

"Goodbye to All That": Britons and the Great War, 1914-1918"

In 1914, Britain had reached the apotheosis of its power: it dominated the world both literally -- at that juncture, it ruled over nearly 400 million people on five continents -- and figuratively, as a center of global finance and culture. However, the advent of the Great War forced Britons to bid "goodbye to all that," as the terrible strain of four years of fighting nearly bankrupted the nation, wounded (both physically and emotionally) an entire generation of young men and women, and helped establish the foundation for the dissolution of the empire later in the century. Together, we will look closely at how British men and women experienced the turbulent period between 1914 and 1918, focusing on ways in which the social, cultural, political, and gender boundaries established during the nineteenth century were radically re-shaped by the events of those years. Individually, students will examine in detail some of the major social, political, and cultural issues confronting Britons during the cataclysm of the First World War as they prepare a 25-page paper based on original research utilizing primary sources

The basic format of this course will consist of three weeks of group discussions of assigned readings selected from the work of historians and other scholars (e.g. Nicoletta Gullace, Adrian Gregory), along with some classic primary sources from the Great War. After the first few weeks, students will begin meeting individually with the instructor on a weekly basis to assist their progress in producing the required research paper. Possible topics for research papers might include, but are by no means limited to, life in the trenches, new roles for women, memorialization, and the emergence of the "home front."

This introductory seminar is intended for first-year graduate students in European history, though second-years and Americanists may enroll with permission from the instructor. While students aren't required to have had any previous coursework specifically focusing on Britain or World War I prior to taking this course, they'll find it very useful to have a basic working knowledge (equivalent to UNCG's History 223) of European history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Required Readings

All the required reading for this class will be in the form of journal articles and short selections from other primary sources. Xerox copies of those items will be distributed in class.

Although not required, I *strongly* recommend that all students purchase either *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian or *The Chicago Manual of Style*, both available at virtually all bookstores in the reference section. These two titles should be considered wise investments, as you'll use them repeatedly no matter where you're headed after UNCG.

Grading

Grades in this course will be assigned according to the following scheme:

- 40% -- Research Paper
- 20% -- Rough Draft and Outline
- 15% -- Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography
- 10% -- Paragraph Description of Topic
- 15% -- Participation (in class discussions, research presentations, and attendance at individual meetings)

Course Philosophy

History 709 is the first opportunity graduate students have to engage in primary source-based research while at UNCG. For some of you, the topic you select may end up being the prelude to a 707 or 708 research project, while for others, it will be a chance to indulge themselves in the myriad joys and pitfalls of historical research involving Britain before they head off to pursue work in other periods and countries. But regardless of your future plans, remember that success in History 709 depends completely on students working *independently* and *continuously* throughout the semester. Don't kid yourselves: there is NO possible way that you can research properly and write an articulate, critical, intellectually-sophisticated 25-page paper in the last two weeks before it's due. Unless you're really a UNCG professor in disguise, it's just not going to happen.

Personally, I love teaching this type of course. It's such a kick to see students through the process of choosing a topic, developing a bibliography, framing a research question and then positioning it within the extant historiography, struggling (and eventually succeeding) to interpret often abstruse sources, writing drafts, and finally producing a paper that is creative, original, and intellectually rigorous. In theory, the 709 experience could become "a total nightmare" or "hell on Earth" if one let it, but that's not how I see this course or my job as your instructor. From my perspective, my job is to a) guide you, assist you, and sweetly cajole you (for those of you who need it, which of course nobody will, right?!) to b) get your paper done by the due date without c) either of us losing our minds, senses of humor, or the will to live while doing it! I look forward to a productive and enjoyable semester with all of you.

Plagiarism Policy

UNCG takes the Academic Integrity Policy extremely seriously, as do I. Any work submitted that is found to contain plagiarized material will immediately receive a failing grade, and disciplinary action will be taken forthwith in accordance with the University's policies. We will be having several discussions regarding the correct citation of sources and how to avoid plagiarism during class this semester.

Syllabus

August 27: Introduction: “In my end is my beginning”: Britain and the Great War

September 3: “The little world of the trenches”: Everyday Life on the Western Front

Reading: Graves, Robert. Excerpts from *Goodbye to All That*.
Gullace, Nicoletta. *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War*. Chapter 2, pp. 35-51.
Short selections of poetry by Brooke, Owen, and Kipling.

Assignment: Bring in a Xerox copy of a recent paper you’ve written. It can be from any class, but preferably a History course. What I’d like to see is a paper that you consider to be an example of your best writing so far. I’ll look them over, get a feel for your writing style, offer comments on your writing, and return them next week.

September 10: “This woman is doing her bit!”: Gender and the British Home Front

Reading: Brittain, Vera. Excerpts from *Chronicle of Youth: Vera Brittain’s War Diary, 1913-1917*.
Gullace, Nicoletta. Chapter 3 of *The Blood of Our Sons*, pp. 53-69.
Woolacott, Angela. *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munitions Workers in the Great War*. Chapter 8, pp. 188-216.

Three Months to Due Date!

September 17: “A corner of a foreign field that is forever England”: Memorializing the Great War

Reading: Cohen, Deborah. *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939*. Chapters 1 (pp. 15-60) and 3 (pp. 148-201).
Gregory, Adrian. *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1918-1946*. Chapter 1, pp. 8-41.
Laqueur, Thomas. “Memory and Naming in the Great War.” In *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John Gillis, pp. 150-164.

September 18: **Paragraphs Due!** Send an electronic copy of your paragraph description of your proposed research topic to me at klmicha2@uncg.edu. by **noon!** Please have your paragraph in Microsoft Word, Rich Text Format, PDF, or plain text. (Note: This is a Friday.)

September 24: Library Research Seminar led by Dr. Stephen Dew, Research Librarian. Meet at 3:30 p.m. outside Jackson Library's CITI lab room.

October 1: **Research Prospecti and Preliminary Bibliographies Due!** In-class presentations and discussions of everybody's proposals.

October 8: Individual Meetings Begin Today!

Two Months to Due Date!

October 15: Individual Meetings.

October 22: Individual Meetings. **Introduction and Outlines Due!**

October 29: Individual Meetings.

November 5: Individual Meetings.

November 12: Individual Meetings.

One Month to Due Date!

November 13: **Rough Draft Due!** (Note: This is a Friday.) Send an electronic copy of your draft to both me and the classmates in your critique group by noon! Please have your draft in Microsoft Word, Rich Text Format, or PDF.

November 19: In-class, Small-group Critiques of Rough Drafts.

November 26: Thanksgiving Holiday! No Class!

December 3: Last Day of Class! In-class group meeting to discuss turn-in procedures. Individual meetings as well, as needed.

December 11: **Final Draft of Papers Due (Electronic Submissions) by 5 p.m. No exceptions!**