

Writing Contemporary Wars and Contemporary Militaries: Film and Literature of Military Interventions from the Persian Gulf War to the Present

Conference venue: University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Date: 11-12 November

Keynote speakers:

Prof. Helen Benedict (Columbia University) and Prof. Anna Froula (East Carolina University)

This 2-day conference will focus on the way that war has been represented in the United States (and UK) since the First Persian Gulf War in 1990 to the present. Recent events, such as the end of a so-called Forever War with the removal of American troops from Afghanistan, will serve as a focal point from which to explore topics related to war and the military.

This conference welcomes papers that interrogate the recent American wars, with particular interest for the exploration of representations of the military, especially as it relates to gender. Cross-cultural and interdisciplinary contributions are also encouraged, and we therefore welcome papers that explore similar themes related to gender and the military across other countries, cultures, or periods.

Some of the suggested questions include:

- How does the military, a historically masculine institution, reconcile its discriminatory practices with its need for female troops?
- More generally, how does the instrumentalization of women—both at home, within American troops, but also in the invaded countries—serve the country's imperialistic interests and revitalize the war rationale?
- How has the influx of women into combat positions in all the services changed the way war is perceived, experienced, and narrated?
- How has drone warfare and the increasing reliance on other technologies of the virtual and remote soldier impacted military masculinity?
- Along the same lines, how have the new technologies of surveillance and remote assassination changed the meaning and visualization of war more generally?
- How have representations of the psychological cost of war entered film and literature in a time where trauma and PTSD are far more accepted than during the Vietnam War?
- Do these seemingly endless wars result in overexposure and fatigue—and if so, how does this affect anti-war activism?

- After the hyper-mediatized failure of the Afghanistan War, what perspectives for Afghanistan, but also for future American wars? Is the rhetoric of liberation still a viable justification for further American interventionism and imperialism?
- How might the current war in Ukraine impact the representation and cultural memory of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq?
- Lastly, fictional writing about war has increasingly included elements relating to climate change and the Anthropocene. What are the implications and results of this?

Abstracts (250-300 words) should be sent, along with a short bio-note, to both Prof. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (agnieszka.soltysikmonnet@unil.ch) and Ana Gomes Correia (ana.gomescorreia@unil.ch) by **30 June**.