

# ASIA-PACIFIC CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES

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## ADVANCED SECURITY COOPERATION (ASC) COURSE 11-2

To those who have been selected to attend the ASC Course:

Welcome to the APCSS, to the ASC Course, and above all, to Hawaii. Congratulations on being accepted. I want in this introductory note to give you a sense of what the course is about and intends to do, along with setting out the demands of the course and what you can expect of your stay at the APCSS in Hawaii.

First, the APCSS is a higher-learning educational institution devoted to bringing together security practitioners across the Asia-Pacific Region. The APCSS focuses therefore on the people in the region who practice the day to day affairs of security. In many ways, the APCSS can be seen as a forum, or venue, that brings together security practitioners from over thirty-eight countries to discuss, deliberate, and share security concepts, approaches, and best practices unfolding within the region. The APCSS website is replete with numerous materials to give you a good sense of the institution's mission, vision, and background. Please consult this information prior to your arrival to gain a greater sense of what happens at the APCSS.

The ASC course, as you will read in documents listed below this on the ASC links, sits at the heart of the APCSS, due to its focus and approach. The ASC course is concerned with understanding two elements of contemporary security. Both of these elements come together to form what is referred to as "comprehensive security" studies.

The first focus of the ASC course turns on the ideas associated with the internal and external dynamics of security affairs in the Asia-Pacific region. Internal and external security affairs refer to the types of security practices that occur internally to countries, within borders, and external to them. That is, security issues that are generally considered as happening within a country's domestic affairs (internal), and security issues that cross borders and have impacts between countries or into the region more broadly (external). Many of these issues can be considered as 'transnational security' dynamics, and stem from the rise in the past decades of 'non-traditional security concerns' along with the impact of a new range of security actors that have dramatic effects on international and regional security practices. So our first focus in the ASC course is to understand and explain many of the critical contemporary dynamics associated with internal and external security in the Asia-Pacific region.

The second point of departure is the challenge of bringing about security cooperation between and within countries. If there is one common point cited overwhelmingly throughout the region, it is this: "the nature of the new security threats in the Asia-Pacific region requires countries to act together cooperatively and collaboratively to solve the security challenges of the future. Countries simply cannot handle the various transnational security problems alone any more. And that includes the major powers of the current global order."

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But how is security cooperation brought about? In what areas of security practice may we expect cooperation or collaboration to emerge? What types of regional or international mechanisms exist that facilitate cooperation? What benefits do regional institutions bring, and what assistance can networks of security practitioners provide to one another to alleviate security concerns? Most importantly, how is trust generated between peoples and across borders? These are the types of questions and issues that inform the second part of the ASC course: understanding the mechanisms and processes of security cooperation and collaboration in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The ASC course is almost five weeks in length. It is a demanding course even for those whose first or second language is English. Hence, participants can expect to work at a high pace, participate with their peers, and come away from the course with a rich understanding of security dynamics in the region. Indeed, we expect that for most of participants this will be the most informative educational course they will have attended in their careers. This is due largely to two factors. The professors at the APCSS design courses with practitioners in mind, and towards what people who work in security need to understand and evaluate. The ASC course, for example, is continually updated to reflect contemporary security practices and the input we receive from graduates of the APCSS. Second, the course provides an opportunity to listen to perspectives from across the entire region from those who are engaged in security on a daily basis. The level and nuance of information, interpretation, and perspective brought to bear in the ASC course from over thirty-eight countries in the region is unparalleled.

One particular component of the ASC course merits mention and your attention before you arrive. This is the Fellow's Project. Listed below on the ASC website you will see a detailed description of the Fellow's Project, followed by several examples of previously successful Fellow's Projects. Please read these documents at length. However, please note the following: the Fellow's Project is an individual assignment that you think up and put together. It is meant to challenge your critical thinking skills, and allow you to think about a problem you are interested in. This problem can take many forms, as you will read below, but the theme must revolve around dealing with challenges of security cooperation. You may, for example, think about an issue of cooperation where you work, within your institution, or between several institutions. Or you may think about a policy problem your country is challenged by that could use some sustained analysis and reflection.

The bottom line is that the project is yours, and should be concerned with what you are interested in. Its intent is to be practical, and allow you to grapple with the various complexities associated with it. The problem-solving and analytic tools provided in the ASC course will assist you in constructing a successful Fellow's Project. Please give some thought to a topic, or possible set of possible topics, before your arrival at the APCSS.

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But as importantly, welcome to Hawaii, one of the world's most remarkable landscapes. The scenery is breathtaking and the atmosphere relaxed. We are privileged to be able to conduct the APCSS educational mission in such surroundings. Please bring clothing suitable for warm days, along with days in which rain may be heavy or it may be somewhat cold. Bring a range of appropriate shoes and footwear, as there are numerous outdoor activities on the weekends throughout the course. And importantly, please feel free to bring your family with you at your expense. One never knows if one will return to Hawaii, it is often said here. For any further questions on your travels to Hawaii, with or without family, please contact the admissions office for details.

We look forward to meeting you soon for a challenging experience.

Safe travels and regards,

Dr. Justin Nankivell – ASC Course Manager

CDR. Chris van Avery – ASC Course Coordinator