

## 2026 Peace in the Age of Forever Wars Report

Last April 3-4, 2026, the “Peace in the Age of Forever Wars” symposium was hosted at Gladfelter Hall’s Global Studies Lounge. Organized by faculty members **Dr. Lee-Ann Chae** and **Dr. Petra Goedde**, the event brought together scholars from across the humanities and social sciences to examine the evolving relationship between war and peace. The event was supported by the Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy (CENFAD), Dr. Todd Davis (Temple Alumnus), the Faculty Senate, and the Office of the Provost, among others.



*Dr. Lee-Ann Chae opening remarks*

The conference opened with a keynote by **Dr. Mary Dudziak** (Emory University School of Law) titled “War and Peace in Time and Space - or - Peace as a Form of Privilege.” Her intervention questioned the idea that war and peace exist as distinct temporal states.

Drawing on American history, she argued that ongoing military conflict has made it difficult to identify any period truly free from war. At the same time, many American individuals continue to “experience peace” in their daily lives, creating a tension between lived experience and political reality. Dr. Dudziak ultimately suggested that peace is neither a time nor a place but is a form of privilege.



*Dr. Mary Dudziak*

The first panel, “Gender, War, and Peace”, explored how women’s perspectives and activism reshape understandings of conflict. **Dr. Christin Hansen** (University of Trier, Germany) examined the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

(WILPF) emphasizing the argument that the inclusion of women is essential to creating lasting peace. **Dr. Jennifer Kling** (University of Colorado), arguing from a feminist political theory and indigenous theory perspective, offered a philosophical critique of modern imperialism claiming that war reflects a failure of political relations and that peace depends on sustaining networks of interdependence rather than domination. **Adam Stone** (PhD Candidate at Rutgers University) shifted the focus to the Cold War by highlighting how women peace and anti-nuclear weapons activists created alternative forum for discussion that challenged official state narratives.

The second panel, “Peace, Justice, and Human Rights,” was more philosophically oriented. **Dr. Christian De Vos** (CUNY School of Law), **Dr. Ryan Liss** (University of Western Ontario), and **Dr. Sari Kisilevsky** (Queens College, CUNY) collectively highlighted the limits of existing approaches to international law and raised questions about how concepts like human rights function in contexts of ongoing conflict. In this context, for instance, Dr. Kisilevsky revisited Kant’s theory of perpetual peace, noting that its allowance for a right of self-defense introduces tensions that make the idea of lasting peace unstable.

The third panel, “Approaches to War and Peace,” continued in a similar vein, with contributions from **Dr. Elad Uzan** (Blavatnik

School of Government) and **Dr. Jessica Wolfendale** (Case Western Reserve University). The panel examined broader perspectives on war and its consequences, emphasizing the difficulty of defining clear principles for ending conflict and evaluating its impact on civilians.



*Audience members during a panel discussion*

The second day opened with a keynote by **Dr. Graham Parsons** (Vassar College), which examined the persistence of U.S. reliance on military force. Parsons argued that cultural constructions of masculinity play a central role in sustaining this reliance, suggesting that masculinity often “treats war as good.” In this framework, war is associated with aggression and domination, while failure or restraint is perceived as humiliation. He further introduced the idea of “social emasculation,” arguing that experiences of collective shame can motivate violence and reinforce a renewed faith in war, as seen in the aftermath of events such

as 9/11. This perspective helps explain the continued embrace of military solutions even in the face of their strategic limitations.



*Dr. Graham Parsons*

The fourth and final panel, “Pacifism and Peace,” discussed whether and how peace can be sustained. **Dr. David Chan** (University of Alabama) explored the possibility of “asymmetric peace” in a world of unequal powers, arguing that internal inequalities within powerful states often drive external conflict, and that by reducing these disparities could make peaceful coexistence more likely. **Dr. Mikkel Dack** (Rowan University) argues that after World War II, the Allies didn’t just end the war, but they actively tried to build peace by reshaping defeated societies. Through coordinated efforts across countries like Italy, Germany, Austria, and Japan, they used policies in education and media to promote

democracy and prevent future conflict. His main point is that peace has to be deliberately constructed, not simply assumed once war ends. **Dr. Margot Minardi** (Reed College) then examined the nineteenth-century American peace movement, particularly the American Peace Society, and its campaign for a “congress of nations.” She showed how reformers challenged the idea that peace was merely “utopian,” instead presenting it as a practical political goal.

The symposium continued with a keynote by **Dr. Samuel Moyn** (Yale University), that addressed the relationship between contemporary conflicts, efforts to “humanize” war, and international law.



*Dr. Samuel Moyn*

The symposium concluded with a roundtable featuring Dr. Moyn, Dr. Dudziak, Dr. Parsons, and the organizers, Dr. Chae and Dr. Goedde, and included active

participation from the audience. The discussion highlighted the symposium's interdisciplinary character, bringing together philosophers, legal scholars, and historians, and in many ways served to synthesize the presentations from the two days. As a result, it moved across a wide range of topics, including gender, culture, and differing interpretations of war and peace. Dr. Chae opened the discussion by questioning whether we should continue to accept the broadly liberal framework that most presenters seemed to rely on. While a few suggested alternative approaches, such as feminist or virtue-centered frameworks, most assumed that a state-based global legal order remains the best path to peace. In fact, one recurring question concerned the role of gender in shaping conflicts. In response, Dr. Parsons emphasized the link between masculinity and hierarchy, arguing that the idea that someone must dominate has broader political consequences.

Audience members also asked questions about the relationship between greed and masculinity, as well as issues such as genocide. The discussion then touched on how peace has at times been framed as a national security threat, and how, particularly in the 1960s, peace was just not simply understood as an idealistic or “Kumbaya” notion, but also as a pragmatic political project.

A central question that emerged was how to define a “positive” vision of peace. While Dr. Moyn stated that peace without justice is not truly peace, noting that law can be effective when grounded in moral consensus. Dr. Parsons, instead, described peace as a value to strive for, even if it is difficult to fully define. The discussion concluded with further audience reflection on whether peace should be understood in terms of individual security.



*Roundtable with Dr. Samuel Moyn, Dr. Graham Parsons, Dr. Petra Goedde, and Dr. Lee-Ann Chae*