

University of Wisconsin - Madison

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

Fall 2023

Instructional Modality: Online asynchronous+ in person discussion section
4 credits

Designations and Attributes: Advanced Level; Humanities, Social Science Breadth; Counts as LAS credit; 50% Graduate Coursework Requirement; Requisites: Sophomore standing

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30PM-5:30PM

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.

Learning Outcomes:

The course is an advanced engagement with the fields of modern European history and war and society more broadly. By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and explain the major trajectories in twentieth-century European history and the ways in which they were affected by the First World War, and more broadly, engage critical questions that animate the field of war and society studies today.
- 2) Identify and critically engage with the major interpretive frameworks that historians have used in their study of the First World War, and of total war more broadly

- 3) Analyze primary sources from the history of the First World War, both written and visual, and evaluate or critique interpretations of these sources.
- 4) Produce original historical arguments, in both written and oral communication, and properly mobilize evidence to support these arguments.
- 5) Evaluate interpretive frameworks, in both the historiography as well as the popular cultural memory of the war, and situate the emergence of such frameworks within a broader history of representations of the war and contestations over such representations.

Course structure:

The course consists of **online content** and **in-person discussion section**:

Online content includes instructor's podcasts, online readings, documentaries, and film, and printed material (books and a course reader). 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 (scroll down the page to see them as you listen). 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). Close captioning is available by clicking on the 'cc' button.

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 a greater number of 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 readings: hyperlinked on Canvas.

Film: required movies are available on Library Reserve (DVD or VCR), and can easily be found on several commercial platforms, either for free with ads, or for a low fee (in some instances you can get a 7-day free trial subscription to the platform. We can no longer stream full-length movies through the library.

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); a digital copy is available through UW Memorial library.

Course packet: a course packet will be available for purchase at the L&S Copy Center in the Social Science Building, Sewell Hall Room 6120, 1180 Observatory Drive. All readings will also be available on Canvas if you prefer to print them at home. **You will need a paper copy for section.**

Discussion Section:

For each week, discussion section takes place on the following **Tuesday**; for example, discussion section for week 1 takes place on Tuesday 09/12, for week 2 on 09/17, and so on (the relevant discussion section is listed for each week on the syllabus as well as the Canvas page). You are required to complete all the weekly readings, podcasts, and assignments **before** section (bring the readings with you to class). Attendance is required in all discussion section meetings. Each student has a “free pass” for one unaccounted absence; two or more unaccounted and/or undocumented absences will severely affect your grade. Five or more such absences will result in a failure to pass the entire class. Your section grade reflects effort and engagement (merely showing up is not enough). Additional information will be given during the first meeting of your discussion section.

****Active engagement and participation in discussion section will be rewarded!****

Digital Instructional Tools:

Canvas: please go to [canvas.wisc.edu](https://it.wisc.edu/services/canvas/) and familiarize yourself with the platform; further information can be found on <https://it.wisc.edu/services/canvas/>

Zoom: for office hours, if you prefer to meet virtually; further information on <https://it.wisc.edu/services/web-conferencing-zoom/>

Assignments and grades:

Weekly Discussion Board (1% \times 10)	10%
Weekly short questions (1% \times 9)	9%
Chronology Quiz:	2%
Primary Source Module	2%
Peer Reviews (meet and report, 2% \times 2)	4%
First essay	12%
Midterm Assignment	12%
Film Analysis	12%
Group presentation (12 minutes)	10%
Post-presentation reflection	3%
Final Exam	12%
Section Participation Grade	12%

Weekly Discussion Board: The purpose of the discussion board is to invite you to reflect on the new material collectively and prepare for discussion section. There are 10 weekly discussion boards (not including the “introduce yourself” and “discussion board etiquette” threads). You are asked to post (at least once per discussion board) a short and thoughtful reflection; you are encouraged to use the opportunity to read what your classmates had written and respectfully engage with their thoughts while adding your own. The approximate length for a good answer is 100-150 words (it would be difficult to say anything meaningful in a shorter paragraph). The discussion boards are divided according to sections. Your responses are due on the relevant **Monday noon** (before the Tuesday section). Please read your peer’s reflections in advance of the discussion section.

You will receive the full credit (1 point) for the post if it:

- Offers a thoughtful and compelling argument while avoiding generalizations or platitudes
 - Discusses one or more concrete examples that support your argument
 - Directly engages with the course material, and cites or refers to at least one the weekly sources (author and page number or podcast title/film and minutes; there is no need to provide all facts of publication)
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- Discussion posts that meet all the criteria will earn you 1 point
 - Discussion posts that meet some of these criteria, but not all, will earn ½ point.
 - Discussion posts that do not meet any of these criteria or are too vague or abstract will not receive any points.

Please note: a good, lively, and engaged discussion on Canvas can do wonders to overall learning in this class. It is also a good place to earn some participation bonuses!

Weekly Question (text entry on Canvas): for each week, at the bottom of the page, you will be required to briefly answer a question related to the readings or the podcasts; your answer should be about 150-200 words long. These questions are designed to facilitate comprehension and retention of the material; it is best to complete them immediately after completing the required listening and readings for the week. There are 9 weeks with weekly questions, 1 point per question. Weekly questions are due **Tuesday 9:00AM**, before the relevant discussion section (to avoid confusion, you can simply complete both the discussion board and the weekly question by Monday night).

You will receive the full credit (1 point) for an answer if it :

- a. Provide a historically plausible interpretation or explanation while avoiding generalizations or platitudes
 - b. Discuss one or more concrete examples that support your argument
 - c. Explicitly reference and cite the readings, podcasts, or other sources that we use, including page numbers or minutes, at least once per question (citation format similar to discussion posts).
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- Responses that meet all criteria, will receive 1 point
 - Responses that meet only one or two criteria, will receive ½ point.
 - Responses that do not meet any of these criteria, are too vague or abstract, or are left blank, will receive no points.

Primary source tutorial: complete by 09/19 9:00AM.

WWI Chronology Quiz: In section, 10/03.

First essay: 10/10 9:00AM; 3-4 pages; based only on sources discussed in class.

Midterm Assignment: due **Thursday, 10/26, 11:59PM**; 3 pages; you will be presented with a new scholarly argument and asked to engage with it. You are strongly encouraged (but not required) to pair up with another student and submit jointly.

Film analysis: 11/28; 3 pages; based only on sources discussed in class.

Group research project: Each group (2-3 students) will be required to conduct research on one of the topics below and present their findings in class (12 minutes). Creativity is greatly encouraged. Each group will need to submit its presentation material (such as slides) electronically on Canvas before the presentation. You will be able to sign up for a presentation on the first discussion section. With the exception of unusual circumstances, the presenters are graded as a group. Take a look at the grading rubric on Canvas for further details. The topics for group presentations are:

<i>Conscientious Objectors and/or Pacifism</i>	09/26
<i>Trench Warfare</i>	10/10
<i>Gas Warfare</i>	10/17
<i>The Indian Army</i>	10/31
<i>Australia and New Zealand at War</i>	11/07
<i>Veterans and Disabled Soldiers</i>	12/05

Post-presentation Reflection: short (1-2 minutes) video upload, due one week after your presentation. Check the relevant assignment page on Canvas for further details.

Peer Reviews: Before the First Essay Assignment and Film Review students are required to meet (in pairs, virtually or in-person, depending on choice and circumstance) and review each other's drafts. You will need to report the time and date of the meeting, and very briefly (about 2 sentences) discuss what emerged from the review of each of the drafts.

Final Exam: online, asynchronous; 2 essay questions, 120 minutes; open books; no proctoring required; must be completed (in one sitting) before Friday, 12/15, 7:05PM (our final exam time set by the Registrar).

General instructions for written assignments:

Instructions for all written assignments, as well as grading rubrics, will be posted on Canvas. With the exception of the group presentations (and reflections), no additional independent research or reading is required for any of the assignments. TurnItIn will be activated for some assignment (note that papers are then saved in the repository).

Late Assignments: Given the fast-pace nature of this class timely submission is essential. With the exception of a documented emergency or other crisis for which it was impossible to plan in advance, *a half point will be deducted in the case of a late submission, and another half point every twenty-four hours thereafter.* For example, a paper that was submitted 26 hours late and was graded 9.5/10 will be graded at 8.5/10 after the late-submission penalty. Please do plan ahead and carefully follow the assignment schedule on the syllabus or on Canvas.

All work submitted should be your own (please see the plagiarism statement below).

The easiest way to avoid plagiarism is to **never** present work written by another person or by AI software as your own. The course plagiarism policy prohibits the use of AI software. The purpose of this class, after all, is to think together about war and history, learn from one another, and develop our own voice as critical thinkers. It would be difficult to achieve any of these goals, or enjoy the journey, by deferring to others.

Extra credits (1-3 points): 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. Each reported appointment will earn you one point, up to **three** extra credits allowed (although more visits to the Lab are highly encouraged!)

Final Grade Scale:

A	94-100
AB	88 to <94
B	84 to <88
BC	78 to <84
C	68 to <78
D	61 to <68
F	0 to <61

Communication in class:

- 1) **Virtual Office:** Accessed through Canvas (a permanently “pinned” discussion), the Virtual Office is intended for all questions, comments, and thoughts that are not directly related to the film discussion board and are not a private matter. If you have any questions about the readings, about the podcasts, about assignments, about course mechanics – this is the place to ask it rather than email – so that other students can benefit. Be sure to check the Virtual Office regularly and set your discussion board notifications (through the Account setting on the left) to at least daily alerts.
- 2) **Announcements:** Instructor’s communication to the class will be done by using the Announcements features on Canvas. Please **turn your announcement notification on** by going to your Account (upper left side) and then press “notifications.” You should set your alerts so that you receive announcements right away. Do it now!
- 3) **Discussion Threads:** The online discussion threads are central to learning in this class. Check and engage regularly.

- 4) **Email:** As mentioned above, share questions and thoughts about the course, the material, and the assignments on the Virtual Office. For private and individual concerns (such as setting up alternative office hours) it is best to contact your instructor by email or private message on Canvas.
- 5) **Office Hours:** Wednesday **1:15PM-3:15PM**, or by appointment, in person or on Zoom (your choice). You are encouraged to set appointments with your instructor to discuss the class at any time throughout the semester.

Credit Hours and Workload

The credit standard for this 4-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor - student meeting times [group discussion of 50 minutes per week], dedicated online time, reading, writing, completing individual and group assignments, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Regular and Substantive Student-Instructor Interaction:

This course requires regular and substantive student-instructor interaction: regular interaction through discussion section, assignments and discussions; feedback on written and other assignments; and scheduled office hours.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Students often experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and personal well-being. These may include mental health concerns, substance misuse, sexual or relationship violence, family circumstances, campus climate, financial matters, among others. Students are encouraged to learn about and utilize UW-Madison's mental health services and/or other resources as needed. Visit uhs.wisc.edu or call University Health Services at (608) 265-5600 to learn more.

Academic Policies

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>

Accommodations to students with disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional

accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Academic Calendar and Religious Observances

Establishment of the academic calendar for the University of Wisconsin-Madison falls within the authority of the faculty as set forth in [Faculty Policies and Procedures](#). Construction of the academic calendar is subject to various rules and laws prescribed by the Board of Regents, the Faculty Senate, State of Wisconsin and the federal government. For additional dates and deadlines for students, see the [Office of the Registrar's pages](#). Students are responsible for notifying instructors within the first two weeks of classes about any need for flexibility due to [religious observances](#).

Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in courses may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, students are not authorized to record lectures without permission unless they are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability who has an approved accommodation that includes recording. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities, with the exception of sharing copies of personal notes as a notetaker through the McBurney Disability Resource Center. Students are otherwise prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

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Course Schedule

I Why WWI?

Online:

- 1.1 Why World War I?
- 1.2 Course Mechanics

Recommended readings:

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.

Do:

Introduce yourself (online): on the Introduce Yourself discussion thread on Canvas.

Section: 09/12:

- Introductions
- Assignment of group presentations

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).

Do:

Discussion Board Etiquette: read what your peers suggest and participate at least once.

Complete the Primary Source Tutorial

Week 2 Discussion board + weekly question

Section: 09/19

- Primary Source workshop

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).

Do:

Discussion board + weekly question

Section: 09/26

- *Group Presentation: Conscientious Objectors and/or Pacifism*

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

Do:

Discussion board + weekly question

Section: 10/03

- WWI Chronology Quiz
- First essay workshop

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:

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

* Strachan on the Somme and Verdun (documentary)

Do:

Discussion board + weekly question

First Essay Peer Review (10/06)

Section: 10/10

- *Group Presentation: Trench Warfare*

*****First essay due Tuesday 10/10 9:00AM *****

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.

Do:

Discussion board + weekly question

Section: 10/17

- *Group Presentation: Gas Warfare*

VII Midterm Assignment Week

Section: 10/24

- Midterm workshop

***** Midterm assignments due Thursday 10/26 11:59 PM *****

VIII Colonial Conscripts

Online:

8.1 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)

Do:

Discussion board + weekly question

Section 10/31

- *Group presentation: The Indian Army*

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:

*Michelle Tusan, "Genocide, Famine, and Refugees on Film: Humanitarianism and the First World War," *Past and Present* 237 (2017).

*Proclamation of the Irish Republic

*Yeats, "A Terrible Beauty is Born"

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Do:

Discussion board + weekly question

Section: 11/07

- *Group Presentation: Australia and New Zealand at War*

X The War on Film (1)

Watch:

(1) Required:

- *La Grande Illusion* (1937)

(2) At least one of the following:

- *Black and White in Color* (1978)
- *Blackadder* (first and last episodes, at least)

(3) Refresh your memory:

- *Paths of Glory* (1957)

Do:

Discussion board + Weekly Question

Section: 11/14

Week XI Russia's First World War

Listen:

11.1 *Russia's Great War*

Watch:

Documentary on war and revolution

Read:

TBD

Section: 11/21

- Film Analysis Workshop

Week XII The Search for Stability

Online:

12.1 The failures of economic reconstruction

12.2 The failures of democracy

12.2.1 War and the Vote

12.2.2 Gender, citizenship, and postwar reconstruction

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]

Do:

Film Analysis Peer Review (by 11/22 11:59PM)

Discussion board + weekly question

Section: 11/28

****Film Analysis due 11/28 9:00AM****

XIII: Cultures of Commemoration

Online:

12.1 The bodies and names of fallen soldiers

12.2 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.

Do:

Discussion board + weekly question

Section: 12/05

- *Group Presentation: Veterans and disabled soldiers*

XIV WWI and the 20th Century

Online:

13.1 Total War and the Twentieth Century
- WWI and its legacies, Oxford University Debate.

Section 12/12

- Final Exam workshop

*****Final Exam (online) due Friday 12/15, 7:05PM*****