

Advanced Discussion Questions

Self-Reflexivity Exercise:

How often do you think about the fact that the US is at war? Who taught you about the post-9/11 wars? How do you feel about the war? What are the costs of war? What costs do we pay as a world, country, and individuals? How do you feel about these costs? Do we, as members of U.S. society, have any power or responsibility over the costs of U.S. wars?

Reflection on Poems:

How might art help us to comprehend huge, often abstract numbers such as those provided by the Costs of War Project? What sort of emotions or thoughts do these poems inspire in you? How might you represent the numbers of dead, the financial costs of war, or other costs through poetry or art?

1. How does the Costs of War Project define the costs of war? How does your definition match up with the Costs of War Project? How might you broaden or narrow the costs of war?
2. What is “The Military Normal”? How might the military normal contribute to high military spending? What kind of discourses, practices, etc. help to perpetuate the military normal?
3. What sort of opportunities does the military provide for individuals? How does this intersect with issues of race and class? Are there any other institutions offering the same benefits?
4. Can we imagine other forms of national service at the same magnitude as the military? What else could we accomplish with the same funding and human capacity?
5. What would the world look like if we re-envisioned our military system? If we did not have our current military (in terms of size, function, etc.), what would happen? Would we need to replace it? How would the U.S be viewed by other nations without our military?
6. What does peace mean? How can we conceive of alternatives to war?
7. What now? Now that we are aware of these high costs, do we have a responsibility to act? If so, to whom? What creative actions might we take to address the high costs of war?