

Gettysburg Staff Ride
October 6-7, 2023

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Students are encouraged to apply regardless of program of study, year, or prior involvement with AGS. We are looking for students interested in and willing to participate in an exciting learning exercise on the Civil War, focusing on the Battle of Gettysburg in the summer of 1863.

No specific expertise is required.

Through the staff ride, students will research and come to understand the battle of Gettysburg in a unique way by seeing firsthand the battlefield and examining the psychology of leadership through the eyes of key decision-makers. The staff ride also offers a unique opportunity to meet other students and network with others involved in AGS, including faculty, alumni, postdoctoral fellows, and fellows in the Counterterrorism and Public Policy Fellows program.

WHAT IS A STAFF RIDE?

A staff ride differs from a guided battlefield tour in two respects.

First, it is an educational technique for studying leadership. In a staff ride, participants ask the questions: "What happened?" "Why?" "With what result?" but then press further: "Did this commander make the right decision at this juncture?" "How would I have acted in his place?" "Should he have made a different decision given the information he had?" It is, to use an unpopular term, a judgmental exercise, and often a counterfactual one.

Second, a staff ride requires active participation. The challenge and reward of this activity lies in its character as a collective effort, and its success rests on the preparation, interest, and commitment of the participants themselves. The staff ride director serves as a moderator or a seminar leader, and only in the last resort as a subject matter expert. What makes a staff ride particularly stimulating is that they are group exercises, in which we examine many aspects of command and management. To that end each participant takes a turn giving a short talk, in most cases **playing the role of one of the main participants** in the battle and is questioned by his or her colleagues about that participant's view of what has transpired on the battlefield.

AGS will cover all transportation, lodging, and meal costs. Students will be responsible for any recreational expenses outside of the Staff Ride's program.

GOALS

The Gettysburg staff ride is a canonical experience of nearly every military officer's education, and our exercise will hew closely to the same exercise followed at West Point and the Hertog Institute for the Study of War. Participants will gain an understanding not only of the history of the Battle of Gettysburg but also of the thought processes of key leaders and strategic thinkers.

Successful applicants will participate in a trip to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on Friday, October 6, 2023, and Saturday, October 7, 2023.

The staff ride will serve as an excellent introduction to AGS, especially for those who would like to participate in international staff rides in the future. Students will prepare roles, interact with students from both the undergraduate and graduate programs, and work closely with faculty.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for preparing for the staff ride and for conducting themselves in a respectful manner, cognizant that they are representing Duke, on the staff ride.

Preparing for and participating in the staff ride requires:

1. Attendance at one meeting in advance to prepare for the trip.
2. Complete brief recommended reading (or viewing) from list (list will be provided by organizing team at time of acceptance).
3. Complete specific reading to research your assigned role and prepare your presentation. Research may include reading books, articles, and available primary source materials regarding your character and his or her role during the battle of Gettysburg. You might also consult audiovisual material, such as movies, television, and podcasts. In all instances, you should think critically about whether it is a reliable source of accurate historical information.
4. Role presentation: After completing the reading, you will prepare your briefing for the Staff Ride itself. In Staff Ride tradition, each person plays the "role" of a decision-maker during the conflict. You will be responsible for presenting your role and sharing your character's strategic decision-making process. We expect presentations of the highest quality and will assist you during the preparation process.
5. Availability from early morning on Friday, October 6 through the evening of Saturday, October 7.

APPLICATION

Please return your application to Dr. Susan Colbourn (susan.colbourn@duke.edu) no later than Tuesday, September 12, 2023.

Note: If accepted, you are required to attend the staff ride and complete the necessary preparation to participate fully. In emergency circumstances, please reach out to Dr. Colbourn to discuss should you need to withdraw. Should you fail to attend the staff ride, it is your responsibility to reimburse AGS \$275 for all lost costs no later than October 31, 2023.

Full Name: _____

Class Year: _____

Major(s): _____

Gender: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Dietary preferences: _____

APPLICATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that if I am selected, I will attend the Gettysburg Staff Ride. If I fail to do so, I will reimburse AGS \$275 for lost costs by October 31, 2023.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

SHORT ANSWER:

In 250 words or less, tell us why you would be interested in participating in the Gettysburg staff ride. How would participation in this trip align with your studies, broader interests, etc.? This is a

great space to share with us a unique interest or experience you have that makes you excited to be part of this trip.

Additionally, name three potential roles whom you would like to be on the staff ride.