

THE WORLD AT WAR, 1914-1918

History 348 Fall 2012

War is a series of catastrophes that results in a victory. Georges Clemenceau

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Few events in world history have had as profound an impact on political institutions, society, and culture as the “Great War.” This course will begin with an examination of prewar European society and an analysis of the stress zones--diplomatic, political, and cultural--that brought Europe to war in 1914. Next we will examine the course of the war, focusing not only on the battlefield but on the mobilization of the enormous human and material resources that were required to fight a “total war.” Attention will be paid to the impact of total war on society, an impact that included challenging gender traditional roles, rapid technological changes, an increased role for the state, and an intensification of ideological conflicts. Finally, we will attempt to evaluate the consequences of the war for Western societies. These consequences extended beyond the peace treaties--which ratified the breakup of empires and reconfigured European power relations--to world historic events such as the Russian Revolution, the rise of Fascism, a misfired attempt to bring a new order to the Middle East, and, not least, a major sea change in Western intellectual and cultural attitudes.

READING LIST

Texts (to be purchased):

Neiberg, Michael. *Fighting the Great War* (Harvard University Press, 2005)
Remarque, Eric. *All Quiet on the Western Front* (originally published, 1929)
(Both required texts available in the UNCG Bookstore)

Selections from the following books on Electronic Reserve (indicated “ER” on class schedule and can be downloaded through Blackboard):

Blinkhorn, Martin. *Fascism and the Right in Europe, 1919-1945* (2000)
Eatwell, Roger. *Fascism* (Penguin, 1995)
Ellis, John. *Eye Deep in Hell: Trench Warfare in World War I* (Pantheon, 1976)
Eksteins, Modris. *Rites of Spring* (Houghton Mifflin, 1989)
Graves, Robert. *Good-Bye to All That* (originally published, 1929)
Habeck, Mary. “Technology in the First World War: The View from Below” in Jay

Winter et al. *The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (Yale University Press, 2000)

Herwig, Holger. *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918* (St. Martins Press, 1997)

Hynes, Samuel. *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (Antheneum, 1991)

Keylor, William. *Twentieth Century World: An International History* (Oxford University Press, Fourth Edition, 2001)

Laurence Lafore. *The Long Fuse* (Lippicott, 1965)

Lyons, Michael. *World War I: A Short History* (Prentice Hall, 2000)

MacMillan, Margaret. *Paris 1919* (Random House, 2001)

Paxton, Robert. *Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Thomson-Wadsworth, Fourth Edition, 2005)

Schmitt, Bernadotte and Harold Vedeler. *The World in the Crucible, 1914-1919* (Harper & Row, 1984)

Smith, Leonard, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War* (Cambridge, 2003).

Stevenson, David. *Cataclysm: The First World War as Political Tragedy* (Basic Books, 2004)

Stevenson, David. *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918* (Belknap Press, 2011)

Strachan, Hew. *The First World War* (Viking Penguin 2004)

Wilkinson, James and Hughes, H. Stuart. *Contemporary Europe* (10th ed., Pearson, 2004)

Zieger, Robert. *America's Great War* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2001)

II. COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Students who complete the course will be able to:

- 1) Explain the origins of the conflict and engage in the ongoing debate as to where the blame for the war lies.
- 2) Trace the path of the war as the number of belligerent nations grows and the conflict spreads throughout the globe.
- 3) Discuss the many technological, societal, political and cultural developments which made the Great War such a decisive event.
- 4) Analyze the impact of the Great War throughout the remainder of the 20th century and into the 21st.

In addition, History majors will fulfill these goals:

Learning Goals for History Majors: Thinking in Time

History Graduates will be able to:

1. Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods. [Historical Comprehension]
2. Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view. [Historical Analysis]
3. Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]
4. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]

III. FORMAT AND PROCEDURES:

Instruction: Because of the size of the class we will have less time for discussion than I would like, but I will occasionally ask questions, and I certainly encourage you to ask questions when you have them. That being said, the format will largely be one of lectures delivered by the instructor, along with pictures, maps, video and movie clips – all of which expand upon the lecture and reading material. In addition, there may be a guest lecturer on one subject or another.

Attendance: Attendance is required, not optional. However, I will allow everyone a single unexcused absence - otherwise only properly documented absences will be excused. All unexcused absences beyond the single one allowed will affect your final grade. There will be an attendance sheet passed around each day, and it is your responsibility to make sure you have signed it.

Participation: Come to class prepared to listen, take notes, and ask questions where needed. You will be allowed to use laptops to take notes, but no other electronic devices are to be used during class time.

Quizzes: There will be quizzes given occasionally, at random intervals throughout the semester. These will serve to keep you on track with your readings, allow you to gauge how well you are absorbing the reading material, and constitute the primary element in your participation grade. Given that these will be administered at the beginning of the class period, you need to ensure that you are on time.

Writing Assignment: There will be a writing assignment due sometime shortly before the end of the semester. The details have yet to be determined, but the focus will be on some of the historical debates surrounding the war and your perception of them in light of the material you have absorbed in the course.

Grades: Your grade will be determined using the following components:

Mid-term exam:	30%
Final Exam:	30%
Writing Assignment:	30%
Participation and Quizzes:	10%

IV. Academic Integrity

Each student is expected to abide by the UNCG Code of Academic Integrity. All work you turn in should be your own or should carry the proper citation for any outside sources used. Please review the academic integrity policy as outlined by the university by visiting <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>

V. Accommodations for students with disabilities

In compliance with the UNCG policy, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

VI. Tentative Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

ER=reading on electronic reserve; can be downloaded from Blackboard (all other readings from Neiberg text or *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which are to be purchased)

Week 1

Aug. 20: Introduction

Aug. 22: The Restive Utopia: Europe before 1914

Readings: Wilkinson and Hughes, "Europe in 1914" ER

Week 2

Aug. 27: Our Country's Honor: The Alliance System in Europe and the Origins of War

Readings: Lafore, "The Austrian Anomaly" ER

Aug. 29: And it will start in the East: Franz Ferdinand and the July Crisis

Readings: Neiberg, Introduction and Paxton, "The Coming of the War" ER

Week 3

Sept. 3: No Class – Labor Day

Sept. 5: From the Baltic to the Balkans: The Early War in the East

Readings: Neiberg, chap. 2 and chap. 4, pp. 111-17 (section on Gorlice-Tarnów)

Week 4

Sept. 10: The Race to Paris: The Early War in the West

Readings: Neiberg, chap. 1 and Herwig “The Battle of the Marne” ER

Sept. 12: Monotonous Mutual Mass Murder: Stalemate in the West / War in the the Trenches

Readings: Ekstein’s, “Rites of War” and “Reason in Madness” ER
Ellis’s *Eye Deep in Hell* (Excerpts)

Week 5

Sept. 17: Global War: Gallipoli, Africa, Salonika, China, Mesopotamia ...

Readings: Neiberg, chap. 4, pp. 95-111; 117-22

Sept. 19: The War of Attrition: Verdun and the Somme

Readings: Neiberg, chaps. 6 and 7

Week 6

Sept. 24: To Harness the Power of the Nation: Mobilizing for War in the Industrial Age

Readings: Lyons, “Total War and the Home Fronts” ER

Sept. 26: A War of Machines: Improving the Science of Killing

Readings: Habek, “Technology in the First World War” ER

Week 7

Oct. 1: War changes everything: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for Peace

Readings: Schmitt and Vedeler, “Crisis at Sea and American Involvement” ER

Oct. 3: **FIRST EXAM**

Week 8

Oct. 8: The Yanks are Coming: America Enters the War

Readings: Zieger, “War, Peace, War: 1915-1917” ER

Oct. 10: : The Crises of 1917: The Nivelle Offensive and the French Mutinies

Readings: Neiberg, chap. 9, pp. 229-49

Week 9

Oct. 15: **No Class, Fall Break**

Oct. 17: The Crises of 1917: Passchendaele and Caporetto

Readings: Neiberg, chap. 9, pp. 250-53 and chap. 10

Paper Prospectus Due

Week 10

Oct. 22: The Crises of 1917: The Collapse of Russia

Readings: Neiberg, chap. 8

Oct. 24: The Last Throw of the Dice: The Central Power’s Offensives of 1918

Readings: Neiberg chaps. 11-12

Week 11

October 29: With Our Backs to the Wall: Collapse of the Central Powers

Readings: Stevenson, "On the Attack, July-November 1918" ER

October 31: The Terms of Peace: Wilson, the Allies, and the German expectations for Peace

Readings: MacMillan, "Peace Without Victory" ER

Week 12

Nov. 5: The Peace of Paris I

Readings: Keylor, "The Peace of Paris and the New International Order" ER

Nov. 7: The Peace of Paris II

Readings: MacMillan, "The Middle East Settlement" ER

Week 13

Nov. 12: The Specter of Revolution

Readings: Paxton, "Revolution, 1917-21" ER

Nov. 14: The Counterrevolutionary Contagion

Readings: Blinkhorn, "Rise of Fascism" ER

Week 14

Nov. 19: Legacy of War: War in Fiction

Readings: Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front (complete)

Nov. 21: Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

Nov. 26: Legacy of War: Postwar Europe

Readings: Fussell, The Great war and Modern Memory

Nov. 28: Legacy of War: The Great War and the 20th Century

Week 16

Dec. 3 SECOND EXAM