

August 11, 2022

Gentlemen.

You are signed up and scheduled for CW Academy Advanced Class during the September-October 2022 semester. We will be meeting as a group beginning on Monday, September 12. The schedule will be Mondays and Thursdays at 7 PM PDT (02:00 UTC the next day) for the ensuing eight weeks. **We will kick things off with an informal “meet and greet” session on Thursday September 8, 2022 at 7PM PDT (02:00 UTC Friday)** to introduce our selves, test the Zoom connection and work out any bugs with the audio.

For those of you who have taken other CWA classes, welcome back. For those who are new, welcome aboard and let me quickly explain how CW Academy works. The most important part for your success is daily practice. Try to devote one or two short sessions of 15-20 minutes each day rather than cram everything into a 5-hour marathon once a week. In addition, you will want to spend as much time as you can on the air rag chewing and/or participating in the various practice “contests” – SST, MST and CWT. Make sure, however, that you are always having fun and this doesn’t become burdensome.

Here is the equipment you are going to need:

- A computer and a broadband Internet connection,
- Headphones/ear buds that plug into the computer’s headphone jack,
- A webcam (camera/microphone) – most machines have these built in but, if not, you can buy a perfectly good one for about \$20 or less
- Keyer paddles – new ones have become ridiculously priced so borrow or buy a used one if you can. Unfortunately, even good operators can not be able to reliably above about 20-wpm with a straight key.
- A radio with a built-in keyer and sidetone. Most (all?) modern rigs have this but if you need a separate unit, MFJ makes an inexpensive EconoKeyer if you can’t borrow one or find a used one.

We will be using Zoom for our class meetings. While very good for normal conversational meetings, Zoom has some quirks when dealing with CW which can make copying more difficult than on-the-air. To be considerate to your fellow classmates, it is important that you

- **use headphones/ear buds,**
- **mute yourself if you are not actively sending, and**
- **follow the instructions in the document attached to this e-mail as to the necessary program settings.**

As far as I am aware, Zoom on mobile devices does not support the necessary settings so you will not be able to use your phone or tablet for the class sessions. I’d be happy to be proved wrong on this point so if you think you have a solution, let’s try it out before the first meeting! (I am not a Zoom super-user.)

Please download the latest “Practice Instructions and Homework Assignments” from the CWops website under the CW Academy → Student Resources → Advanced tab:

<https://cwops.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Practice-Instructions-and-Homework-Assignments-Advanced-rev-1.8.pdf>

There, you will also find a link to the audio practice files referenced in this document. **Please complete the first assignment (Session 1 → Day 1) prior to our meeting on Sept. 12.** Typically, we’ll start each class meeting with a short discussion of questions/thoughts on the homework and what on-the-air activities you’ve been up to. I will also periodically present something relevant to CW and/or contesting that you hopefully will find helpful. You all are encouraged to do likewise. The remainder of each class meeting will be devoted to exercises to improve your head copy **and sending skills.** If you need to miss a few classes, no problem, just keep practicing!

The advanced class makes heavy use of two excellent practice tools, Morse Runner and RufzXP. If you are not familiar with these programs, you can find written instructions and videos on how to use them under Student Tutorials heading. These are windows programs that can also be made to run under linux; I can help you with that if you are using linux.

As for my background, I am a recently retired electrical engineer. I was originally licensed as a teenager in the late 1970's. CW has always been my favorite mode and I enjoy enjoy contesting. I took the CWA advanced class last spring because I was having trouble "getting my fist back" on my own after a long hiatus from ham radio. It was so much fun that I volunteered to be an advisor; you all are my first class so please bare with me while we figure out all the details. Also, I live in a rural are outside of San Diego. The internet connection is usually reliable but there may be occasional outages – I'm working on "Plan B" if that becomes problematic.

Although this may all sound very regimented, we actually have a lot of leeway in what we cover in the class meetinds and I need you input on what you would like to emphasize. This could include:

- Contesting
- Rag chewing
- Sending
- Head copy / memory retention
- Something else?

Similarly, the requirements for CWops membership may seem intimidating but you will be well more the ready at the end of this class, provided you **practice every day!** If you've never participated in a CWT before, you may find these very intimidating also as the average speed of callers is around 39-wpm! (If you hear me, I'm in the slow lane at 30 or 32-wpm.) Don't worry, you just listen until you get a call sign and exchange and then throw out you call. Soon, this will become much easier as well. Although you will rub shoulders with some very talented "world-class" operators, you will soon discover that this is a very welcoming group who have all been where you are now.

So, if I haven't scared you away, **please e-mail me a.s.a.p. to let me know 1) you are willing and able to make the time commitment to practice and 2) confirm that you will be participating in the class.** Please also give me an idea of what you'd like to get out of the class. If your circumstances have changed and you wish to opt out for this term, no problem. You are always welcome sign up again for a future class. I just need to know that there is a vacancy so it can be filled by another student. (I will send you a Zoom invite before our "meet and greet" session on Sept. 8.) FYI, I am also readily available if you want a private session either on the air or via Zoom to work on something. You will also find that after a few meetings, some of your classmates may want to arrange a schedule to practice as well.

I'm looking to meeting and working with all of you and to helping you achieve your CW goals.

Vy 73,  
Joe Attili – AA2IL