

Instructor: Dr. I.A. Isherwood
Office Hours: M-Th 11AM-12PM
Office: 205 Weidensall
Email: iisherwo@gettysburg.edu

History 219: The Great War

One hundred years ago Europe's Great Powers went to war. The resulting conflict forever altered the nations that fed its human destruction. The First World War's impact went far beyond the battlefields of Europe and its legacy is deeply felt to the present day. This course examines the First World War's history, cultural legacy, and memory from 1914 to the present. It does so through both traditional study of the causes, conduct, and consequences of the war, but also, through investigating the Great War as a cultural experience. Students will learn not only the history of the war itself, but how the war changed people, how it challenged and altered notions of national identity, how its legacies changed over time. Through detailed study of the war's history, its cultural production, and its variable memory, students will understand not only the history of a conflict important in world history, but gain lenses for understanding war that go far beyond the years 1914-1918.

Learning Goals Specific to this Course

- ❖ To pique interest in First World War Studies
- ❖ To develop your understanding of First World War history and its relevance through study and reflection
- ❖ To contextualize source materials and use them in the construction of written and verbal arguments
- ❖ To address interpretative models of learning about history in theory and practice
- ❖ To learn to write critically, read skeptically, and critique discriminatively

Learning Goals for History Classes at Gettysburg College

- ❖ Develop critical reading skills
- ❖ Develop discussion skills, especially through classroom-based work
- ❖ Distinguish between primary and secondary sources through research work and through classroom work
- ❖ Develop writing and communication skills through construction and revision of paper

Curriculum Requirements

- ❖ Multiple Inquires – Humanities goal. History Major Distribution Requirement– this course counts as a European history course.

The Fourth Hour

The fourth credit hour for this class will be devoted to student research and writing. Students will be expected to do substantial reading each week. Students will be assessed in through quizzes, exams, and their research essays.

Required Texts

In addition to these books there will be numerous articles that will be required reading on days in which they are assigned.

Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel*

Emily Mahew, *Wounded*

Michael Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War*

Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished*

Films

37 Days (2014)

The Somme: From Defeat to Victory (2006)

1917 (2019)

Class Conduct and Flexibility:

This semester will pose challenges to our community. As such, this course has been designed so that we can (1) meet in person and (2) pivot towards remote learning if necessary. What this means, in practical terms, is that in the event that we will need to conduct class remotely, we will do so through a format of recorded lectures, class forum participation, and Zoom discussion sections, the latter if practical. In the event in which either I become sick or am in quarantine, we will still follow the syllabus, and I will upload relevant course materials (power-points, discussion questions, etc) to the moodle. In the event that you are in quarantine or ill, I will be recording our class lectures and posting the power-points to moodle. In the event that our classroom environment becomes either unsafe or untenable due to the virus - or as a result of the precautions necessary to maintain safety - then I will begin the process of moving to remote learning, with detailed instructions to follow. Thank you for your patience and flexibility in advance in what is a difficult time for teaching and learning.

Grade Distribution:

Participation: 20%

Philosophy: Participation is defined as the work you do for and within class. It is essential to this course and I expect that you attend class eager for discussion. The relationship between instructor and student is symbiotic: I show up, on time,

prepared, and ready to teach. I expect that you will be responsible, do the reading, and engage with the course material. Your ability to demonstrate that you are doing the work for the day is essential for you to receive credit for participation.

Assessment:

Your participation grade will be evaluated through your engagement with online forum posts and your in-class engagement.¹ Participation will be assessed on a graduated scale (A-F), akin to your paper grades, at the end of the semester. I am interested both that you participate in each class, which is expected, but also in the quality of that participation, which will be assessed throughout the term.

Here are the standards for in-class participation:

- A: Contributes to every discussion and consistently at a high level.
- B: Contributes to most class discussions at a high level.
- C: Occasionally contributes to discussions but does so on point.
- D: Rarely contributes to discussions or does so consistently off topic.
- F: Doesn't contribute to discussions or show engagement with the class.

Here are the standards for moodle forum posts:

- A: Never misses a post and clearly demonstrates relevant sophistication and depth of knowledge of the topic at hand.
- B: Contributes to nearly all forum posts and at a high level.
- C: Contributes to most forum posts, but is on point and engaged.
- D: Contributes to only some forum posts, but does so with relevance.
- F: Does not contribute to forum posts.

There will be no 'make ups' for forum posts, but if you are sick or have a family emergency, this will be taken into account in your end-of-semester participation grade calculation.

Attendance: Chronic absenteeism (missing more than three classes) without context will result in a reduction of your overall grade. This does not apply to students who have a documented health issue, a family issue, or who have extenuating circumstances

Causes Essay: 15%

Your short essay will be a 'case study' on the causes of the First World War. You may approach the subject from one of three perspectives: 1) pick a country and write a detailed assessment of their response to the July Crisis; 2) discuss, in detail, one of the systemic causes of the war (militarism, nationalism, etc.); 3) analyze the subject of war guilt and build your own argument for causation. Papers should be 4-5 pages in length and use 5+ quality historical sources. A good place to begin your research is through the International Encyclopedia of the First World War's "[Pre-war](#)" page.

Mid-term Exam 15%

You will have a take home mid-term essay exam.

Final Exam 25%

You will have a take home final exam.

Research Paper Proposal 5%

You are required to write a research paper proposal of 2-3 paragraphs in length outlining your chosen topic. Included should be a bibliography of sources to date. You will be assessed according to 1) the development of your topic to date; 2) your research question and how it has been formed; 3) the quality of your sources.

Research Paper 20%

General Traits: You are required to write a research paper of 2000-2500 words in length (pp. 8-10). You will have significant freedom on your paper topic, but it must pertain to the First World War era and use both primary and secondary sources. Sources should be of academic quality – peer reviewed texts and/or primary source documents – and demonstrate tangible historical research at the college level. Your topic should be narrow enough that you can discuss your research with a degree of originality.

Late Essays: Essays will be marked late if they are not virtually handed-in at the start of class the day that they are due. Essays will decrease a full grade for each day that they are late. So a B essay becomes a C essay after one day of being late. Please turn your papers in on time to avoid this unfortunate penalty. Extensions are only given in rare instances and at least 24 hours in advance of a paper deadline.

Academic Standards: Your Written Work

Historical writing is a combination of narration and analysis. Excellent historical

writing demonstrates style and factual accuracy as well as advanced critical thinking on a particular subject. As such, in this class, your assessment will be based on your ability to write essays. Both your papers and examination answers will require you to articulate and argue a particular point with both style and substance.

First and foremost, essays must answer the question given. Your leeway is in the approach you take. Strive for uniqueness and sophistication in your approach. Think and write carefully. Under no circumstances should you fill up your essays with generalities, diatribes, or cant. Papers should be both well organized and demonstrate depth of learning. Language should be clear and free of abstractions. Cluttered writing indicates cluttered thinking and shoddy editing. The best historians are those who can come up with complex ideas and communicate them well without losing the substance of the idea itself. We should all strive for clarity in our writing.

Essays will be assessed according to the following criteria: 1) your ability to answer the question/address your themes; 2) your ability to discuss or analyze the question/theme; 3) your sources and their use; 4) your writing style, grammar, and punctuation; 5) the organization of the paper and its flow. Excellent essays (A) are superior according to each of these five criteria. Good essays (B) are those that have the characteristics of excellence, but also, shortcomings in one or more areas. Satisfactory essays (C) are those that still have complete themes and proper sources, but have more significant shortcomings. Weak essays (D) demonstrate poor research and writing, generally.

Academic Policies:

- ❖ This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion. Students will receive advance notification of any changes if they are made.
- ❖ Plagiarism: All work in this class, as well as your professional dealings with me, are covered by the college Honor Code. Ignorance is not an excuse for infractions. If you have questions regarding sources and their use, please come to me before handing in an assignment. If suspected of plagiarism your work will be unquestionably handed over to the Honor Commission for judgment.
- ❖ Please do not expect an instant response to e-mail; however, know that I will try to answer all inquiries within 24 hours, excluding weekends. I make every attempt to make myself available if you need consultation so please take advantage of my virtual office hours.
- ❖ Please turn off your phones and place them in your bags upon entry into the classroom. Texting in class is inappropriate and impolite.

- ❖ Please do not leave class while it is in session unless in an emergency. It is distracting and inconsiderate to walk out of lecture.
- ❖ If you have an educational accommodation, please meet with me at the start of the semester.

Schedule

Note: readings/films are expected to be completed on the day assigned. Texts from the International Encyclopedia of the First World War are hyperlinked. Works on the moodle are listed as such.

Date	Topic	Assignment
8/18	Great (War) Expectations	Syllabus
8/20	The Nineteenth Century World	Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig, Chapter 2 from <i>Decisions for War</i> (moodle); Paul Reynolds, "The Man Who Predicted This," <i>History Today</i> (May 1, 2013).
8/25	Conceptualizing Causation	Samuel Williamson, The Way to War ; Boris Barth, Imperialism; John Paul Newman, Nationalism ; Gunther Kronenbitter, Alliance System 1914 ; Eric Brose, Arms Race prior to 1914 .
8/27	Understanding Causation	Annika Mombauer, "The July Crisis," William Mulligan, "The Historiography of the Origins of the First World War," ; Film <i>37 Days</i> .
9/1	1914: East and West	Neiberg, Chs. 1-2; Matthew Seligmann, Pre-war Military Planning ; Jonathan Krause, "Western Front," (Intro and 1914 section only).
9/3	1914: Experienced	Ernst Jünger, <i>Storm of Steel</i> , Chs. 1-4; John Lucy from <i>There's a Devil in the Drum</i> (Moodle).
9/15	1915: Stalemate	Neiberg Ch 3; Krause, "The Western Front" (1915 section);

		Jünger, Chapter 5; Vanda Wilcox, " The Italian Front " (Sections 1-3).
9/17	1915: Anatomy of Stalemate. The Battle of Loos 1915.	Short Paper Due: Causes. Read the Jack Peirs letters from September 1915 ; The War Diary of the 8th Battalion, The Queen's ; The Battle of Loos – Interactive Map .
9/22	1915: The East	Neiberg, Chapter 4; Gokhan Cetinsaya, Kut al-Amara .
9/24	Atrocities, Genocide, and War Crimes.	Jean Quataert, International Law and the Laws of War ; Ronald Suny, The Armenian Genocide ; Alan Kramer, Atrocities ; Jens Thiel and Christian Westerhoff, Forced Labor ; Peter Gatrell, Refugees .
9/29	The War at Sea	Neiberg, Chapter 5 (123-139 only); Eric Osborne, Naval Warfare ; Michael Epkenhans, Jutland ; Alan Kramer, Naval Blockade .
10/1	Mid-Term Exam Due	No Class
10/6	1916: Attrition	Neiberg, Ch. 6; Robert Foley, " The Battle of Verdun and German Strategy in 1916 ", " The Battle of Verdun and German Operational Art ", and " The Battle of Verdun and German Offensive Tactics of 1916 " all from <i>Defense in Depth</i> (blog).
10/8	1916: Attrition	Neiberg, Ch. 7. Documentary: <i>The Somme: From Defeat to Victory</i> ; Letters of Jack Peirs , August-September 1916; Jünger, <i>Storm of Steel</i> , Chapters 6-9 (pp. 67-130)
10/13	Wounded	Research Paper Proposals Due. Emily Mahew, <i>Wounded</i> , Ch. 1-7
10/15	Wounded	Mahew, <i>Wounded</i> , Finish.
10/20	1917: Exhaustion	Neiberg, Ch. 9-10
10/22	1917: Experience. Tactical demonstration.	Jünger, 10-15. War Diary of the 8 th Queen's July , August , September 1917.
10/27	Everyday Lives	Tammy Proctor, " The Everyday as Involved in War ," IEFWW; Martha

		Hanna, “War Letters: Communication between Front and Home Front,” IEFWW; Susan Grayzel, “Women’s Mobilization for War,”
10/29	Winning and Losing: The East	Neiberg, Ch. 8; Gerwarth, <i>The Vanquished</i> , Part I; Vanda Wilcox, “The Italian Front” (sections 4-5).
11/3	Winning and Losing: The Middle East	Neiberg, Ch 5 (140-149); Alia Bakri, Revolutions and Rebellions: The Arab Revolt ; BBC In Our Time (podcast), “Lawrence of Arabia”
11/5	Winning and Losing: The Western Front	Neiberg, Ch. 12-13; Alexander Watson, “German Spring Offensives” IEFWW; Nicholas Lloyd, “Hundred Days Offensive” IEFWW; Jünger, <i>Storm of Steel</i> , Finish; Terms of the Armistice
11/10	Peace?	The Paris Peace Conference: The Treaty of Versailles ; Alan Sharp, “The Paris Peace Conference and its Consequences”
11/12	Peace?	Research Papers Due. Gerwarth, Part II.
11/17	Peace	Gerwarth, Part III
11/19	Legacies	Howard Phillips, “Influenza Pandemic” ; Dietmar Rothermund, “Post-war Economies” ; Nadine Rossol, “Commemoration (Germany)” ; Remi Dalisson and Elise Julien, “Bereavement and Mourning (France)” .
12/1	Memory	Remembering the Great War. David Reynolds, “Civilization” from <i>The Long Shadow</i> (Moodle); Jay Winter, “Historiography 1918-Today”
12/3	The Great War and the Centenary	Film – 1917; Lucy Noakes, “Centenary (United Kingdom)” ; Ross Wilson, “Centenary (USA)” ; Chris Kempshall, “Centenary (Computer Games)”

Final	12/7	By 5PM.
-------	------	---------