

HISTORY 225(W)

**THE FIRST WORLD WAR
A Centennial History**

Fall 2014

“My subject is War, and the pity of War”
--Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)



This course is an introduction to the history of Europe during the First World War. Our focus, I should say at the outset, is not exclusively, nor even mainly military. What Europeans called (and still call) the Great War was an event of momentous cultural, political, economic, and psychological consequence: the tragic opening act of the twentieth century in all its varied aspects. As we go over the details of the war itself, therefore, we will also attend carefully throughout the semester to the effects of the war on European society and consciousness. The syllabus reflects a personal and publishers' bias toward Western European history, but not to the complete exclusion of the equally traumatic and portentous war in the East and worldwide.

The course meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 9:40 for lecture-discussions and some documentary films. Every other week, we break out into smaller seminar groups as the syllabus indicates. I expect students to come to both lectures and seminars regularly and wakefully and to fulfill all other course requirements as defined below. If you will not be in class, please let me know why in advance. And everyone should feel free to seek me out in my office at any time in the semester for any reason (note my office hours, e-mail address, phone numbers, etc., below). My door is open.

The following books are required and available for purchase at the River Campus Bookstore (or on Amazon, etc). They are also on two-hour reserve in Rush Rhees Library

Peter Englund, *The Beauty and the Sorrow: An Intimate History of the First World War*
 Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*
 Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*
 Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That*
 Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*
 Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

There will be additional reading from time to time in the form of short handouts or Blackboard postings as we go along. Please **pay attention** to all course announcements!

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Course Requirements (225):

1. Regular class attendance and participation (10%)
2. Five (out of a possible seven) short (1-2 page) written responses to the assigned reading, due on the appropriate day of discussion (10%)
3. Two 5 to 6 page (1500 to 1800 word) papers, due on **Oct. 16** and **Dec. 4** (30% each)
4. One take-home final essay, due at 5 pm on **Friday, December 19** (20%)

Course Requirements: (225W):

1. Regular class attendance and participation (10%)
2. Five (out of a possible seven) short (1-2 page) written responses to the assigned reading, due on the appropriate day of discussion (10%)
3. One 15 to 20 page (5000-6000-word) primary research paper in three stages: proposal, due Oct. 16, rough draft, due Nov. 25, and final draft, due Dec. 11 (60%)
4. One take-home final essay, due at 5 pm on **Friday, December 19** (20%)

Internet Resources:

The centenary of the outbreak of the First World War has spawned an enormous amount of digital activity. The number of web sites devoted to the war is huge and growing rapidly. A few sites that may be particularly helpful to students in this course are:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/> (British National Archives)

<http://www.1914.org> (Imperial War Museum)

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/index.htm>

<http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/military/ww1.html> (US Nat'l Archives)

<http://www.bbc.com/history/0/ww1/> (BBC)

<http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en> (Federal Republic of Germany)

<http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one> (British Library)

That said, I still believe in historical research the old-fashioned way (that is, in libraries, archives, and printed books), and I encourage all students writing research papers to confer with Alan Unsworth (aunsworth@library.rochester.edu), the History subject librarian in Rush Rhees Library, about their topics as early as possible.

Academic Honesty: All students in this class will be expected to be familiar with and abide by the principles of academic honesty as laid down by the College of Arts and Science's academic honesty policy. For the full articulation of this policy (including the consequences of its violation), see <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/>

Class Schedule

This is a *tentative* class schedule as of the start of the semester. I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule and to tweak the reading assignments as needed as we go along. The only way to stay on top of the schedule is to come to class regularly and to pay attention to any e-mails and announcements coming from me.

Sept. 2 Introduction: Europe and the Great War

Sept. 4 Europe in the Nineteenth Century

Sept. 9 A Sunday in Sarajevo

Sept. 11 Discussion Sections – Response paper due

Reading for Sept. 11: Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, pp. 1-94.

Sept. 16 The Guns of August

Sept. 18 The Mood of August

Sept. 23 Silent Night: The Christmas Truce of 1914

Sept. 24 Film Night (optional): *Joyeux Noël* (2005)—time & place TBA

Sept. 25 Discussion Sections – Response paper due

Reading for Sept. 25: Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 94-135; Peter Englund, *The Beauty and the Sorrow: An Intimate History of the First World War*, pp. 1-72 (1914).

Sept. 30 Total War

Oct. 2 Gallipoli

Oct. 7 The Price of Glory

Oct. 9 Discussion Sections – Response paper due

Reading for Oct 9: Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 139-191; Englund, *The Beauty and the Sorrow*, pp. 73-314 (1915 & 1916).

Oct. 14 No Class—Fall Break

Oct. 16 Behind the Lines

FIRST PAPER DUE (225) PAPER PROPOSALS DUE (225W)

Oct. 21 Women and the Great War

Oct. 22 Film Night (optional): *A Very Long Engagement* (2004)

Oct. 23 Discussion Sections – Response paper due

Reading for Oct. 23: Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (pages TBA).

Oct. 28 Propaganda and Public Opinion

Oct. 30 The Art of War

Nov. 4 The Poetry of War

Nov. 5 Discussion Sections – Response paper due

Reading for Nov. 3: Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 192-238; Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That* (pages TBA).

Nov. 11 Ten Days that Shook the World

Nov. 13 Over Here: The United States and the Great War

Nov. 18 The Revolt in the Desert

Nov. 19 Film Night (optional): *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)

Nov. 20 Discussion Sections – Response paper due

Reading for Nov. 20: England, *The Beauty and the Sorrow*, pp. 315-419 (1917).

Nov. 25 War, Revolution, and Peace

ROUGH DRAFTS DUE (225W)

Nov. 27 No class—Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 2 The Peace to End all Peace

Dec. 4 War and Remembrance

SECOND PAPER DUE (225)

Dec. 9 The Lost Generation

Dec. 10 Film Night (optional): *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930)

Dec. 11 Discussion Sections – Response paper due

FINAL DRAFTS DUE (225W)

Reading for Dec. 11: Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*; Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Friday, December 19: Take-home final essay due (225 & 225W)

