

American Grand Strategy Program – Gettysburg 2022 Staff Ride

WHO SHOULD APPLY:

All majors are encouraged to apply **regardless of prior involvement with AGS**. We are looking for students interested in and willing to participate in an exciting learning exercise focused on the Civil War, in particular 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 offers a unique opportunity for participants to **network with alum and faculty**.

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.

Secondly, a staff ride requires **active participation**. The challenge and the pleasure of this activity lies in its character as a collective effort, and its success rests on 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.

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 **strategic thought processes of crucial leaders involved in the Civil War**. Students will participate in a trip to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania the weekend of **October 22 – October 23**. The Staff Ride will serve as an excellent introduction into the AGS program,

especially those who would like to take advantage of later international staff rides. 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 behaving appropriately on the Staff Ride. **Please note:** if accepted, you are required to attend the Staff Ride and complete the necessary preparation (detailed below). AGS will cover all transportation, lodging and meal costs. Students will only be responsible for any recreational expenses outside of the Staff Ride's program. In emergent circumstances, you may cancel your participation by contacting Khuwailah "KB" (beyahk@duke.edu) no later than **Tuesday, October 4**. Should you fail to attend the staff ride without the notice listed, it is your responsibility to reimburse AGS \$275 for all lost costs by **Thursday, November 3**. If the trip is cancelled due to unpredictable COVID-19 restrictions, participants will not need to reimburse the program.

PREPARING FOR THE STAFF RIDE REQUIRES:

1. Attendance at one prep meeting.
2. General background: You will be given a brief recommended reading (or watch) list upon selection.
3. Role specific reading: In addition to general reading, you will need to research your specific role in order to prepare for your presentation. Research may include books, articles and movies describing your character and his or her role during the battle of Gettysburg.
4. Role presentation: After completing the reading, you will prepare your briefing for the Staff Ride itself. In Staff Ride tradition, each person plays a "role" of a decision maker during the conflict. You will be responsible for presenting your person's role and 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 **Saturday, October 22 – late afternoon/ evening on Sunday, October 23**.

APPLICATION

***Please return your application to Khuwailah “KB” (beyahk@duke.edu) by September 21.**

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 **Thursday, November 3.**

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.