

August 11, 2025

Gentlemen.

Welcome to the CW Academy Advanced Class. You have been assigned to our class for the September-October 2025 semester. There are two co-advisors for this class – Joe Attili, AA2IL and Jim Mueller, N7AUE. We will begin meeting regularly as a group beginning on Monday, September 8. The schedule will be Mondays and Thursdays at 7 PM PDT (9PM CDT, 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 4, 2024 at 7 PM PDT** to introduce our selves, test the video conference 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 us 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 at least 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 events such as SST, MST, CWT and POTA/SOTA. As the students entering this class will have a variety of abilities and experience, please do not compare yourself to others in the class but rather measure your progress against yourself. Most importantly, make sure that you are always having fun and this doesn't become burdensome – ham radio is our hobby not our vocation!

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 and microphone) – most modern computers have these built in;
- Paddles – new paddles have become ridiculously priced so borrow or buy a used one if you have to. (We emphasize the use of paddles because even good operators can not reliably send much above about 20-wpm with a straight key.)
- A radio with a built-in keyer and sidetone. Most (all?) modern rigs have this – just make sure you are not transmitting when you practice!

We will be using Jitsi for our class meetings. Jitsi is a web-based application similar to Zoom. While very good for normal conversational meetings, all video conferencing applications have some quirks when dealing with CW which can make copying more difficult than on-the-air. We have used Jitsi in several previous classes and found that, compared to Zoom, it handles the audio quite well but the video is inconsistent at times. To be considerate to your fellow classmates, it is important that you

- **Use headphones/ear buds and**
- **Mute yourself if you are not actively sending.**

We will send out a link for the video conference prior to the September 4 meet-and-greet.

Please take a look at the latest “Practice Instructions and Homework Assignments Ver2.2” from the CWops website under the CW Academy → Student Resources → Advanced tab:

<https://cwops.org/cw-academy/cw-academy-student-resources>

There is a link for a PDF download if you prefer that over the online version. We are going to use the latest “prototype” version. (The content for all CWA levels has been revamped recently and we will work through any “bugs” if necessary.)

You will also find a link to the audio practice files referenced in this document. **Please complete the first assignment (Session 1, Days 1, 2 and 3) prior to our first formal meeting on September 8.** 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. We will then do some exercises to improve your **head copy and sending skills**.

Inasmuch as your skills are increasing and you are becoming skilled operators, we will also present/discuss various topics related to operating and techniques to increase your enjoyment of our great hobby. If you need to miss a few classes, no

problem, just keep practicing as best you can! Also, if you need a “private lesson” to help work out an issue or just want to schedule a QSO, just ask and we’ll set something up.

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 or Mac OS; we can help you with that if you are using Linux.

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

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

So, if we haven’t scared you away, **please e-mail both of us 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.** In your e-mail, please also include what your specific interests are and 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. We just need to know that there is a vacancy so it can be filled by another student.

We’re looking forward to meeting and working with all of you and to helping you achieve your CW goals.

VY 73 ES CU SOON,
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