First-Year Interest Group

FIGs give sets up to twenty first-year students with similar intellectual interests the opportunity to interact with each other in more than one course. Each FIG features a seminar on a specific topic. You have chosen to enroll in History 200: Historical Studies – World War I. This document is the syllabus for that course. The second offering is History 120: Europe and the Modern World, 1815 to the Present. Members of the FIG will have their own discussion section in History 120.

Through the FIG experience, students should come to see that learning entails not only acquisition of facts but also recognition of continuing arguments about disputed information and about the interpretation of events. No discipline, especially none dealing with human behavior, will routinely give definitive answers to questions that involve conflicts between competing values, such as the proper balance between personal freedom and collective societal interests. The educated person, however, is one who has learned how to use evidence to establish facts, to employ that knowledge to reduce interpretive disagreements to the extent possible, and to contribute to rational balancing among good but not completely compatible goals.

The FIGS initiative also exists to help students stave off feelings of anonymity that sometimes overtake newcomers to large institutions. Your professors hope that you will develop a sense of camaraderie that will be social as well as academic. With time, you will establish a range of friends; at the moment, your FIG classmates constitute a beginning – familiar faces seen on a regular basis several days each week.
In addition to the unique problems each human faces, first-year students at places like UW – Madison confront the common challenge of having to balance adult responsibility with adult freedom. You will have heavy workloads, but parents and teachers will not be closely supervising whether or not you carry them out properly or on time. Although few, if any, of you are old enough to drink legally, alcohol will be available – sometimes in dangerous amounts. Illegal drugs will also be present. The likelihood of romantic involvement will increase and, with it, opportunities for myriad risks. Discouragement will also be a possibility. Like you, the other members of the first-year class will also have been top students at their high schools; the competition will be intense, and former levels of effort may prove inadequate to obtain the results you desire.

Each of you will be a reference point for his or her FIG peers. Help one another establish high, but reasonable, expectations about what it means to be a responsible student. Protect each other from the temptation to lose focus in the looser atmosphere of college life. Share with one another your concerns with work load, study techniques, and the difficulties you are facing.

College should not feel like high school, and the FIG experience will serve, I hope, as a “rite of passage” helping you through that change. The volume of information covered in each course will rise dramatically. More important, education will become increasingly an active endeavor of discovering information rather than a passive one of receiving it. You will soon realize that knowing everything even about a limited topic is impossible. You will come to understand that some of what you hear in classes will soon be rendered outdated by new information. The most important thing you will learn should be how to continue learning – on your own, for the rest of your lives.

My goals are not only to teach you about the subject of the seminar but also to introduce you to skills that will help you in all your classes across your college years. History will be the medium used to convey them, but the abilities you acquire will often be non-specific to that discipline. The seminar sometimes may seem disturbingly different from what your high school experience taught you to expect in a history course. On those occasions, do not hesitate to ask for explanations and reasons.

**World War I**

The centenary or one hundredth anniversary of World War I should have great significance for those now coming of age. The conflict lasted from August 1914 until November 1918 and, until the outbreak of a second global struggle in 1939, writers referred to it as “The Great War.”
names are appropriate. The Great War was truly a worldwide phenomenon, with nations around the globe participating in it and fighting taking place in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia as well as on the high seas. The World War was truly a great war in terms of its costs and consequences. According to official estimates, it cost the lives of almost ten million soldiers and more than six million civilians. An influenza epidemic that began during its final phase and lasted until 1919 added another twenty to forty million dead to the toll.

Americans entered the Great War late, in 1917 and suffered little from it relative to other nations. For them, World War II is more memorable. For Europeans, World War I remains the event that brought the end of one era of human existence and the beginning of the “modern age.” Recognizing their insight is important for all.

World War I replaced Germany’s monarchy with a short-lived republic that the Nazis made the scapegoat for the nation’s defeat as they brought another catastrophe upon the globe. It helped trigger the communist revolution that turned Russia into the Soviet Union, whose eventual confrontation with the United States dominated the world stage in the second half of the twentieth century. The war initiated the decline of the imperial system under which much of the underdeveloped world served as colonies of European powers, and it brought changes to the political order of the Middle East that still affect the region’s stability. Machine guns, tanks, airplanes, submarines, and chemical weapons played major roles in warfare for the first time, and casualties among civilians as well as combatants soared while leaders altered strategy and tactics too slowly to match the innovations. In response to the horrors of the conflict, participants tried to create institutions that would make it “the war to end all wars.” So great were the social changes associated with the Great War that commentators spoke of a “Lost Generation.” The term, which applied directly to those in Europe who were young adults between 1914 and 1918, carried multiple meanings. It described literally the millions who had died and figuratively the even greater numbers attempting to survive in and adjust to a world where old values were in disarray and new ones competing for dominance.

Office Hours and Beyond

My office is 4135 Humanities; it is located at the northeast corner of the fourth floor. My scheduled office hours are on Tuesdays from 2:15 to 3:15 PM and Wednesdays from 3:15 to 4:15 PM. I am often available at other times as well, and you are free to stop by whenever I am present. I shall be ready to talk with you if unavoidable obligations are not pending.
E-mail is the best way to contact me outside of class. The address is tjarchde@wisc.edu. I monitor it throughout the day and usually in the evening as well. To make appointments for times other than the scheduled office hours, email me, see me at class, or call me at 263-1778 (office) or at 251-7264 (home). Both phones have answering machines; leave a message if necessary.

Courseware

Learn@UW is the principal on-line courseware used to support FIG Seminar on World War I. The URL is https://learnuw.wisc.edu. Your user name is your UW-Madison NetID, and your password is your UW-Madison NetID password. Once you have logged in, you will see a list of the courses you are taking that are using Learn@UW. If you do not see that list, click on the “>” to the right of the heading “2012 – Fall.” Our course is listed as “History 200: Historical Studies (001)/World War I.”

An icon labeled “Syllabus” appears near the top of the course home page. Clicking on it will lead you to a PDF (Portable Document Format) version of this syllabus. Further to the right is an icon labeled “E-mail T. Archdeacon, Prof.” Clicking on it will open a blank e-mail message addressed to me. The remainder of the home page describes topics and assignments for each week of the course. All required reading materials for the course, except the textbook, are online, and you can obtain those needed each week by clicking on the highlighted references.

Meetings

History 200: World War I will routinely meet two times a week, for 75-minute sessions beginning at 9:30 AM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The format for each meeting will depend on the task for the day. At the core of the course is Hew Strachan’s The First World War and a set of DVDs, the elements of which are based on the chapters of that book. In some meetings, the class will watch episodes from the DVDs; in others, the instructor will review material from the corresponding chapters as well as analyze and discuss supplemental readings about key aspects of World War I. Additional meetings will focus on matters relevant not only to the current course but also to others that you will take in college. Those skills will consist of written and oral presentation; methods of secondary and primary research; and the use of citations in college-level essays. Visits to the Memorial Library and to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum will substitute for two classroom sessions. The final meetings of the course will examine readings related to the aftermath of the war and allow students to report relevant topics of special inter-
est to them; several of the topics will make clear the continuing impact of World War I even on today’s world.

Requirements

Reading:

History is a book-oriented discipline, but the readings for the class, other than Strachan’s work, will usually be scholarly articles. Several reasons lay behind the choice. To use a bit of political/military jargon, books serve a “shock and awe” strategy, while articles and chapters are “surgical strikes.” Books attempt to obliterate a subject with full coverage, and articles attempt to provide insight into it by taking apart a particular aspect of it. Relying on articles enables us to examine core arguments about more topics, albeit at the cost of giving less thorough coverage to any single one of them. Articles are also the most important medium for carrying on scholarly debates for most social sciences as well as for the “hard” sciences. Learning how to analyze them is an important advantage for those of your majoring in such areas. Finally, taking advantage of UW’s access to online articles that are available online keeps the cost to students for course materials remarkably low.

Students should complete assigned readings before coming to class and participate actively in the discussions of them. **Whenever the class assignment includes more than one reading, I shall divide responsibility for coverage among the students.** Based on their readiness to participate knowledgeably in the discussion of the works, students will receive grades of good, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory) for each lesson. Their cumulative performances across the semester will make up 20 percent of their final grades.

Writing:

Perhaps the most important skill that students can acquire in this seminar is the ability to write a college-level essay. You will have two writing assignments designed to that end. The first is a short paper that will enable me to identify whatever problems each of you may have with producing written presentations. I plan closely to edit that paper; most of you will receive criticism far beyond any you have experienced to this point in your schooling. The exercise, however, is solely an opportunity to learn; it will have no effect on your grade. The second is a longer research paper, and you will receive support throughout the semester in connection with its creation. You will learn how to find and cite sources as well as how to identify and address a well-focused historical problem.
The first writing assignment asks you to read a small set of documents. Most of those involve statements produced by governments in defense of their individual decisions to declare war. You will then have to write a 750-word paper summarizing and commenting on the documents. The paper is due on 25 September.

The second writing assignment asks you to prepare a paper approximately ten pages long. In it, you will summarize what historians have said about a particular issue associated with World War I. Tracing the differences of opinion among those historians and examining how thinking about the problem has evolved is an important part of the exercise. In consultation with me, you may identify the issue you want to study, or you may select it from a list of topics that I intend to supply.

Creation and presentation of the second paper will take place four steps. By 16 October, each student will produce a 250-word statement identifying the subject of his or her paper. By 30 October, he or she will submit a bibliography of books, articles, and other relevant materials. The final draft of your paper is due by 4 December. Each of you will also make a brief oral report about his or her paper during a class meeting in the final weeks of the semester.

All written assignments should be placed in the Dropbox folder for it under the Learn@UW course page. We shall discuss how to find and use the Dropbox and its folders. We shall also learn how to use Google Docs for sharing materials. The processes for uploading your work to Learn@UW and to Google Docs are simple and straightforward.

Quizzes:

You will take two online quizzes during the semester. Both will consist of a combination of multiple-choice, true-false, ordering, and similar objective questions. The quizzes will be reasonably simple, and their purpose is primarily to assure me that you pay attention to the Strachan book and related materials. They will not cover the other readings for the course. You will complete the first quiz after finishing the first five chapters of Strachan and the second after completing the remaining five. The first quiz will be available by 23 October and the second by 27 November. You, however, will have flexibility regarding when you take each quiz.

Grading

Each student’s grade will reflect his or her performance on the combination of written and oral work as well as on his or her participation in the classroom. Participation refers to the student’s
attendance, readiness to answer questions about the readings, and overall contribution to discussions. The various components of the final grade have the following weights:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>750-word paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>250-word statement of problem</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-page paper</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Total Points</td>
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Schedule

4 September    Introduction

Lesson 1 will be an opportunity for the instructor and the students to meet each other. We shall also examine the syllabus, discuss assignments and expectations, and touch on the basics of Learn@UW, which is the software supporting the course.

6 September    Prelude to the Great War

Lesson 2 introduces the class to the leaders and the nations involved in World War I, which fundamentally changed or even destroyed their political and social worlds. The latter part of the class will involve a discussion of the Balkan region of Europe in the late nineteenth century. If time runs out, coverage of the material may carry over into the following class.

Assignment:
2. Familiarize yourself with a map of Europe as of 2012.
11 September          “To Arms”

“To Arms” is the first of ten episodes in the series *The First World War* produced by Channel 4, a public-service television broadcaster in Britain. Based on the Hew Strachan book assigned as the text for this course, the series was narrated and produced by Jonathan Lewis. Reading the corresponding chapter in Strachan’s book before viewing the episode and reviewing it afterwards will enhance your understanding of the material. We shall watch and discuss each of the episodes, and that point holds true for them as well.

Assignment:
Strachan, *The First World War*, chapter 1

13 September          The July Crisis

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary sparked a month of political, diplomatic, and military maneuvers that led Europe into war. Building on what students have viewed and read, Lesson 4 will further examine those developments. We shall also review two articles about subjects that distracted popular attention in France and England from the possibility of war during critical weeks in July.

Assignment:

18 September          Memorial Library Visit

This lesson will take place in Memorial Library, Room 321. Ms. Rebecca Payne will introduce students to basic sources about World War I and to several electronic tools for finding primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are documents or records that contain firsthand information or original data on a topic. Secondary sources are books, articles, and other media produced through subsequent study of an event or subject. The knowledge you gain will assist you in preparing not only the term paper for this course but also reports and essays throughout your college career.
20 September  “Under the Eagle”

Episode 2 of *The First World War* focuses on the initial months of the fighting. They set the stage for the next four years of trench warfare along the Western Front in Europe. Much of the popular memory of World War I is wrapped up in stories from those trenches. As later episodes will show, however, one of Strachan’s strengths is his willingness to widen the focus of his history to give proper recognition to the other theatres of conflict.

Assignment:
Strachan, *The First World War*, chapter 2

25 September  The Western Front Battles of 1914

Lesson 6 will review the major military actions on the Western Front during 1914. The failure of Germany’s Schlieffen Plan and of the Allies’ hopes to break through the lines of their opponents dashed expectations that the war would end quickly. The readings for the week examine confront popular beliefs about public moods at the start of the conflict and revisit the question of “war guilt.”

Assignment:
3. *Turn in 750-word paper by 11:59 PM.*

27 September  “Global War”

Episode 3 of *The First World War* demonstrates why the conflict the Europeans initially called the Great War was truly a worldwide conflict. It describes how the fighting reached Asia, Africa, and even the vicinity of South America. Strachan calls particular attention to the roles played by non-European soldiers both in their homelands and far from them.

Assignment:
Strachan, *The First World War*, chapter 3
“Jihad” is a word with which Westerners have become familiar over the past decade. Strachan intentionally uses it to make viewers and readers aware of World War I’s role in shaping the Middle East and its current conflicts. The decline of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of Turkish and Arab nationalisms, Zionism, and the geopolitical interests of England, France, Russia, and even Germany came together to make the Middle East a volatile environment. Episode 4 of The First World War begins our consideration of issues affecting the region during and after the conflict.

Assignment:
Strachan, The First World War, chapter 4

4 October The European Periphery

Lesson 10 will begin by reviewing whatever aspects of Strachan’s chapters 3 and 4 that the post-film discussions did not cover. It will then closely examine three articles about the Ottoman State, which increasingly became identified with the Turkish people. The first two articles investigate why the Turks entered the war and why they proved to be more effective fighters than the other nationalities, especially the English and French, expected.

Assignment:

9 October Review of the First Assignment

My intention is to use this meeting to discuss writing skills with the class. I shall call your attention to a number of common errors. At appropriate points, I shall use examples from the papers submitted for the first assignment but without revealing the identity of any individual student. Please take this lesson very seriously. With few exceptions, first-year students have
much to learn about writing. Do not be surprised — or overly upset — if you receive more criticism than you expected. Expectations are higher in college than in high school. Writing good papers requires hard work and a willingness to rewrite. Learning to write clearly and cogently, however, is perhaps the most important skill you can develop in college.

Assignment:
Familiarize yourself with the following aids:
1. The UW Writing Center, “The Writer’s Handbook”
2. Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)  http://owl.english/purdue.edu/owl

11 October       Citations

Lesson 12 will discuss the use of citations in the written presentation of research results. Scholars use footnotes or endnotes to cite sources of evidence within the body of the text. They use bibliographies, which appear at the end of the product, to make available to readers an alphabetized summary of the primary and secondary materials consulted.

Citations help researchers verify and build on each other’s efforts. Failure to cite is, at best, a disservice and, at worst, evidence of plagiarism, or the unethical appropriation of work done by others. Learning to distinguish between what must be cited and what need not be takes experience. Despite student fears, however, they are not at the risk of being accused of plagiarism except in cases of the most outrageous copying of existing work.

To help students organize their sources and even automate creation of their citations and bibliographies, the lesson will include an introduction to EndNote Web, a citation manager available at no cost through UW Libraries.

Assignment:
Familiarize yourself with EndNote Web:
http://library.wisc.edu/citation-managers/endnote-web/index.html#create-library

16 October       Visit to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Assemble before 9:30 AM at the museum, which is located at 30 West Mifflin Street (around the corner from the east end of State Street and across from the Capitol). Staff members Russ and
Jennifer Kollath will show us artifacts and archival materials from World War I. The museum focuses on the history of American wars in which men and women from Wisconsin have served.

Assignment:
1. Examine the Wisconsin Veterans Museum website:
   http://www.wisvetsmuseum.com/
2. Turn in 250-word paper identifying topic of research paper.

18 October

“Shackled to a Corpse”

Episode 5 of The First World War concentrates on military events along the Eastern Front. It includes coverage of the important German victory against the Russians at the Battle of Tannenberg in late summer 1914 and a series of other German successes in 1915. The “corpse” to which the title of the episode refers was Austria-Hungary whose record fighting the Russians, Serbs, and later the Italians was much less impressive.

Assignment:
Strachan, The First World War, chapter 5

23 October

The Western and Eastern Fronts in 1915

Lesson 15 will continue the treatment of the Eastern Front during 1915 and add to it an examination of the Western Front in the same year. The readings to be discussed consider the combatants’ search for strategies to break the deadlock that threatened to prolong the war. Many strategists on both sides still hoped that new fronts or fresh tactics would lead to breakthroughs against the enemy, and they proved willing to experiment with new weapons. They analyze differing concepts of “attrition” and “breakthrough” as well as the introduction of gas, submarines, and airplanes.

Assignment:
4. *First quiz available.*

25 October  “Breaking the Deadlock”

Episode 6 of *The First World War* examines two of the bloodiest battles of World War I, Verdun and the Somme. Both engagements, the former initiated by the Germans and the latter by the English and French, lasted for several months of 1916. Both likewise piled up enormous numbers of casualties without achieving their objectives. Much of our popular impression of World War I grows out of the stories of those battles.

Assignment:
Strachan, *The First World War*, chapter 6

30 October  The Battles of 1916

Lesson 17 reviews important points about Verdun, the Somme, and other battles of 1916. It also includes the course’s most extensive treatment of the phenomenon of “trench warfare.” The lesson addresses the strategy of “attrition” as well as the different meanings that term implied. The readings focus on the experiences of the soldiers engaged in the fighting and on the efforts of leaders to learn from their own mistakes.

Assignment:
3. *Turn in bibliography for research paper.*

1 November  “Blockade”

Episode 7 of *The First World War* examines the use of economic pressure as a tool of war. England used its naval power to block the delivery of goods to its opponents. Germany exploited the resources of conquered territory and used submarine warfare to impede its enemies’ war ef-
forts. In 1917 the Germans’ renewed commitment to submarine attacks not preceded by warnings helped bring the United States, formerly a neutral nation—at least nominally—into the war on the side of the English and French.

Assignment:
Strachan, *The First World War*, chapter 7

6 November The Yanks Are Coming

The Great War marked the full emergence of the United States as a world power. Entry into the war, however, was controversial and had ongoing political costs. The Americans’ timely intervention had an impact on the battlefield, although not so grand as some of them believed. The United States made its greatest contribution as a supplier of loans and materiel. By the end of the war, the nation transformed itself from a debtor country to a major creditor and economic giant.

Assignment:

8 November “Revolution”

Episode 8 of *The First World War* discusses reviews that battles of 1917 and the weariness of war that beset all the European combatant nations to some degree. In Russia, such feelings sparked a revolution that toppled the tsar. The English and French armies suffered mutinies, and Germans experienced naval mutinies as well as feared the possibility of revolution in their country as well.

Assignment:
Strachan, *The First World War*, chapter 8
13 November The War at Home

Lesson 21 finishes the coverage of the campaigns conducted in 1917. It also takes a look at the Russian Revolution. The readings examine the roots of resistance to the conduct of the war among the men on the front lines.

Assignment:

15 November “Germany’s Last Gamble”

Episode 9 of The First World War examines the beginning of the end of World War I. By March 1918, the Bolshevik government that had taken power in Russia signed a peace treaty with the Germans. That success increased German hopes that an attack in the West, before the Americans could make their presence felt, would bring them victory there. The Central Powers were soon in a race against time to achieve military success before their internal resources collapsed.

Assignment:
Strachan, The First World War, chapter 9

20 November “War without End”

Episode 10 of The First World War completes the story of Germany’s defeat in the Great War and examines the peace conference that followed in 1919. The title of the episode reflects Strachan’s belief that the destabilizing effects of the war continued long after the quiet settled again on the Western and Eastern Fronts and that the conditions of the peace set the stage for another conflict. The readings for the remainder of the semester will pursue those themes.

Assignment:
Strachan, The First World War, chapter 10
Lesson 25 completes the coverage of the final year of the war, 1918, during which American soldiers became involved in the fighting. It also treats the peace conference that took place in 1919. The Treaty of Versailles, which ended the war, was controversial, and historians have compared the pact unfavorably with the Fourteen Points that President Woodrow Wilson had proposed as the basis for a lasting peace. The treaty did establish a League of Nations, but Wilson was not able to win Senate acceptance of American membership of that body.

Assignment:
4. Second quiz available.

Lessons 26 to 30

The final lessons of the course serve two purposes. Students will offer approximately ten-minute reports on the essays they have written for the course. Fitting material into that amount of time is not easy; the presentations will require serious planning and practice to be effective. Students will also discuss a series of readings on aspects of World War I and its aftermath that the class has not yet considered.
29 November Disarmament and War Guilt

Assignment:

4 December Displaced Populations

Assignment:
4. 10-page paper due.

6 December “Shell-shock”

Assignment:
Assignment: