

Dr. Harry A. Butowsky
History 388 Section 004
Innovation Hall 204

George Mason University
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Course Title: The History of World War I

Course Description: The Great War of 1914 to 1918, also known as World War I, in its scope, its violence and, above all, in its totality, ushered in a century of global war. Never before had a war absorbed so many combatants. Never before had so many nations been involved in the fighting. Never before had the slaughter been so comprehensive and indiscriminate. Never before had the participants staked so much for so little. World War I changed the face of modern Europe and the World. The war paved the way for the Russian Revolution, World War II and the global turmoil that would consume the world for the rest of the century. It is the purpose of this course to examine the History of World War I to determine the significance and meaning of the conflict for this generation of Americans.

Grading System:

All students in this course are required to take both the mid-term and final examination. The final exam will be given on May 6, 2010.

Paper

I will offer all students the opportunity to do a research assignment for credit. Students interested in this option must talk to me and submit a research proposal by February 11, 2010.

Additional Information: Lectures at the beginning of each class will provide background information and put the reading in context. General discussion will follow for the remainder of the time. Slides and other visual materials will be shown during class. Please note that I will ask questions so be sure to complete all required readings before coming to class. I ask questions in class and the lectures will be more meaningful to you when you come to class prepared.

Required books for this course are Martin Gilbert, The First World War: A Complete History, Barbara Tuchman, The Guns of August; Alistair Horne, The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916; John Reed, Ten Days that Shook the World and Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front

Lectures

1. Introduction to the course. Discussion of the sites, locations and events associated with History of World War I.

Readings:

Gilbert, 1

2. The Background to World War I

Readings:

Gilbert, 2

Tuchman, Guns of August

3. The Opening Struggles, Failure of the Schlieffen Plan, The War in the East and the Opening of the Naval War

Readings:

Gilbert, 3, 4, 5, 6

Tuchman, Guns of August

4. Widening the War: Turkey, Italy and the United States

Readings:

Gilbert, 7, 8

Movie Assignment: Gallipoli (1981); Lawrence of Arabia (See the 1988 reedit of the original film)

5. Verdun and the Somme

Readings:

Gilbert, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Alistair Horns: The Price of Glory-Verdun 1916

Movie Assignment: Paths of Glory (1957)

6. The Naval War-The Submarine War and the Battle of Jutland, The Air War

Movie Assignment: The Blue Max (1966), The Dawn Patrol (1930, 1938), Wings (1927)

7. The Breaking Point in the West and the East, The Collapse of Russia and the Russian Revolution

Readings:

Gilbert, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

John Reed: Ten Days that Changed the World

Movie Assignment: Dr. Zhivago (1965), Reds (1981), Nicholas and Alexandra (1971)

8. The Central Powers on the verge of victory and American intervention

Readings:

Gilbert, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

Movie Assignment: The Big Parade (1925), Sergeant York (1941)

9. The Last Year-1918

Readings:

Gilbert, 27, 28

Erich Maria Remarque: All Quiet on the Western Front

Movie Assignment: All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)

10. The Versailles Conference, The Post War World, Europe After the War, the Rise of Fascism and the beginnings of World War II.