

History 350: The First World War and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Europe

Fall 2017

Blended class: online content + in-class discussion (Thursdays)

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The Great War has been linked to nearly every social, cultural, and political transformation that marked the short century that followed: mobilization and the experience of total war transformed the relations between governments and citizens, between men and women, and between social classes. Europeans experienced death on an unprecedented scale and came to terms with new forms of industrialized warfare, from the use of poison gas to modern practices of genocide. Europeans now learned to live with violence, both during as well as after the war, and found new ways to mourn or remember the dead.

This course will situate the upheaval of 1914-1918 within the larger framework of twentieth-century European history. Using a wide variety of sources – memoirs, essays, poems, literary and cinematic representations, among others – we will try to understand how historians have approached the cultural and political history of the war, and the problem of the relation between war and social transformation more broadly.

Course Mechanics:

The course consists of online content (instructor's podcasts, online readings, documentaries, and film), printed material (books and a course reader), as well as weekly in-class discussion sections. Material and assignments for each week are listed on each week's page on Canvas.

Students who are not familiar with Canvas are encouraged to take the online tutorial at <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/13> (this will be useful for other courses as well!).

Instructor's podcasts: To listen to the podcasts, click on the relevant page link on Canvas; there you will find: an embedded podcast, followed by an outline and relevant images. You will also find a link to a Word version of the outline, to facilitate note taking (for those who wish to print it out, or save the file to your computer and type your notes as you listen to the podcast).

It is best to listen to the podcasts in a dedicated study space, where you can concentrate, and make sure that you are not interrupted. The system of more shorter podcasts (rather fewer but longer ones) allows for a better engagement with the material. At the end of each podcast, take a quick break to summarize for yourself the main points of the argument. This class format requires self-discipline and a good system of note taking.

Online sources and film – all are hyperlinked on Canvas (on the relevant week's page).

Printed Materials:

Books: The following books are available at the bookstore. Cheap used copies are easily found online (any edition is fine). Copies of the books have been placed in the Library course reserve.

Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (1993).

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (1933)

Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of a Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (1999).

Recommended text: Michael Howard, *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2002, reissued 2007); an excellent concise description and analysis of the course of the war (copies have been placed in the College Library course reserve). You can also access an online digital copy through the library website.

Course packet: Available for purchase at the Copy Center, Room 6120 Social Science (1180 Observatory Drive) The relevant readings are marked by an '*' on the schedule of lectures. A copy of the reader has been placed in College Library course reserve.

What if I have a question or want to share my thoughts with the class? At the bottom of each module you will find a discussion thread titled "Discussions, Reaction, Questions." This is the place to ask questions about the material, related issues you came across during the week, or post your comments and thoughts. You can reply to an existing thread or start a new one. You are strongly encouraged to do both (online participation will go a long way towards your participation grade!)

Discussion Section:

For each week, discussion section takes place on Thursday; for example, discussion section for week 2 takes place on Thursday, September 14 (the relevant discussion section is listed for each week on the syllabus). You are required to attend all sections; more than two unaccounted absences will severely affect your grade. Five or more such absences will result in a failure to pass the entire class. Additional information will be given during the first meeting of your discussion section.

Requirements:

The course consists of online content and discussion sections. The success of both depends on your active participation. Read the assigned pages **before** class and bring them with you.

WWI Chronology Quiz: In section, 09/28.

First essay: 10/02; 5 pp.; based only on sources discussed in class.

Midterm Assignments: 10/23; 5 pages; encouraged to pair up with another student.

Second essay: 11/27; 5 pp.; based only on sources discussed in class.

Final research assignment: 12/13; 5 pp; requires additional research.

General instructions for written assignments:

* All written assignments should be submitted in **both** electronically on Canvas as well as a hard copy (either in section or in your TA's mailbox (check the instructions for each assignment).

* The required format is double space, 12-pt. font, 1." side margins throughout.

* Dates for all written assignment are final; as a rule of thumb, there will be no extensions. Plan ahead!

Group research project: Each group (3 students) will be required to conduct research on one of the topics below and present their findings in class (10-12 minutes). Creativity in terms of both format of presentation and content is greatly encouraged. Each group will need to submit its presentation material (slides, videos, etc.) electronically on Canvas before the presentation.

<i>Conscientious Objectors</i>	09/21
<i>Trench Life</i>	10/05
<i>Gas Warfare</i>	10/12
<i>The Indian Army</i>	10/26
<i>Australia and New Zealand</i>	11/02
<i>Veterans and Disabled Soldiers</i>	11/30

Weekly Mini-Assignment: for each week, at the bottom of the page, you will be required to answer, very briefly a question posed to you on Canvas (no more than a paragraph), or prepare for section in some other way. The purpose of this mini-assignment is to invite you to reflect on the new material and prepare for discussion section. While your answer is not graded, completing the assignment is mandatory and forms part of your participation grade. Only timely submissions will count towards your section grade. Your replies will also be used to assess student's understanding of the material as well as to prepare discussion in section. Your responses are due on the relevant Wednesday by 11:59PM.

Grade Structure:

Chronology Quiz:	3%
First paper	15%
Midterm Assignment	20%
Second paper	15%
Final Paper	20%
Group presentation (10-12 minutes)	12%
Section Grade:	15%

Extra credit 3%: proof of one appointment with the History Lab and a short paragraph reflecting on what came out of the meeting (for example – plans for revision of the paper, or further research into a particular question); see details under Assignments on Canvas. Only one extra credit (although more visits to the Lab are highly encouraged!)

-Please note that active, constant, and collegial participation, and genuine effort and engagement will be rewarded!

Week I Why WWI?**Online:**

- 1.1 Why World War I?
- 1.2 Course Mechanics

Read (recommended):

Michael Howard, *The First World War, a very short introduction*; or any other source; will give you a good background on the war and help you prepare for the short quiz on week III.

Introductions: Please go to “Introduce Yourself!” in week I and write a sentence or two about yourself so that your instructor and peers can get to know you (this is a required assignment). You can also upload your picture to Canvas.

Section: 09/07:

- Introduction to the course
- Assignment of group presentations

Week II To Arms

Online:

- 2.1 Europe before the war
- 2.2 Nations and empires
- 2.3 The “Spirit of 1914”
- 2.4 War culture and propaganda

Read:

- *Michael Howard, *The First World War* (Oxford, 2002), chapters 1-2, “Europe in 1914” and “The Coming of War,” pp. 1-26.
- *Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (1942), chapter 9, “The First Hours of the War of 1914,” pp. 214-237.
- *Filippo Marinetti, “The War as the Catharsis of Italian Society” (November 1914)
- *Nicoletta Gullace, *The Blood of our Sons: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (New York, 2004), chapter 1, “The Rape of Belgium and Wartime Imagination,” 17-33.
- The Bryce Committee Report on German Atrocities, Part II (b): “Treatment of Women and Children” (no more than a quick look online).

Section: 09/14

Week III Women and Men

Online:

- 3.1 War and gender: an introduction
- 3.2 Military mobilization: men
- 3.3 Military mobilization: women
- 3.4 A short introduction to the literary history of WWI

Read:

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (at least up to page 289).

Section: 09/21

- *Group Presentation: Conscientious Objectors*

Week IV Home Fronts

Online:

- 4.1 WWI and the making of the Home Front
- 4.2 European socialisms and WWI
- 4.3 “War Socialism” and its legacies
- 4.4 The new ecology of production

Read:

*Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 1998), 32-40.

* Belinda Davis, "Home Front: Food, Politics, and Women's Everyday Life during the First World War," in *Home/Front: The Military, War, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany*, 115-138 (2002), 115-138

Section: 09/28:

- WWI Chronology Quiz
- First short essay workshop

***First essay due Monday 10/02 11:59 PM ***

Week V Armageddon

Online:

5.1 The "cult of the offensive"

5.2 Industrialized warfare

5.3 Discipline and collapse

Read:

*War Poems: Siegfried Sassoon, "The Attack;" Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est"

Watch:

* Strachan on the Somme and Verdun (documentary)

* Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory* (1957)

Section: 10/05:

- *Group Presentation: Trench Life*

Week VI Faces of War

Online:

6.1 War in the Air

6.2 The Politics of Shellshock

Read:

Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (entire)

Peter Taylor Whiffen on the "Shot at Dawn" campaign.

Section: 10/12

- *Group Presentation: Gas Warfare*

Week VII Midterm Week

Section: 10/19

- Midterm workshop

**** Midterm assignments due Monday 10/23 11:59 PM ****

Week VIII Colonial Conscripts

Online:

7.1 Colonial Conscripts

Read:

Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of a Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Introduction, chapters 1-3, 5-7, and conclusion) (to be discussed on 03/13!).

Section 10/26

Group presentation: The Indian Army

Week IX: Global, Imperial, Total War

Online:

9.1.1 The War in Africa and the Middle East

9.1.2 War and the Imperial Project

9.2.1 Civilians in war: occupation, atrocities, refugees

9.2.2. War and genocide

10.1.1. Ireland before the war

10.1.2 Ireland's War

Read:

*Proclamation of the Irish Republic

*Yeats, "A Terrible Beauty is Born"

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Section: 11/02

- Discussion of final paper ideas and bibliography
- *Group Presentation: Australia and New Zealand*

Week X The Search for Stability

Online:

11.1 The failures of economic reconstruction

11.2 The failures of democracy

10.2.1 War and the Vote

10.2.2 Gender, citizenship, and postwar reconstruction

Watch:

Documentary on war and revolution

Read:

*Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel* (1929), pp. 315-319.

*Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*, pp.29-45.

*Hindenburg on the "Stab in the Back," 1918.

-Mary Louise Roberts, "Samson and Delilah Revisited: the Politics of Women's Fashion in 1920s France," *American Historical Review* 98:3 (1987): 657-684. [JSTOR]

Section: 11/09

Week XI The War on Film

Watch:

(1) Required:

- La Grande Illusion (1937)

(2) At least one of the following:

- Black and White in Color (1978)
- Blackadder (2 episodes + series final, at least)

(3) Refresh your memory:

- Paths of Glory (1957)

Section: 11/16

Week XII Thanksgiving Week

Thanksgiving Holiday: No Section 11/23

****Second paper due Monday 11/27 11:59 PM****

Week XIII:

Online:

13.1 The bodies and names of fallen soldiers

13.2 War Memorials

Read:

*Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (1995), chapter 1, "Homecomings: the return of the dead," and chapter 3, "Spiritualism and the "lost generation," pp 15-28 & 54-77.

Section: 11/30

- *Group Presentation: Veterans and disabled soldiers*

Week XIV WWI and the 20th Century

Online:

14.1 WWI – A Century Later

Section 12/07

- Discussion of paper outlines
- Course conclusions

Week XV Final Week

****Final paper due on the last day of classes, 12/13 11:59pm****