Summary. This interdisciplinary seminar explores a ground-level view of war and its physical/environmental, human, economic, and social consequences. We primarily take up the examples of the post-9/11 wars in the Middle East and Southwest Asia but we also look at comparative examples from Africa and Southeast Asia.

The focus is less on the causes of war, on battles, elite war strategies, and relations between states than it is about what war is like for those caught within it, what larger social and economic contexts and what myths make it more or less likely, and how the category of war itself often obscures its fuller extent and understanding. Course readings and lectures use ethnographic, political economic, historical, and feminist approaches to understanding war and its effects. We will also look at efforts made to prevent or ameliorate those consequences.

We begin the course by identifying the questions about war that bring you to the class, and we examine the social roots of questions and inquiry. Among the questions this course can address are: How are societies changed, in the short and long term, by war? How are they changed by war preparation in putative peacetime? Are wars and their costs inevitable, and in particular, how does war relate to human nature? Who is most likely to die in wartime? Who is most likely to kill? What are the environmental effects of war, arms production, and military training? How long can the consequences of war be detected in a social order after the return of formal peace? What kinds of global and local humanitarian and governmental actions have been taken to ameliorate the damages of war?

Learning Goals. This course introduces a critical approach to the problem of war and its relationship to society. It is designed with three main learning goals in mind:

- to identify common myths about the nature of war and unlearn them as we introduce evidence that war should not be understood as simply the result of human nature, the motivations of combatants, or the strategies of political and military elites or that wars and their costs are as limited in scope (temporal, economic, and spatial) as might be assumed;

- while the course is interdisciplinary, a goal is to introduce the methods anthropologists in particular use to understand social institutions like the military, and to encourage you to cultivate an “anthropological imagination” which is connected to the ability to empathize (if not agree) with people in a very diverse range of situations and, relatedly;

- to learn how to engage in critical social analysis, and in particular to use what you learn here in future as a method for reading the newspaper “against the grain” as you read about future wars and post-war zones around the world. Reading “against the grain” of
conventional understanding in the U.S. means also understanding how colonial and
eocolonial relations between nations shape war and its consequences and shape previous
academic work on the subject of war.

Format. This class will be taught either in person or online depending on the health situation as the
summer progresses. The course will begin online through the first 4 weeks. Class time will be spent in
both short lectures and discussion of research materials brought before the class. Lectures will be
devoted to the presentation of new material that is not covered in the reading and to explanation and
exploration of the reading. There will be a number of guest lecture/discussions with the authors of our
course readings. Participation will be key to your success in understanding course themes. Students will
be responsible for posting discussion starting thoughts and questions to our website periodically
through the semester. The format for these thoughts is provided below.

Requirements.

1. Prepare for each class by close reading of our syllabus materials. Preparation will include web
postings on our Canvas site six times through the semester (see description of format below). Each
posting should be at least 250 words in length. Those reflections will form the basis for discussion in
class. Everyone can get full credit for each of these postings by reading and engaging seriously with
the syllabus material.

2. Write a 1500 word (c. 5 page) paper that explores your own experience with the costs of war, with a
focus on an aspect of those costs covered in the syllabus.

3. Group presentation based on research on one kind of cost of war in the ongoing Yemen Conflict.

4. Choose a topic from the Costs of War website. Write a 3200 word (c. 10 page) research paper that
expands on an aspect of the research reported there.

Grading.

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
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Web Posting Guidelines:

Six times of your choosing during the semester, you will be writing out some reflections on the class
readings. You will post these on-line at the course website by 9 p.m. the night before class. They should
include your responses to that following day’s reading. Each posting should be about 250 words in
length.

In more detail, each posting should be in two parts:

(1) An Ah-Ha! observation that describes the most important thing you learned from the
readings and lectures. This would be something that you did not know before and/or that
contradicted and/or improved your understanding of the costs of war.
(2) A Head-Scratcher that describes the point that most perplexed you. The Head-Scratcher is particularly important, because students too often think that mastering concepts means just committing them to memory and being able to use them. Think about the daily conversations that you have with friends, however. The best ones usually spring from confusions, disagreements, or puzzles you notice rather than shared certainty. Indeed, certainty elicits mutual affirmation more than discussion, and is usually an absolute conversation-killer.

These postings should primarily include responses to readings. These can also draw on your own experience as it relates to them. The goal of these cyber-posts is to encourage thoughtful and consistent engagement with the readings and thereby to enhance your comprehension of course content. They will also help you come to class ready to raise some of the issues that you wrote about in discussion.

**Required Books**


**Weekly Outline**

***Please note that asterisks separate the readings for each week that are to be completed for discussion on Tuesdays v. Thursdays.***

*Th 05/13*

**Introduction**


*Tu 05/18, Th 05/20*

**Myths of War**


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Theories of Violence and the Problem of “Human Nature”


For Yemen project:


The Human Toll in Death and Injury


Political Meaning of Wounds


The Injuries of War Preparation

Recommended:

Kashmir Case Study


T 06/08, Th 06/10

The Medical Consequences of Wars

(Yemen Group Project: Injury Presentation due)


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T 06/15, Th 06/17

Dislocation

(Yemen Group Project: Health Costs Presentation due)


****


War and the Production of Inequality


- Ülkü Güney. 2010. “‘We See Our People Suffering’: The War, the Mass Media and the Reproduction of Muslim Identity among Youth.” Media, War & Conflict 3 (2): 168–81. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258173344_'We_see_our_people_suffering'_The_war_the_mass_media_and_the_reproduction_of_Muslim_identity_among_youth

Economic Consequences

(Yemen Group Project: Dislocations Presentation due)
Sanctions Debate


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Illicit Economies


Extraction Economies


Th 07/08, T 07/13

Economic Consequences: The United States and Iraq

(Yemen Group Project: Economic Consequences Presentation due)


****


Th 07/15

Environmental Consequences

(Yemen Group Project: Environmental Costs Presentation due)


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T 07/20

**Human Rights and Civil Liberties**

*(Yemen Group Project: Human Rights and Civil Liberties Presentation due)*

Choose to read the articles for one out of the two following case studies. Class will be divided into two discussion sections and report back out to the rest of the class on their reading and discussion.

Case Study One: Iraq, Abu Ghraib, Torture and Prison Rights


• Mohamedou Ould Slahi. 2015. *Guantanamo Diary selected excerpts*:
  o Introductory Video: https://youtu.be/YozKfwQKq_0

OR

Case Study Two: Gaza, Military violation of human rights, Goldstone Report


Key Points of the Goldstone Report


**Recommended:**


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**Th 07/22, T 07/27, Th 07/29**

**Responses to War’s Costs**

*(Yemen Group Project: Responses to War presentation due)*

**Judicial Response, the ICC, Justice Cascade**


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**Humanitarian Intervention**


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**Political/Social Movements, Transnational Advocacy Networks and NGOs**

*Reconstruction Aid*