

Muhlenberg College

## DANA FORUM 2017



**Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

Great Room, Seegers Union

5:30PM

**Thursday, April 27, 2017**

Great Room, Seegers Union

5:30 PM



## *About the Dana Scholars Program*

### **Mission Statement**

The Dana Program offers outstanding, intellectually versatile students an opportunity to belong to a community of scholars that fosters conversations across disciplines, rigorous academic inquiry, and promotes engaged citizenship and leadership. Each Dana scholar can major in any academic department or program. All Dana seniors engage in collaborative research projects on issues of public concern and interest.

**Director:** Dr. Mohsin Hashim  
**Forum Director, 2016-2017:** Dr. Irene Chien

**Faculty Advisory Committee:**  
Dr. Keri Colabroy, Dr. Dawn Lonsinger  
Dr. Matthew Moore, Dr. Cathy Ouellette

### **Student Advisory Committee:**

<b><i>Class of 2017</i></b>	<b><i>Class of 2018</i></b>
Alison Smith	Sara Kass
Alexander Stavros	Sarah Roussel

<b><i>Class of 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Class of 2020</i></b>
Victoria Castillo	Nisha Godbole
Jamie Greenberg	Madeliene Vaver



## *Dana Forum*

The **Dana Forum** is designed as a senior year capstone experience to deepen a sense of community among Dana scholars and to enrich the intellectual climate on campus. Each year the Forum helps Dana seniors develop and execute collaborative research projects that are tied to the Center for Ethics' annual theme. In the Fall semester, under the supervision of the Director of the Dana Forum, students engage academic questions related to the annual theme chosen by the Center for Ethics. They also form working groups to research a topic of their choice and identify a faculty mentor for the project. The collaborative research component of the Dana Forum is completed during the spring semester of the Dana Scholar's senior year under the mentorship of a faculty member chosen by each group. The specific nature of each team's project depends on the students' background, interests, and goals. Because of the goals of the Dana program, projects that also serve the community are strongly encouraged.

**Dr. Irene Chien, Forum Director, 2016 - 2017**



## *Center for Ethics 2016-2017 Program*

The 2016—2017 program is entitled *War and Peacebuilding*.

The Muhlenberg College Center for Ethics seeks to develop our capacities for ethical reflection, moral leadership, and responsible action by engaging community members in scholarly dialogue, intellectual analysis, and self-examination about contested ethical issues.

Explorations of the ethics of war and conflict, and of the requirements for peacebuilding have been central to intellectual debates, public policy, and popular culture. Moreover, in both new and more traditional ways, we live in a country that has been engaged in near constant warfare for at least the last fifteen years. Yet, the all-volunteer military and the new reliance on special forces and drones has meant that fewer and fewer Americans have actually served in these wars. This series invites the Muhlenberg community to explore a range of questions and important ethical concerns related to war and peacebuilding. Speakers, events, and films will focus on questions including: What explains public support for American militarism? How should we understand our military engagement in the Middle East? On what basis are wars and actions therein justified? What effect does warfare or the training for warfare have on the environment, and on the construction of gendered identity? How are questions of war and peace being politicized in the current presidential election cycle? How have cinema, television, video games, and theatre represented war, and how are these representations related to increased conflict, or projects of peacebuilding?

**Dr. Chris Sistare, Director, Center for Ethics**

**Program Directors:** Dr. Jack Gambino, Dr. Roland Kushner, Dr. Brian Mello



## *Schedule of Events*

### **Wednesday, April 26**

- 5:30 p.m.                      Hors d'oeuvres Served
- 5:45 p.m.                      Welcome and Opening Remarks  
Dr. Chris Sistare
- 6:00 p.m.                      *Invoking the Veteran: How 2016 Presidential Candidates Represented the Veteran*  
Timothy Canali, Trevor Luck, Alison Smith
- 6:30 p.m.                      *A Toy Story: War Toys as Pawns for Shaping American Identity*  
Megan Beispiel, Emma Jahde, Emily McGoldrick, Danielle McWalters
- 7:00 p.m.                      *The Marvel of War: Captain America on War and Conflict*  
Alan Mendez, Joseph Rorem, Gregory Sacks, Kayla Staub
- 7:30 p.m.                      Closing Remarks  
Dr. Irene Chien



## *Schedule of Events*

### **Thursday, April 27**

- 5:30 p.m.                    Hors d'oeuvres Served
- 5:45 p.m.                    Welcome and Opening Remarks  
Dr. Brian Mello
- 6:00 p.m.                    *Drone Warfare*  
Patrick Moore, Jacob Parris, Alexander Stavros,  
Sean Watkins
- 6:30 p.m.                    *American Imperial Feminism Gone Awry: Rape and the  
War on Terror*  
Lauren Butler, Lauren Kenney, Allysén Bay Merrill,  
Monica Ransegnola
- 7:00 p.m.                    *Fear in American Rhetoric Surrounding the Middle East*  
Emily Kosinski, Lara Roseto, Megan Ross, Brittany  
Smith
- 7:30 p.m.                    *After War: Refugees, Veterans, and U.S. Public Opinion*  
Molly Albano, Morgan Backenstoss, Christopher  
Baumgartel, Korrinne Yurick
- 8:00 p.m.                    Closing Remarks  
Dr. Mohsin Hashim



## *Event Schedule*

**April 26  
6:00 P.M.**

### **Invoking the Veteran: How 2016 Presidential Candidates Represented the Veteran**

**Presenters**

Timothy Canali  
Trevor Luck  
Alison Smith

**Mentor**

Dr. Lanethea  
Mathews-Schultz

This project engages with the 2016 presidential race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, focusing on their implementation of the American veteran. We sought to examine how these two candidates discursively constructed the veteran in the context of widely accessible campaign media. Veteran studies as its own academic field does not examine political discourse. To fill this gap, the project at hand drew on an array of academic sources, using scholarship from political science, psychology, and media/communication to examine veteran construction in materials from this election cycle. This project examined transcripts and videos from debates in which Hillary Clinton and/or Donald Trump were present (both primary and general) and television ads created by these candidates' campaigns. From these materials, we coded and qualitatively analyzed mentions and representations of veterans and veteran affairs to expose trends and patterns in the candidates' employment of the veteran.

A number of preliminary observations of the two candidates' invocations of veterans have emerged. While both used veteran bodies as spokespersons in advertisements, and both promoted their own campaigns through alignment with veterans and veterans' issues, Trump and Clinton differed in their frequency of using veterans for pro-self and anti-opponent arguments. We also observed that neither candidate presented a particularly comprehensive understanding of veteran affairs. Additionally, we considered the extent to which candidates' discussion and presentation of the veteran aligned with trends in party ownership.



## Event Schedule

**April 26  
6:30 P.M.**

### **A Toy Story: War Toys as Pawns for Shaping American Identity**

**Presenters**

Megan Beispiel  
Emma Jahde  
Emily McGoldrick  
Danielle McWalters

**Mentor**

Dr. Pearl Rosenberg

Upon leaving office in 1961, Dwight Eisenhower warned Americans in his farewell address about the influence of the military-industrial complex—how the strong ties between the military and the arms industry have the power to influence public policy in a way that prioritizes war and leaves peace as an afterthought. While the political ramifications of the American affinity for war are evident, we often neglect to acknowledge the ways in which war permeates everyday life and infiltrates U.S. culture, especially the consumer culture that we become involved in from the earliest moments of childhood when we may engage with war-related toys. These toys may include Nerf guns, G.I. Joes, and Lego sets. This presentation delves into the multi-layered discussion surrounding militaristic children's toys and analyzes American marketing strategies, cultural values, parenting preferences, and gender norms. Using personal stories and observations, we begin to expose the complexity surrounding the simple toys of childhood. We unpack everyday occurrences related to war toys and expose the underlying entrenchment of militarism in US culture, instilled at the earliest stages of child development. Varying ideologies related to war-related toys and their impact on a child's future, mainly the child's predisposition to violence, affect the ways in which toys are marketed, censored, and used. While the ethics of this topic exist in an almost permanent state of debate and disagreement, awareness of the values that these toys promote will encourage the audience to adopt a more nuanced perspective on war toys.





## *Event Schedule*

**April 26  
7:00 P.M.**

### **The Marvel of War: Captain America on War and Conflict**

**Presenters**

Alan Mendez  
Joseph Rorem  
Gregory Sacks  
Kayla Staub

**Mentor**

Mr. Anthony Dalton

The Captain America narrative serializes and explicates both international war and domestic conflict. Created in a fit of United States nationalism and anti-Axis sentiment in the wake of World War II, Captain America's storyline has since been imbedded in the dynamic sociopolitical climate of the United States from the 1940s onwards. Jason Dittmer, a geopolitical scholar, refers to Captain America as a "rescaling icon," an anthropomorphization of US values, which allows Captain America to be employed as a lens for analysis of critical periods in US American history.

Through the careful exploration of over 620 comics in the primary Captain America storyline, we argue that the series serves as a sociopolitical barometer, reflecting contemporary attitudes towards international warfare in World War II, the Cold War, and Vietnam. Other events commented on through the series include domestically-impacting events like the Civil Rights Movement, 9/11, and our current political climate. The portrayal of the enemy especially points to changing national sentiments over time, which is also capitalized upon in the series' main villain—the Red Skull.



## Event Schedule

**April 27**  
**6:00 P.M.**

### **Drone Warfare**

**Presenters**

Patrick Moore  
Jacob Parisse  
Alexander Stavros  
Sean Watkins

**Mentor**

Dr. Chris Sistare

The United States military has been developing drones since World War I, and the technology has grown such that they are reshaping the battlefield. The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle has gone through several phases. It began as an inaccurate and impractical weapon, catalyzed a reconnaissance revolution, and has now morphed into a precision weapon capable of identifying targets and launching an immediate strike. Just War Theory and International Humanitarian Law establish guiding principles concerned with contemporary warfare. These principles are supported by key assumptions regarding the distinction between what is the battlefield, and what is not. Drones, and their immediate strike potential, deconstruct this critical conception of distinction by affording the potential for a 'global battlefield.' Through this possibility, drones used as a tool of militarized violence undermine important assumptions made by moral and legal principles in militarized conflict. As the technology continues to advance, so does its potential for applied use in a domestic, non-militarized setting. For a number of commercial industries, the implications of relatively cheap and accessible unmanned aircrafts are incredibly significant. This potential, however, is mitigated as the government introduces post 9/11 legislation that trades privacy and liberty for national security. The sacrifice of privacy results in a culture of paranoia wherein drones, because of their militarized history, are becoming a literal manifestation of the unknown, invasive observer. And because of these fears, new federal regulations gut the technology's universal potential.



## *Event Schedule*

**April 27  
6:30 P.M.**

### **American Imperial Feminism Gone Awry: Rape and the War on Terror**

**Presenters**

Lauren Butler  
Lauren Kenney  
Allysen Bay Merrill  
Monica Ransgnola

**Mentor**

Dr. Kate  
Richmond

In contemporary America, the War on Terror has been branded as necessary because of a threat from a foreign and uncivilized force; yet, some have argued that it is actually an imperialist agenda meant to reassert a masculinized power in response to 9/11. Our presentation will examine how rape and rape culture are integral to understanding this reassertion of a Western masculine power. Specifically, we will examine the narrative of “saving” foreign women from “uncivilized” men (mostly men of color) as a way to persuade the public to support war and nation building. As part of the narrative, proponents of the War on Terror have co-opted liberal and radical feminist ideas to sell this war to the American public. For example, images of Middle Eastern women in burqas have come to represent a culture that oppresses and controls women, which exists in opposition to the American ideological standard of gender equality. Such an approach has created a mentality that clearly delineates “us versus them” and depicts America as a benevolent hero. In our presentation, we will examine how transnational feminism could be used to deter rape, war, hegemonic masculinity, and the violence associated with nation building.



## *Event Schedule*

**April 27  
7:00 P.M.**

### **Fear in American Rhetoric Surrounding the Middle East**

**Presenters**

Emily Kosinski  
Lara Roseto  
Megan Ross  
Brittany Smith

**Mentor**

Dr. Brian Mello

Does Islam incite its members to violence more than other religions? Of those responding in March of 2002, only 25 percent of Americans said yes. But as of September of 2014, that number has grown to 50 percent due to violent imagery (Tures, 2014). Fear through violent images and emotional language is often used as a persuasion tactic in the media. This has been shown in psychological research to be associated with anxiety-producing reactions. Our project uses these theories of fear as a lens for examining factors influencing American support of militarism in the Middle East. We examine the Clash of Civilizations theory, popularized by Samuel Huntington, in the context of rhetoric surrounding Middle Eastern nations. Our project analyzes the impact of this theory on American perceptions of the Middle East post-9/11 and the way Huntington's metaphor has been perpetuated by various presidential administrations and terrorist groups. Furthermore, we analyze how Americans construct gendered stereotypes of Middle Eastern women as weak, oppressed, and in need of saving from vilified men. By assessing how Middle Eastern women exhibit political activism in non-movements—mundane daily practices, and in movements—traditional Western conception of political activism, we argue that a focus on these narratives of women's political activism as opposed to the current violent imagery and fear rhetoric would alter the public's support for American militarism in the Middle East.



## *Event Schedule*

**April 27  
7:30 P.M.**

### **After War: Refugees, Veterans, and U.S. Public Opinion**

**Presenters**

Molly Albano  
Morgan Backenstoss  
Christopher Baumgartel  
Korrinne Yurick

**Mentor**

Dr. Chris Borick

Refugees and veterans are two populations within the United States that have been directly impacted by war. Within scholarly research these two groups are often discussed separately and their experiences are rarely placed in conversation with each other. Contrary to this status quo in academic circles, public discourse and popular media often portray refugees and veterans in competition for resources. Rather than selecting one of these two groups on which to do our research, we have chosen to put the lived realities and public opinion of refugees and veterans in conversation with one another. In doing so, we seek to create a more nuanced understanding of the connotations pertaining to these groups in the public consciousness of the United States, the ways in which the government and the public consider resource allocation to these groups, and the extent to which ethics plays a role in these conversations. Our investigation aims to develop responses to three main questions: 1) Do variations exist in public perception of relative deservingness of refugees and veterans in terms of government resource allocation? 2) Do variations exist in public perception of current resource allocation to refugees and veterans? 3) What factors might drive these variations if/where they occur? Drawing upon the resources of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, interdisciplinary scholarly works, and government documents, we aim to develop an understanding of why we see the results we see, including any demographic patterns which we may apprehend.



## *Notes*



*Notes*



## *DANA Scholars*

### *Class of 2017*

*Molly Albano*  
*Morgan Backenstoss*  
*Christopher Baumgartel*  
*Megan Beispiel*  
*Lauren Butler*  
*Timothy Canali*  
*Emma Jabde*  
*Lauren Kenney*  
*Emily Kosinski*  
*Trevor Luck*  
*Emily McGoldrick*  
*Danielle McWalters*  
*Alan Mendez*  
*Alhysen Bay Merrill*  
*Patrick Moore*  
*Jacob Parisse*  
*Monica Ransegnola*  
*Joseph Korem*  
*Lara Roseto*  
*Megan Ross*  
*Gregory Sacks*  
*Alison Smith*  
*Brittany Smith*  
*Kayla Staub*  
*Alexander Stavros*  
*Sean Watkins*  
*Korrinne Yurick*