

Wilfrid Laurier University

History 360

The Great War: 1914-18

Winter 2010

Instructor: Dr. Robert K. Hanks
Lecture Room: P1017
Time: TR 11:30 am - 12:50 pm

Contact Information:

Office: 4-127
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:00 (or by appointment on TR)
E-mail: rhanks@wlu.ca or rob.k.hanks@gmail.com

Course description:

This course deals with many of the major issues arising in and around World War I. The course will cover the following topics: causes of the war, changing war aims, tactics and strategy, battlefield experience, home fronts, wartime diplomacy, the break-up of empires, the emergence of new states, and peacemaking. Assignments will include a book review, an essay and a final exam. {IR/G} {S}

Getting in Touch:

Students are encouraged to consult with me during office hours, in chat sessions after class, or through e-mail. Please clearly identify all e-mail messages relating to this course with the course title and your name (i.e. "HI 348, Jones"). This will make it easier for me to give your e-mail priority attention. In general, I answer e-mail within 24 hours, and often sooner. Because of the threat posed by computer viruses, do not send unsolicited attachments.

Special needs:

Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact Laurier's Accessible Learning Office for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus. This course will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students working with Accessible Learning.

Course Texts:

Roshwald, Aviel and Richard Stites. *European Culture in the Great War. The Arts, entertainment and propaganda 1914-1918*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Stevenson, David. *Cataclysm. The First World War as Political Tragedy*. New York; Basic Books, 2004.

These books can be purchased at Words Worth Books, 100 King Street South, Waterloo. Copies can also be obtained through Amazon.com, Amazon.ca, Alibris.com, and Abebooks.com. A copy of each book will also be placed on reserve in the Library.

Additional article readings from JSTOR will be assigned.

Useful Books on Reserve:

There is a wealth of primary and secondary sources on the First World War. The following have been selected because they provide useful, comprehensive background information and because they will provide a useful starting point for deeper research.

Banks, Arthur. *A Military Atlas of the First World War*. London; Heinemann Educational Books, 1975. Call Number: G 1037.B3 1975. This is the best available military atlas of the First World War, providing many useful charts and diagrams on different aspects of the war.

Beckett, I. F. W. (Ian Frederick William). *The Great War, 1914-1918*. Harlow, England; New York; Longman, 2001. Call number: D521 .B376 2001. A very useful recent survey of the war. Insightful, succinct and highly acclaimed.

Millett, Allan Reed and Williamson Murray. *Military Effectiveness, volume I*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987-88. Call Number: U42 .M55. A uniquely useful collection of essays on the military strengths and weaknesses of each major participant in the war. There are particularly strong essays on Russia and Germany.

Palmer, Svetlana and Sarah Wallis (Eds.) *Intimate Voices from the First World War*. New York: W. Morrow, 2003. Call Number: D640.A2 I58 2003. A new collection of primary source documents by participants in the war. Looks promising.

Strachan, Hew. *The First World War, vol. one*. Oxford; New York; Oxford University Press, 2001. Call Number: D521 .S86 2001. The first volume of

Professor Strachan's attempt to write the definitive history of the First World War. Longer, more detailed and less wieldy than Beckett's book.

Tucker, Spencer. *The European powers in the First World War: an encyclopedia*. New York; Garland, 1996. Call Number: D 510.E97. The best available encyclopedia of the First World War (although it does not cover the American involvement because of an editorial decision by the publisher). This omission will be superceded by Professor Tucker's forthcoming *World War I. A Student Encyclopedia*, which will become available sometime this year.

Document resources:

The university has recently acquired this collection of documents on microfilm. This is a great resource that we are lucky to have. Students are encouraged to use it to enrich their research.

The First World War, a documentary record. Series one, European War, 1914-1919, the War Reserve Collection (WRA-WRE) from Cambridge University Library. Edited by J. M. Winter. Laurier Library WLU Microforms-Books - 3rd Floor (D505 .F5 Ser.1).

- Part 1: The Card Catalogue Index and Manuscript Listings. 7 reels
- Part 2: Trench Journals, Personal narratives R Reminiscences. 20 reels
- Part 3: Allied Propaganda of the First World War. 20 reels
- Part 4: German propaganda of the First World War. 20 reels
- Part 5: The Royal Army Medical Corps, Red Cross and other Auxiliary Services. 25 reels
- Part 6: The War at Sea and the War in the Air. 22 reels
- Part 7: Economics, Finance and Socialism. 15 reels
- Part 8: Russian Affairs, Bolshevism and the Eastern Front: 10 reels
- Part 9: Peace, Versailles and the League of Nations: 20 reels.

Useful Websites:

The history of the First World War is well served by a wide variety of excellent websites. These include sites maintained by universities, national archives, reliable media outlets and dedicated amateur historians. Students are encouraged to use websites, but should keep in mind that good research (i.e. B level work) also requires use of traditional library resources (i.e. books, articles) A university student should be comfortable with every medium of information.

<http://gwpda.org/>

The World War I Document Archive

<http://www.worldwar1.com/tgws/>

The Great War Society (USA)

<http://www.tgws.fsnet.co.uk/>
The Great War Society (UK)

<http://www.fylde.demon.co.uk/welcome.htm>
Hellfire Corner

<http://www.pitt.edu/~pugachev/greatwar/ww1.html>
Great War Website

<http://www.greatwar.nl/>
The Heritage of the Great War

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/firstworldwar/index-e.html>
Library and Archives of Canada: Canada and the First World War

http://www.historial.org/us/home_b.htm
Historial de la Grande Guerre. The Historiale is one of the most important French museums devoted to the First World War. Its website is in French, German and English.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone/>
BBC: Wars and Conflict – World War One

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/about.htm>
First World War.Com. The War To End all Wars

Lecture Schedule

1) Tues., Jan. 5 ----- Introduction

2) Thurs., Jan. 7 ----- The Military Background

3) Tues., Jan. 12 ----- The Diplomatic Background

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 3-36.

4) Thurs., Jan. 14 ----- Cultural Expectations and War Plans

5) Tues., Jan. 19 ----- Three Assassinations in 1914

6) Thurs., Jan. 21 ----- Class Debate: The Origins of the War
7) Tues., Jan. 26 ----- 1914: The War of Movement

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 37-80.

8) Thurs., Jan. 28 ----- 1915: Trench Warfare and its Consequences

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 81-144; David French. "The Meaning of Attrition, 1914-

1916," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 407. (Apr., 1988), pp. 385-405. An in-depth examination of one of the most misunderstood strategic concepts of the war.

9) Tues., Feb. 2 ----- Life and Death in the Trenches

10) Thurs., Feb. 4 ----- The War at Sea

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 199-214.

11) Tues., Feb. 9 ----- The War in Africa and Asia

12) Thurs., Feb. 11 ----- 1916: Deadlock and Attrition

Reading Week: Feb 15-19

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 161-98, 215-42.

13) Tues., Feb 23 ----- The Home Fronts: France and Great Britain

Readings: Roshwald, Chapters 12, 14.

14) Thurs., Feb. 25 ----- The Home Fronts: Austria-Hungary and Germany

Readings: Roshwald, Chapters 2, 5, 6, 7.

15) Tues., March 2 ----- The Home Fronts: Serbia and Belgium

Readings: Roshwald, Chapters 8, 11. **16) Thurs., March 4** -----

1917: The Nivelle Offensive and Vimy Ridge

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 243-47; Ian M. Brown. "Not Glamorous, But Effective: The Canadian Corps and the Set-Piece Attack, 1917-1918," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Jul., 1994), pp. 421-444.

17) Tues., March 9 ----- Two Revolutions: Russia and the USA

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 247-62; Roshwald, Chapter 1.

18) Thurs., March 11----- 1917: From Passchendaele to Palestine

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 263- 302; Roshwald, Chapter 13.

Optional Reading: Eitan Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-18," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 36, No. 1. (Jan., 2001), pp. 87-109.

19) Tues., March 16 ----- The Impact of the War on Women

Readings: Margaret H. Darrow, "French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 101, No. 1. (Feb., 1996), pp. 80-106

20) Thurs., March 18 ----- Espionage during the War

Readings: Nicholas Hiley, "Counter-Espionage and Security in Great Britain during the First World War," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 101, No. 400. (Jul., 1986), pp. 635-670.

21) Tues., March 23 ----- 1918: The German Spring Offensives

Readings: "8 January, 1918: President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points," available at: <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1918/14points.html>; Stevenson, pp. 303-42.

22) Thurs., March 25 ---- 1918: Why Was Germany Defeated?

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 343- 408; Tim Travers. "The Evolution of British Strategy and Tactics on the Western Front in 1918: GHQ, Manpower, and Technology," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Apr., 1990), pp. 173-200.

23) Tues., March 30 ----- Legacies and Consequences.

Readings: Stevenson, pp. 409-88.

24) Thurs., April 1 ----- Review Discussion.

Assignments

Mark Breakdown:In-Class Participation----- 5 % (Debate: January 21)

Term Paper Proposal----- 10% (Due: Tuesday, Feb. 2)

Book Review----- 20% (Due: Tuesday, Feb. 23)Term Paper-----
----- 35% (Due: Tuesday, March. 23)

Final----- 30% (TBA)

Assignment Descriptions:**Class participation:** Students may earn class participation points by actively discussing readings in class; by taking part in general discussions; and by attending office hours to discuss their ideas for their essay proposal and other written assignments. Shy students who do not wish to talk in class can instead send short e-mail think pieces in response to lectures or discussions. Although 5 % may not seem like much, it may make the difference between a B or a B+, or an A – and an A.

Term Paper Proposal:

A 300-500 word proposal for your essay topic, plus an **ANNOTATED** bibliography of at least 10 sources. This assignment will be graded on the quality of the proposal, the sources selected, and the quality of annotation. Annotations should identify and discuss the main argument or theme of each work, and

should show evidence that you have read and thought about the source. Avoid bland generic sentences such as: "This source will help me understand my topic."

Your bibliography should include at least: one monograph, one article from an academic journal (including J-Store and Project Muse), one internet source, and if possible, one substantial primary source (a major speech, memoir, diary, collection of letters, a collection of documents, etc.). No more than 30% of your sources should be web-based. The best internet sources are links to primary sources that are not available in our library system. The worst internet sources are generic articles from on-line encyclopedias (i.e. Wikipedia, etc.). Students are encouraged to spend as much time as possible doing research in the library system. It is impossible to write an adequate paper for this course based solely on web-based sources.

You may pick a topic from the suggestions (outlined below) or develop your own topic. All topics are subject to final approval from the instructor. It is important to do a good job on your essay proposal. Experience has shown: the better your proposal, the better your final paper.

Memoir/Diary Review:

The First World War produced thousands of published memoirs and diaries, whose authors ranged from ordinary soldiers to generals, and from ordinary citizens on the home front to famous politicians. The source that you pick should pertain to your paper topic. Your review should consist of 1800-3000 words. (In the case of a multi-volume memoirs, you can focus on a particular theme or subsection.)

Here are some sample questions to guide your comparison: What are the principle themes of the memoir? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What is the worldview of the author? Is the author trying to defend his or her reputation in the court of posterity? To what extent are they successful?

Term Paper:

A ten to twelve page (2700-3600 words) research paper on your chosen essay topic. A first class paper will use at least 15 sources.

Grace Periods:

All assignments are officially due in class on Tuesdays. There will then be a two day grace period until class on the next Thursday. (i.e. Feb. 4, Feb. 25, March 25). Any assignments handed in during the grace period will not be penalized. Any assignments handed in after class after the relevant Thursday will be assessed a late penalty.

Late Penalties:

There will be a blanket 5% deduction for your first late assignment. The second late assignment will be docked 10%. The third late assignment will be docked 15%. Extensions beyond the grace period will only be granted for medical reasons or for extraordinary emergencies. No paper will be accepted without prior approval of the essay proposal. Late penalties will double if they are handed in after the next due date. (For example, if an essay proposal is handed in after the book review due date, its late penalty will be doubled). No assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes unless an extension has been granted.

How to Hand In Assignments:

Assignments may be dropped off in class, during office hours, or in my mailbox on the fourth floor of the Woods building. For the purpose of assessing penalties, the cutoff time will be Thursday, 5:20 pm. In other words, I will check my mailbox immediately after my last class on the relevant date. Any assignments not in my hands at that point will be assessed a late penalty unless an extension has been granted.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious offence. Please see the Undergraduate Calendar for a complete definition of plagiarism. "Wilfrid Laurier University uses software that can check for plagiarism. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism."

Possible Paper Topics:

Assess the role of a prominent political figure during the First World War. How competent was the wartime leadership of the individual in question? Possibilities include: Herbert Asquith; David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill; Raymond Poincaré; Aristide Briand, Paul Painlevé; Georges Clemenceau; Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg; Sam Hughes; Robert Borden; Theodore Roosevelt; Henry Cabot Lodge; Woodrow Wilson; Hiram Johnson; Alexander Kerensky; Benedict XV; Giovanni Giolitti; Benito Mussolini; Sidney Sonnino; Vittorio Emanuele Orlando; Josef Pilsudski; Edward Benes; Thomas Masaryk; Enver Pasha; Eleftherios Venizelos. NB: In certain cases, such as Lloyd George, it may be necessary to focus on a specific problem or issue.

Assess the role of a monarch during the First World War. Possibilities include: George V; Kaiser Wilhelm II; Tsar Nicholas II; Tsarina Alexandra; King Ferdinand of Romania; Queen Marie of Romania; King Albert of Belgium.

Assess the role of a prominent statesman or diplomat during the First World War. You may wish to focus on the outbreak of the war. Possibilities include: Count Leopold Berchtold; Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg; Prince Karl Max Lichnowsky; H.H. Asquith; Lord Edward Grey; Winston Churchill; Jan Smuts;; Baron Giorgio Sidney Sonnino; General Enver Pasha (Minister of War); Tsar

Nicholas II; Sergyei Dmitrievich Sazonov; Theodor Roosevelt; Woodrow Wilson.

Assess the role of a prominent ambassador or diplomat during the war. What factors shaped the effectiveness of the ambassador? Possibilities include: Lord Bertie; Viscount Esher; Sir Mark Sykes; Maurice Paléologue; Prince Karl Max Lichnowsky; Count von Bernsdorff; Colonel House; General Tasker H. Bliss; Walter Hines Page; Herbert Hoover; James W. Gerard.

Assess the military career of a prominent general or admiral from the First World War. What were his strengths and weaknesses; their blunders and successes? How well did they cope with the demands of modern warfare? Possibilities include: Sir John French; Sir Douglas Haig; Sir Edmund Allenby; Sir Arthur Currie; T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia); Joseph Joffre; Maurice Sarrail; Ferdinand Foch; Robert Nivelle; Philippe Pétain; John J. Pershing; Helmut von Moltke (the younger); Erich von Falkenhayn; von Hindenburg and Ludendorff; Conrad von Hotzendorf; Luigi Cadorna; Mustapha Kemal; Grand Duke Nicholas; Tsar Nicholas II; Alexei Brusilov; Graf von Spee; Sir David Beatty; etc...). **Some of these individuals have such complex careers that it might be a good idea to focus on one battle of campaign.** Assess the role of a prominent general with his civilian government. What factors aided or hindered civil-military relations? Possibilities include: Sir John French; Sir Douglas Haig; Sir Henry Wilson; Joseph Joffre; Maurice Sarrail; Ferdinand Foch; Erich von Falkenhayn; Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff; Conrad von Hotzendorf; Luigi Cadorna.

Assess the reasons for the success, failure or stalemate of a particular campaign or battle. Possibilities include: The Schlieffen Plan; the First Battle of the Marne; The First Battle of Ypres; The Battle of Tannenberg; The Austrian campaign of 1914; Gallipoli; Salonika; Verdun; The Somme; Vimy Ridge; Passchendaele; Cambrai; The German Spring Offensives of 1918; the Battle of Amiens; The Canal du Nord; The American offensive in the Meuse-Argonne (1918), The East African Campaign; The British conquest of Iraq; the Palestinian Campaign. Naval battles include: The Falkland Islands; Gallipoli; Jutland; the U-Boat Campaign in the Atlantic; the British submarine campaign in the Baltic, etc ...). As a variant of the above question, you may evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a particular formation (i.e. the ANZACs, the Canadian Corps, the American Expeditionary Force). Assess the impact of a new technology upon the evolution of tactics and strategy. Possibilities include: chemical weapons; machine gun tactics; artillery tactics; the rise of the fighter plane; the effectiveness of bombers; the effectiveness of tanks; the failure of the Zeppelins; the impact of the submarine. What role did a prominent combatant play in the war? What impact did the war have on that individual? Possibilities include: J.R.R. Tolkien, Adolph Hitler; Siegfried Sassoon; Robert Owen; Ernest Jünger; Sergeant Alvin York; Manfred von Richtofen; Billy Bishop.

Assess the role of a prominent woman in the First World War. Possibilities include: Rosa Luxemburg; Gertrude Bell; Mata Hari; Tsarina Alexandra of

Russia; Gertrude Bell; Queen Marie of Romania; Margot Asquith; Frances Stevenson; the Pankhurst family; Vera Brittain; Maria Botchkareva; Princess Evelyn Blucher.

Assess the role of a prominent pacifist during the war. Possibilities include: Sylvia Pankhurst; Bertrand Russell; Lord Lansdowne; Henry Ford.

Assess the First World War's impact on one of the following movements (focusing on one or two countries):

- the suffrage movement
- the labor movement
- the pacifism movement
- the prohibition movement

Specific questions:

Examine the origins of the war by focusing on the role of a particular country in the outbreak of the First World War.

The First World War required the full mobilization of industry, yet in practice, this was often difficult to achieve. Examine industrial mobilization by focusing on one or two countries. Account for their successes and failures.

Account for the Xmas truces of 1914. Why did soldiers who had been trying their best to kill each other suddenly participate in unofficial truces in the winter of 1914? What was the significance of this development?

Why did British military intelligence perform so poorly on the western front?

What impact did the war have upon the mentality of the average soldier? How did soldiers cope with the horrors of trench warfare?

Assess the role of cavalry during the First World War? Was this arm purely obsolete or did it possess limited effectiveness in certain circumstances? Did the cavalry arm justify the resources invested in it? What impact did the war have upon medicine?

Explain the development and results of the shell shock controversy.

Compare the roles of German Ambassador Count von Bernsdorff and American Ambassador James Gerard in the controversy over unrestricted submarine warfare.

Assess the role of bombing aircraft during the war? What advances were made? What were the doctrinal controversies? What impact did bombing operations have on the course of the war?

Why was morale better in the Royal Navy than in the High Seas Fleet? Why did the High Seas Fleet mutiny while the Royal Navy did not?

Was the food shortage in Germany caused by the Allied blockade or by poor administration?

Why did Britain promulgate the Balfour Declaration?

Why did Berlin Ontario change its name to Kitchener? Why was this such a controversial local issue?

Patriots or “traitors”? What role did the Social Democratic Party play in Germany during the First World War?

Why did anti-semitism grow in Germany during the First World War?

Compare anti-semitism in Russia and Germany during the First World War?

What were French civilian attitudes toward the foreign armies on French soil? Compare French attitudes towards the German army and the British Expeditionary Force.

“Frogs” versus “Beefsteaks”: Why were relations between the French and British armies so difficult on the western front?

From enemies to allies. Explain why the majority of South African Boers supported Britain during the First World War.

Why was Allied propaganda in the United States before 1917 more effective than German propaganda?

Leader of the desert revolt or glorified liaison officer? What was the role of T.E. Lawrence in the Arab uprising?

Why did the Tsarist government collapse?

Why did the Russia’s provisional government fail?

Why did Austria-Hungary fail to survive the First World War?

Why did the Young Turks initiate the Armenian Genocide? Who was primarily responsible for the genocide? What impact did the genocide have on the Ottoman Empire?

Why was Kemal Ataturk able to successfully defy the victorious powers after the war and revive Turkey?

Write an historiographic paper. Examine three different interpretations of the cultural meaning of the First World War. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? Possible authors include: Paul Fussell; George Mosse;

Modris Eksteins; Samuel Hynes; Annette Becker and Stephane Audoin-Rousseau; Peter Buitenhuis; Jonathan Vance. **Students are encouraged to design their own paper topics within these general parameters, subject to approval. Read widely and be creative.**