

“*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 individual 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 reshaped 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 an 18-22 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 seminar is intended for final-year History majors, though advanced juniors 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 History 223) of European history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Required Readings

The following book is required for this course and is available for purchase at the UNCG Bookstore in Elliot University Center and at Addams Bookstore. Copies of the book will also be placed on reserve in Jackson Library.

Graves, Robert. *Goodbye to All That* (Anchor).

Other 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 *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White 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% -- Proposal and Bibliography
- 10% -- Paragraph Description of Topic
- 15% -- Participation (in class discussions, research presentations, and attendance at individual meetings)

Course Philosophy

History 511 is probably the first, and in some cases the only, opportunity 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 graduate thesis, while for others, it will be a last chance to indulge themselves in the myriad joys and pitfalls of historical research before they head off to pursue other ambitions. Success in History 511 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 20-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 research topic, developing a bibliography, struggling (and eventually succeeding) to interpret often abstruse sources, writing drafts, and then finally producing a paper that is creative, original, and intellectually rigorous. In theory, the 511 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.

Weather Information

As you might be aware, central North Carolina often receives inclement weather during the Spring semester. On days when the weather looks “iffy,” please be sure to call the UNCG Adverse Weather Line (336) 334-4000 or look on the UNCG home page (www.uncg.edu) for updates. I will also be posting notices regarding class scheduling on the course Blackboard site. If there is a delayed opening of campus that runs into our normal class time, please come to class **as soon as** the delay is over; our class meetings will run through the end of the regularly scheduled period

Syllabus

January 10: Introduction: “In my end is my beginning”: Britain and the Great War

January 17: “The little world of the trenches”: Everyday Life on the Western Front

Reading: Graves, Robert. *Goodbye to All That*. Chapters 10-25, pp. 67-278.
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.

January 24: “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.

January 31: “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.

Three Months to Due Date!

- February 3: **Paragraphs Due!** Send an electronic copy of your paragraph description of your proposed research topic to me by noon! Please have your paragraph in Microsoft Word, Rich Text Format, Adobe Acrobat, or plain text. (Note: This is a Friday.)
- February 7: Library Research Seminar led by Bob Gaines, Research Librarian. Details to be given in class.
- February 14: **Research proposals and preliminary bibliographies due!** In-class presentations and discussions of everybody's proposals.
- February 21: Individual meetings begin today!
- February 28: Individual meetings.

Two Months to Due Date!

- March 7: Spring Break! No Class!
- March 14: Individual meetings. **Outlines Due!**
- March 21: Individual meetings.
- March 28: Individual meetings.

One Month to Due Date!

- April 4: Individual meetings.
- April 7: **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 Adobe Acrobat.
- April 11: In-class, small-group critiques of rough drafts.
- April 18: Individual meetings.
- April 25: Last day of class! In-class group meeting to discuss turn-in procedures. Individual meetings as well, as needed.
- May 2: **Final drafts of papers due in my box in the History Department main office (221 McIver) by 5 p.m. No exceptions!**