), 1-18, and 3-23)

Learning Objectives:

1. Compare and contrast two discreet examples of SR. Identify how they are similar and how they are different from one another, and then contrast each to typical reconnaissance missions.
2. Identify the purpose of these SR missions as well as the tasks that comprised them.
3. Evaluate these two missions for evidence of the SR fundamentals and BOS.
4. Assess how these SR missions were tied to other U.S./Coalition missions or requirements.
5. Understand the nature of SR, what purpose it serves, and especially how it differs from traditional reconnaissance missions.
6. Identify and understand each of the typical tasks that comprise it.
7. Examine the SR fundamentals and BOS.
8. Understand how SR relates to other key SOF missions.

Lesson 30

Lesson drop for paper review

Lesson 31 :

TOPIC: DA Mission Case study : Operation Gothic Serpent

READING: Day, Clifford. *Analysis of the Defeat of Task Force Ranger*

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the events prior to the employment of TF Ranger.
2. Understand the events that led to the demise of TF Ranger.
3. Determine the effects of TF Ranger on the greater political and military strategic stage.
4. Understand and analyze alternate

TOPIC: Alternative missions to DA in Somalia

READING: Robinson 87-109

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand possible UW operations in LDCs
2. Determine if Alternate techniques would be as effective as DA in Somalia.
- 3.
4. Understand and analyze alternate

Lesson 32 :

TOPIC: UW and Afghanistan

READINGS: Rhothstein 88-126

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the role UW in OEF units in the operation
2. Determine the shortcomings of the SOF units in the operation
3. Understand the implications of transformative experiences on militaries

Lesson 33 :

TOPIC: UW and Military Capabilities

READINGS: Rhothstein 126-163

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the importance of technology and tactical innovation in modern small wars.
2. Determine the impact of organizational culture on OEF
3. Understand the potential limitations of UW.

Lesson 34:

TOPIC: Assassination

READING: Calahan, Alexander. *Countering Terrorism: Israeli Response to the 1972 Munich Olympic Massacre*

Learning Objectives:

1. strategic reasoning behind assassination.
2. Determine the limitations to strategic goals.
3. understand the organizational implications to covert and clandestine operations.

Lesson 35 :

TOPIC: Target Assessment and Evaluation

READING: <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm34-36/appd.htm>

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the utility of the CARVER Matrix.
2. Correctly use the CARVER Matrix
3. Evaluate the universal applicability of the matrix to the full spectrum of operations

READING: Blackboard: JP 3-07.1 Chapters 1 and 2 and Appendix B (pgs. I-1 to II-16, and B-1 to B-5)
Bailey, OPATT , Blackboard

Lesson 36 :

TOPIC: Covert Action and US Policy

READING: Wallop, "Covert Action: A substitute for a Clear U.S. Policy."

1. Determine the merits of Covert Action.
2. Understand how covert action causes shifts in diplomatic support

Lesson 37 :

TOPIC: The Changing Nature of War and SOF

READING: Alexander, JSOU report 06-1

1. Understand Dr. Alexander's thesis that the nature of warfare has changed.
2. Determine if SOF requires change to address the contemporary conflict.

Lesson 38 :

TOPIC: The Changing Nature and the interagency fight

READING: All necessary Means

3. Understand the Role other agencies can play in SOF
4. Determine if SOF requires change to address the contemporary conflict.

Lesson 39 :

TOPIC: The Irregular Environment and the Transformation of War

READING: Blackboard: Van Creveld (pgs. 33-62)

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how Van Creveld argues that Clausewitz's Trinitarian model has evolved and transformed.
2. Understand why Van Creveld perceives that Clausewitz's Trinitarian model is less relevant.
3. Identify how world conditions can blur the lines between states, armies, and people, and understand how and why other actors (other than states) can and have waged war throughout history.
4. Identify the reasons why Van Creveld thinks that Low-Intensity Conflicts represent the wars of the future.

Lesson 40:

COURSE REVIEW