

Instructor: Paul Mazgaj

Office: 2121 Humanities Hall (MHRA)

Office Hrs.: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15-1:00

And by appointment

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READING LIST:

TO BE PURCHASED:

Rampolla, Mary Lynn *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (Fifth Ed.)

CAN BE DOWNLOADED THROUGH BLACKBOARD:

All readings marked "ER"

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

The subject matter of this course is the impact of the Great War. Very few events in Western history have had as traumatic an impact as that of the war that began in 1914.

Europe—and, indeed, the world—were forever changed by the largely unanticipated consequences of the war. Economic, social, and political dislocations were the most immediately apparent results: rampant inflation that led to the destruction of entire segments of European society; political revolutions that brought down the three empires of central-east Europe; and, finally, the breakthrough of two new ideological formations—communism and fascism—that were to change the course of twentieth-century history. Many historians argue that even more devastating than these were the psychological effects of the war. The war, they argue, undermined the Enlightenment values that had sustained Europeans since the eighteenth century: belief in the potential of human rationality, a sense of optimism, and faith in progress through educational reform and scientific discovery. In their place, the war ushered in a mood of pessimism, an acceptance of violence and irrationalism, and the modern ironic sensibility.

From within this general problematic—the sense of crisis created by the war—you will be expected to carve out a topic for your seminar paper. This paper will be the central project of this course. In thinking about your paper, keep several things firmly in mind.

- First, this paper must be *analytical* and *interpretive* in nature rather than narrative or descriptive. This means that very early on you must locate an interesting *problem* and make sure that you have identified a range of material that will allow you to investigate this problem.

- Second, this material must include both *secondary* and *primary* sources. You should begin by compiling a bibliography of the most relevant secondary sources (articles, chapters or essays in books, and entire books). The secondary literature should give you the necessary background on your subject, a sense of the larger interpretive questions that historians have raised in this general topic area, and, most importantly, the information you need to define the problem that will be the basis for your paper. The possibilities here will be limited by the availability of primary sources in English (unless, of course, you read other European

languages).

- A third point. All of these assignments must be typewritten, observe the proper scholarly forms, and have the air of a finished product--fully revised and carefully proofread. Please note the due dates below; *they are carved in stone*. Nothing, save officially documented proof of serious personal or family illness, will justify *any* late papers (or incompletes for the course).
- Finally, there is weekly reading that will be the basis for class discussion. It is absolutely essential that you *complete all this reading before class and contribute to class discussion*. If your contribution is good it will result in a positive "discussion grade." Failure to participate (or evidence that you have not completed the weekly reading), since it is a requirement of the course, will affect more than your discussion grade.

From my experience with seminar papers, the greatest potential danger for students is to entertain the illusion that a semester is a very long time. In fact, from the perspective of a seminar paper, a semester is *unmercifully* short. Thus it is imperative that you get started early and keep working at a dogged pace throughout the semester; this will *not* be the kind of project that you can throw together in a few frenzied days--or even a few frenzied weeks--before the due date. To help you keep on track and to give you the benefit of on-going critical commentary, I have arranged a series of interim assignments:

- **Propsectus (5%).** As the word implies, this is a short essay (a page to a page and a half) which sets out clearly what you intend to accomplish in your paper. It should also include an *annotated* bibliography of the sources that you intend to use (with an explanation of why you think they will be useful). It will be handed in twice (a first version and a revised version; see due dates below). Though the percentage of the total grade on this assignment might seem modest, a poorly conceived prospectus (one that has failed to formulate a good research project) will obviously endanger the quality of the final paper.
- **Historiographical essay (20%).** All serious historical research is "contextualized" in the relevant secondary material. That is, the historian identifies how his or her project fits into the already existing scholarship on the question; in doing so, the historian usually discusses this scholarship to give the reader some perspective. This discussion involves summarizing the arguments of various historians, contrasting their methods and approaches, and evaluating the importance of their contributions. Usually, this is woven into the text of a book or article (most often in the introductory material). I'm asking you to do this as a separate assignment. I'll offer commentary and criticism on your "first version." It can then be integrated into your final paper. So, in a sense, you will be doing an important part of your paper. *Approximate length: 6-8 pages.*
- **Oral Report (15%).** This will be a short (10-12 minutes) report where you will essentially spell out the "thesis" of your paper. This should

include your major findings, the sources upon which these findings are based, and what your project contributes to the larger historiography on the topic. It should be organized and polished but you should *not* read it (though you can use notes). Remember, this is a Speaking Intensive course so you are graded not only on “content” but “form”—i.e., on how effectively you communicate. Also, be prepared to answer questions.

- **Discussion Grade (10%).** Your discussion grade will be determined by the *frequency* and *quality* of your contribution to class discussion. *Therefore, please take note: your participation--and the frequency and quality of that participation--will affect your grade.* Should the discussion lag (and I suspect not everyone has completed the reading), I may decide to give a “writing exercise” on the reading for the day; if you do poorly on this exercise, it will affect your overall grade in the course.
- **The Seminar Paper (50%).** This paper is a *formal* research paper (i.e., complete with endnotes and bibliography); it must be thoroughly *revised* and *polished* (i.e., absent organizational, grammatical, and stylistic problems); and, finally, it must be a *substantial* piece of work (i.e., in the 20-25 page range). You will turn in two versions. The first version will not be officially graded *but should be your very best effort* (i.e., it must be complete, fully documented, and written with grammatical precision and in your most accomplished prose style). I will return the first version with commentary and suggestions for revision.

There are no examinations in this course. We only meet once a week. Plan to attend *each and every class and actively participate in the discussion.* Absences will not be tolerated; even a single absence will affect your grade (barring, once again, incapacitating and certifiable illness).

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Aug. 27: Introduction

Sept. 3: World War I: An Overview

Readings: Stromberg, “The Great War of 1914-1918” ER

Rampolla, *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pp. 1-38

10: The Experience of Battle

Readings: Hynes, “’Fourteen-’Eighteen: Civilian Soldiers”

Rampolla, *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pp. 69-87

Research Strategies: Session by Mark Schumacher, Jackson Library.

Mark will provide an overview of many of the sources available for your paper. We will meet at the Electronic CITI in the Library (just opposite the circulation desk) at 3:30.

Sept. 17: Making a New World Order

Reading: Paxton, “The Paris Peace Settlement” ER

Graves, “Good-By to All That” ER

Due Date: Prospectus, first version (see above)

- 24: The Lost Generation**
Readings: Wohl, "England: Lost Legions of Youth" ER
Brittain, "Testament of Youth" ER
- Oct. 1: The Great War and Modern Memory**
Readings: Fussell, "Oh What a Literary War" and "Persistence and Memory" ER
Due Date: *Prospectus*, second version
- 8: The Great War and Tradition**
Readings: Winter, "Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning" ER
- 15: World War I and the Rise of Fascism**
Readings: Mosse, "The Brutalization of German Politics" ER
Paxton, "Revolution against Revolution: Fascism" ER
Due: Historiographical Essay
- 22: Student Conferences** (must sign up for appointment)
Readings: Rampolla, *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pp. 43-68
- 29: Student Conferences** (must sign up for appointment)
Readings: Rampolla, *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pp. 88-137
- Nov. 5: Oral Reports**
- 12: Oral Reports**
- 19: Oral Reports**
Due Date: First Version of Paper Due
- 26: Thanksgiving Break**
- Dec. 3: First Version of Paper Returned**
- Dec. 10: Due Date: Final Version of Paper**