

COURSE DIRECTIVE

**COURSE DIRECTIVE
ACADEMIC YEAR 2026**



**Senior Course on Defence Studies: International Senior Course in Applied
Strategy and Defence Diplomacy
(11th Course)**

(10 September – 11 December 2026)

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HELLENIC NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE
EVELPIDON 6 AND MOUSTOXIDI
GR11362. ATHENS, GREECE.

HELLENIC NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE

The Hellenic National Defence College (HNDC) acts as the highest military education and training institution within the Hellenic Armed Forces on issues of Defence Policy, National Security and Strategy.

Its mission is to educate and train military officers at the strategic level from all branches of the Hellenic Armed Forces, civilian employees of government ministries, as well as civilian personnel from companies and organizations that operate under public or private law so that they can effectively and efficiently handle national defence issues in their respective fields of responsibility and expertise.

HELLENIC NATIONAL DEFENCE GENERAL STAFF
HELLENIC NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE
EVELPIDON 6 AND MOUSTOXIDI, GR 11362, ATHENS, GREECE

20 March 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Course Directive, "Senior Course on Defence Studies: International Senior Course in Applied Strategy and Defence Diplomacy", Academic Year 2026.

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It contains educational material designed to promote discussion by students of the Hellenic National Defence College. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence (HMoD), and the Hellenic National Defence General Staff (HNDGS).

Brigadier General Nikolaos Methenitis
HNDC Course Director

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Hellenic Ministry of Defence
Hellenic National Defence General Staff
Hellenic National Defence College

Course Directive
20 March 2026

International Senior Course in Applied Strategy and Defence Diplomacy (ISCASDD)

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Senior Course on Defence Studies

International Senior Course in Applied Strategy and Defence Diplomacy (ISCASDD)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Senior Course on Defence Studies provides a broad learning experience focused on thinking, leading, and cooperating at the strategic level. Students will participate in required academic deliverables in persuasive writing, speaking on issues of strategic importance and the provision of best military advice. The curriculum consists of presentations, seminar sessions, case studies, practical exercises, and experiential learning opportunities. International Senior Course in Applied Strategy and Defence Diplomacy of the Hellenic Defence College resident core curriculum is designed to:

- a. Familiarize students with updated concepts concerning strategic thinking and leadership.
- b. Provide an assessment of Greek intellectual thinking through classical antiquity, the Middle Ages (Byzantine Empire) and contemporary periods.
- c. Apply the exclusive characteristics of leadership at the strategic level.
- d. Realize the role of a strategic leader as an agent of his/her profession.
- e. Analyze the role of the strategic leader in identifying the need for transformation, evolving and expressing a vision for transformation.
- f. Produce the strategic leadership capabilities necessary to ethically and effectively succeed in a joint, international and multinational environment.
- g. Acquaint the students with current theories of war and strategy.
- h. Provide elaboration on theories of international relations.
- i. Familiarize participants with concepts of regional and international stability acquisition through a conflict prevention thinking approach.
- j. Introduce students to NATO's Maritime Security Operations and Peace Support Operations.

2. SCOPE

The course aims to prepare students regarding their duties as flag/general officers of their countries, to cope with the rapidly changing situations of the geostrategic environment, and to become defence staff officers who stand out for their level of strategic thinking and critical analysis. The course promotes students' understanding of the strategic leadership setting, and the associated knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to lead security organizations at the strategic level within national and international environments.

The goals of the course are achieved by building, developing, and expanding the existing knowledge of students, on subjects related to strategy, history, international relations, countering terrorism, and Maritime threats.

3. OBJECTIVES

- a. Provide students with a basic understanding of the various cultural, demographic, economic, ethnographic, historical, physical, political, and social aspects that are essential for the formulation of strategic leadership.
- b. Familiarize students with the evolution of Greek thinking through time.
- c. Comprehend the role of strategic leaders in the global environment.
- d. Analyze the nature and theory of war and strategy.
- e. Delve into concepts of Diplomacy and Defence Diplomacy practices.
- f. Analyze the phenomenon of terrorism.
- g. Provide adequate knowledge of how NATO copes with Maritime Security Threats and implements Peace Support Operations.

4. LANGUAGE

The official instruction language is English.

5. FACULTY/STUDENT ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Director of the course: In charge of running the course, coordinating and assigning tasks.
- b. Faculty Instructors (FI): Visiting professors/ scholars from Greek and Foreign Universities/ Diplomats, appointed to teach each Section's topics.

c. Faculty Advisors (FA): Military or civilian personnel holding a PhD or an MA degree, whose task is to assist FIs, advise students on academic matters, evaluate examinations, support, and assess major programs.

d. Quality Assurance, Section Head, and Secretariat.

6. COURSE ORGANIZATION

The Course consists of eleven Educational Sections including two Field Study Trips and Visits as described below:

a. **Section 1: Research Methodology, Culture Awareness (RM-CA) & Organizations Orientation (OO) (5 days):** The lectures will enhance the cognitive capabilities of students, imparting significant knowledge about the thinking process and various techniques that may be used to facilitate efficient and effective learning, thinking, and communication. Cultural awareness lectures will provide the students the ability to understand what culture is and what it is not, considering how people acquire their cultures. Moreover, they will be briefed about culture's importance in personal identities, lifeways, mental and communities. Being aware of one's own culturally shaped values, beliefs, perceptions, and biases, students will be able to detect one's reactions to people whose cultures differ from one's own and reflect upon these responses observing and participating in meaningful interactions with people of differing cultural backgrounds. At the end of the Section, the students will be provided a brief and comprehensive pieces of information and orientation of NATO and EU.

b. **Section 2: Thucydidean Approach to Applied Strategy (TAAS) (5 days):** Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War* is used as the platform to understand basic concepts related to war, policy, and strategy. In addition, it analyzes and appraises theories regarding the employment of military power both on a strategic and at a high-operational level by utilizing current practices on land, sea, air, cyber, and space operations and examines the elements of states' power (diplomatic, informational, military, economic).

c. **Section 3a and 3b: Strategic Leadership (SL) (10 days):** It elaborates on the various aspects of classical antiquity by providing students with an appreciation of the uniqueness of strategic leadership orchestrating accumulated knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to lead security organizations at the strategic level within national and international environments. Also, it helps strategic leaders to comprehend the range of conceptualizations of diversity and their relative influence on organizational processes and performance by analyzing the challenges and opportunities associated with the management and leading complex demographically diverse organizations. Additionally, the topic of '*Behavioral Decision Making in the age of AI*' has been included providing a thorough understanding of behavioral science in the AI era.

d. **Section 4: Introduction to Peace Support Operations (PSO) (5 days):** (Field Study Trip 1). This Section will be covered by the NATO's Multinational

Peace Support Operations Training Center (MPSOTC) in Northern Greece. It will provide basic knowledge about Peacekeeping Operations, policies, and CIMIC Operations (IO's, NGO's and GO's).

e. **Section 5: Strategic Crisis Management (SCM) (3 days):** Due to the current global crisis, we all need a way of thinking and a method of doing duties and achieving goals doing what is necessary to outfit the thoughtful change happening in the world. Perceptive individuals realize that we are facing extraordinary difficulties and challenges due to a rapidly changing world. In this Section, you will learn strategies and policies that students can examine and implement directly to make them deal better with an upcoming crisis.

f. **Section 6: Critical Thinking in Strategic Studies (2 days):** The module imparts an awareness of the importance of thinking and learning skills in complex/unbounded settings, different approaches to thinking, and knowledge of certain techniques such as comprehension questioning, divergent and convergent thinking, and visualization. The module consolidates these thinking skills through the medium of contemporary strategic studies.

g. **Section 7: Applied International Relations & Foreign Policy (AIR&FP) (7 days):** Through this module, students will acquire knowledge and understanding of the concepts and theories of Defence Doctrine, National Strategy, and Foreign Policy. Students will also be acquainted with issues such as the formulation of National Defence Policy as well as with transnational and contemporary security threats.

h. **Section 8: Defence Diplomacy and Negotiations (DD&N) (5 days):** The module aims to provide a framework to prepare, conduct, and assess effective negotiations but also to establish firm foundations in understanding diplomatic key concepts by being familiarized with the evolution of Diplomacy through time, diplomatic tools and practices.

i. **Section 9: Countering the Changing Threat of International Terrorism (CCTIT) (4 days):** The module aims to examine the phenomenon of international terrorism in the 20th and 21st Centuries, and discusses the various strategies for countering it. The module imparts deep knowledge about particular terrorist groups and deploys several concepts to understand their motivation, organization, and evolution. The module goes on to assess the development of counter-terrorist strategies since the end of the Cold War, charting the emergence of more holistic approaches. The study of terrorism embodies history, psychology, and political science.

j. **Section 10: Managing Maritime Security Threats (MMST) (5 days):** (Field Study Trip 2). This Section will take place at the NATO Maritime Interdiction Training Centre (NMIOTC) which is located at Chania on the Island of Crete. It aims to introduce students to the Maritime Security Operations and the contemporary threats in the maritime environment. It also aims to educate students on the NATO concept and to analyze NATO Operations' Legal Aspects, Operational Planning Processes, and Briefing Techniques

k. **Section 11: War Games/ Strategic Exercise (WG/SE) (5 days):** The Section is designed to encourage reflection, critical assessment, and consideration of issues that arise in a complex and ambiguous environment. The Section provides opportunities for critical thinking and reflective learning, often culminating in an end-of-course exercise

l. **Major Project (3 days):** This period is dedicated to the major projects' presentations of the students.

m. **Field Study Trips to the island of Crete and Northern Greece (5 days each):** The field study trips except the concepts described above, aim also to increase students' exposure to regional strategic issues and allow them to be engaged directly with senior military leaders in NATO and EU multinational organizations.

n. **Visits:** These visits take place on working days at the Archeological sites of Acropolis, "Georgios Averof" Armored Cruiser floating museum, Athens War Museum, Mycenae, Thermopylae, Rupel's Fort Military Museum, Archaeological site of Vergina, Thessaloniki Museum, Archaeological site of Knossos and Heraklion Archaeological Museum. Families are welcome upon notification. Guided tours will be provided. Visits aim to increase students' understanding of the cultural, historical, and geographic diversity of Greece.

o. **Terrorism and Cyber Security Awareness (1 day):** The Seminar/Certification is offered by HNDC in association with the National Cyber Security Centre Assured Service Provider of Plymouth University (UK). The course is divided into three substantive sections: **information security and reducing risk; cyber vulnerabilities;** and **cybersecurity and cyberterrorism.** By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- (1) Ascertain what information should be regarded as security-sensitive
- (2) Recognize the need to protect information from unauthorized disclosure
- (3) Recognize methods used to protect security-sensitive information
- (4) Identify the most common breaches of information security
- (5) Develop, review, monitor, and audit a Cyber Security Plan (CSP)
- (6) Recognize key aspects of cyberterrorism and cyber attacks

(7) Recognize key challenges in fighting cyber terrorists and cyber-attacks and demonstrate insight into cyberterrorism tools, techniques, and methodologies

(8) Outline and discuss the key characteristics of cyber warfare, cyber-attacks, and ways to counter them.

The course has the restrictions of financial approval of HNDGS.

7. PREREQUISITES

a. This course is suitable for officers at the rank of Lt. Colonel - Colonel (NATO OF4-OF5) and equivalents from all military services, for civilian members of government departments and services with equivalent ranks who, at a minimum, have successfully graduated from a Joint War College or equivalent institution of higher education. Graduation from a National Defence College or equivalent is desirable.

b. English language proficiency is necessary, at least at level 3333, IAW STANAG 6001 (professional level for listening, speaking, reading, and writing), or Advanced level certification (TOFEL, IETLS, etc). No additional language training or translation will be provided throughout the course.

c. Students must have a basic level of computer skills in the Microsoft Office package (mostly Word and Power Point) and Internet Explorer.

d. The course is open to all international partners. Officers from NATO, PfP, MD and other countries as approved are accepted to the course.

e. No prior knowledge of strategic studies, theories, or applications is necessary for enrollment.

8. METHODOLOGY

Students will examine and analyze concepts, issues, and concerns through class discussions and presentations. The course emphasizes an active role in the learning process. Thus, **they are expected to come prepared to discuss the examination of concepts and issues in an interactive dialogue environment.**

9. REQUIREMENTS

Each student is expected to:

a. **Complete** assigned readings and participate in class discussion(s) through dialogue and presentations, as assigned.

b. **Student Class Contribution**

The FIs will evaluate the students' contributions based on an assessment of their daily preparation, in-class participation, and oral presentations, as and where required. As a minimum, students are expected to study the required readings that will be provided before their arrival. In addition, students will be assigned a subgroup/discussion leader for various lessons. Seminar participation is more focused on quality than quantity. The quality of a student's participation, in terms of synthesis and integration of material, and contribution to overall class learning will result in an overall higher evaluation weight as opposed to the number of times the student speaks up in class.

c. **Present** a case study, submit a paper, or present a book review, in Sections **2,3,7,9 and 10**.

d. **Prepare and submit a Major Project** of 5,000 words, **contributing 25%** of the student's total course evaluation on the following general topic:

“Apply one or more strategic theories, and strategic leadership schemes to a specific national security challenge currently faced by your country or its allies.”

The Course Director must agree upon the specific topic. Proposed Project topics must be submitted to the Course director **no later than, 30 September 2026**. After its approval, the course director will assign an FI, **no later than 07 October 2026**, to provide further guidance and evaluate the project. The outline of the project must be submitted to the FI **no later than 16 October 2026**, while its **draft is due in 23 October 2026**. The project must be due **by the close of business on November 25, 2026** (submission to the FI).

e. The student ought to meet the following administrative requirements for the Major Project paper:

(1) Double spaced

(2) 2,54 cm or one-inch margins

(3) Font: Arial 12 pt.

(4) Citations, References, and Bibliography must comply with Harvard references style.

f. To write an acceptable course paper, students will need to conduct research and document sources. While course readings can be helpful and are a good starting point, this paper requires the use of sources beyond the readings. Once your research is complete, you must synthesize that research into a clear, concise and logical presentation.

g. **Writing with integrity:** To avoid plagiarism, sources must be cited in places where they are used. They must also be referenced in cases where these are paraphrased. In general, one should only use direct quotes when the author's

wording is believed to defend one's academic work. References are to be listed in a proper academic style at the end of the project. Using existing research in academic writing is beneficial especially when the writer is not an expert in the field. Their research, expertise, conclusions, and/or analysis can strengthen a student's work.

h. **Evaluation Standard:** Projects will be evaluated based on content, organization, and style. The criteria for evaluating the paper will address the student's ability to gather information, conduct research, organize his/her work in a logical and prioritizing manner, and compose and express thoughts clearly, coherently, and effectively by using standard written English. Descriptions of the criteria for "Outstanding", "Exceeds Standards," "Meets Standards" and "Needs Improvement" are found below. The Faculty Instructor (FI) will return papers that "Need Improvement" to the student for re-submission until the student achieves a "Meets Standard" evaluation or better.

i. **Participate** in Field Studies Trips, and engage with host senior leaders. Students are expected to effectively engage with various presenters when they allow for questions and discussions.

j. **Participate** in Visits. For students' cultural, intellectual, and geographic orientation only (no evaluation), visits have been scheduled.

10. COURSE EVALUATION

a. In each evaluated SECTION: **75% (out of total):**

(1) Students Class Contribution/Participation: **50% (out of 75%)**

(2) Case Study/Paper/Book Reviews: **50% (out of 75%)**
(Sections 2,3,7,9,11: **10%** each)

b. Major Project: **25% (out of total)**

c. Sections and Major Project: **100% (total)**

d. Faculty assessment of oral/written work is based on "Content, Organization and Style".

(1) *Content* carries the most weight as it includes assessment of idea(s), quality, and argument strength. Thus, although each major aspect of the oral contribution/writing is important, the overall assessment cannot be rated higher than the Content assessment. An oral presentation/contribution or project might be well organized and stylistically interesting, but if the student fails to communicate his/her ideas to the audience/the reader, an important aspect may be lost.

(2) *Organization* is the author's approach to ensuring expectations and goals are clear and structured.

(3) *Style* is concerned with perfecting the “flexibility and obedience” of language to accomplish a desired end.

f. Each element thereof is subject to an assessment as follows:

(1) **100 % – 95 %: Outstanding.**

The contribution not only exceeds standards in every respect but stands as an exemplar of excellence in oral/written communication. It displays exceptional insight and creativity, firm analysis, solid research, precise documentation, and does so in a well-structured context, reflecting both depth and balance.

(2) **94,99 % – 75 %: Exceeds Standards.**

Impressive and clearly above the norm, the oral contribution/project is insightful and responsive to the task, well-researched, ample documented, and thoughtfully organized. The speaker/writer has a strong ability to analyze, synthesize, and integrate material. The work exhibits clarity in thought and expression and reflects an accomplished and continuously developing command of language.

(3) **74,99 % – 60%: Meets Standards.**

The oral contribution/project is an acceptable and competent response to a discussion/writing topic: it is informative, to a certain degree persuasive, and includes some evidence grounded in research. Major points are clearly identified and appropriately developed, often with support from properly documented credible sources. The organization is reasonable, demonstrates unity, and has a clear beginning, middle and end.

(4) **59,99 % – 50%: Below Standards / Needs**

Improvement.

The oral contribution/project is weaker than it should be and possibly deficient in one or more salient respects. The content is weak or the reasoning and logic noticeably flawed; the organization might be unclear and/or the style (facility with language) deficient. Content shortcomings are the gravest concern because the absence of substantial material severely undercuts the need for organization and the ability to craft a thoughtful and articulate paper. In the case of a manuscript, it is characterized by minimal analysis, deficient insight, lack of evidence, inadequate research, slipshod documentation, poor organization, and sloppy and/or semi-coherent writing’ “needs improvement.”

(5) **49,99 % – 0%: Fails to Meet Standards/Unsatisfactory.**

11. PASS/FAIL CRITERIA

Pass 60%, and above. Fail below 60%.

12. DETAILED PROGRAM.

The planning calendar indicates the schedule of the class subjects covered during each day.

a. **Official Course Times.**

- (1) Class starts at 08.00h every working day.
- (2) 1st period: 08.00-08.45h
- (3) 2nd period: 09.00-09.45h
- (4) 3rd period: 10.00-10.45h
- (5) 4th period: 11.00-11.45h
- (6) 5th period: 12.00-12.45h
- (7) 6th period: 13.00-13.45h (Also could be used for a scheduled guest speaker)

Times, dates, and topics may be adjusted to accommodate off-site, field study trip arrangements, or unforeseen events.

b. **Time Analysis: 13 Weeks/66 working days, (Sept 10 – Dec 11, 2026)**

- (1) **93 days** total of the Course.
- (2) **10 days** in Field Study Trips.
- (3) **2 days** Major Project presentations.
- (4) **4 days** visits.
- (5) **3 days** In-processing/ Graduation Ceremony.
- (6) **27 days not working** (weekends, Armed Forces holiday).

c. **Dress Code.**

- (1) Every Day Uniform: Class B (everyday office uniform).
- (2) V.I.P. Visits and Ceremonies: Class A (official simple ceremony uniform).
- (3) Visits: Business Casual.
- (4) Field Studies Trips: Uniform Class B and Casual.

13. STUDENTS' READINGS

Students' readings are annotated as follows:

- a. "Basic Readings". Readings that students should have done before class sessions.
- b. "Recommended-Other readings". These are supplementing basic readings. These readings can be found in the College's Library, upon availability.
- c. "Student Issue". Items (mainly books) received, before the start of the course in a hard copy form, from the College's Library. Students return them to the "Library" after finishing the course.
- d. "Library". These are items provided by the College's Library either as a paperback or digitally (e-library).
- e. "Online". Open sources online materials available on the Internet.