

University of Western Ontario  
Department of History  
Fall 2013

**The History of Aviation**  
2814F

*Instructor:* Dr. Jeffery Vacante  
*Email:* jvacant2@uwo.ca  
*Office hours:* Tues. 1:30-3:30pm  
*in Lawson Hall 2218*

*Lectures:* Weds. 1:30-3:30pm  
*in UCC 41*

This course explores the idea of flight from the end of the eighteenth century to the present day. When men began to experiment with flight they were seen as visionaries but also as somewhat eccentric. For many of those who supported these experiments, balloons and then flying machines represented great scientific and technological achievement as well as the hope that science might bring the world together in peace. But the early promise of flight would be shattered when airplanes were shown to be efficient weapons in war. The early dreams of flight persisted during the middle decades of the twentieth century, which helped to propel the creation of a commercial aviation industry. The decades following the Second World War was the so-called golden age of aviation, a time when flight became more comfortable, safer, and more accessible to a new generation of people with both the means and the desire to travel as a form of leisure. The deregulation of the skies beginning in the seventies, however, would ultimately spell the end of the carriers that had done so much to sell the public on the romance of flight. Flying would become more accessible to the masses but it would also become a rather prosaic means of transportation.

This course focuses on the key events and personalities in the history of aviation, including the Wright Brothers, Charles Lindbergh, Howard Hughes, and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. We will also consider how some of the past century's major literary figures, including H.G. Wells, Norman Mailer, Tom Wolfe, have understood flight. As well, we will trace the development of a commercial aviation industry including the rise of such iconic companies as Pan-Am, TWA, Canadian Airways, and Trans Canada Airlines. This course, in the end, is concerned with the idea of flight in the western imagination. It is not concerned with the technical aspects of flight or of the airplane.

In this course students will, in addition to learning the broad outline of the history of aviation, sharpen their ability to read and think critically, develop their analytical skills, and learn to organize and present their thoughts and research in formal academic essays. Throughout the course, students will also demonstrate critical engagement with the course readings.

**Texts:**

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Wind, Sand and Stars*
- Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff*

These books, which are available at the university bookstore, will be supplemented by articles and other readings to be made available on the course website.

**Mark Breakdown:**

Midterm	20%
First Essay	25%
Second Essay	25%
Final Exam	30%

**Requirements:** In the **first review** (5-7 pages) students are to review Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's book, *Wind, Sand, and Stars*. Published in 1939, this book is a classic of aviation literature by one of the most celebrated early flyers. The book is part memoir, part adventure story, and part meditation on aviation and humanity. It remains a popular text today for those wishing to understand the meaning of aviation during the early decades of the twentieth century. In this review, you are to do much more than simply summarize the contents of the book. You are to provide some sense of what Saint-Exupéry is trying to say about aviation and man's place in the world. The review is to be well-written, provide sound analysis, follow proper scholarly conventions (including citation style) and include a cover page. This review is **due October 9**. An identical copy of the essay must be submitted to **turnitin** through the course web page. Essays submitted after the due date will be subject to a late penalty of five percent the first day and one percent for every day thereafter (including weekends).

In the **second review** (5-7 pages) students are to review Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*. Wolfe is an American novelist who has written some of the great works of American fiction. His most significant works, including *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, have captured particular cultural moments in the American imagination and have come to define those eras. But Wolfe is also part of a group of writers that transformed the practice of journalism in the sixties and seventies with what came to be called the New Journalism, which employed first-person narrative techniques and novelistic approaches to non-fiction writing. When *The Right Stuff* was released in 1979, it was not without controversy. In this work of non-fiction, which grew out of a series of articles written in *Rolling Stone* magazine, Wolfe examines the space program, and in particular, the tension between test pilots and the astronauts. This tension is presented within a larger frame that considers the manner in which the astronauts were constructed in a way that served the needs of a country in desperate need of heroes. This book is a study of heroism as well as how the pilot and aviator came to terms with the changing technology that fundamentally transformed the act of flying in the space age. Your task in this review is to do much more than simply summarize the contents of the book. You are to discuss the larger points that Wolfe is grappling with in this book. The review is to be well-written, provide sound analysis, follow proper scholarly conventions (including citation style) and include a cover page. This review is **due November 13**. An identical copy of the essay must be submitted to **turnitin** through the course web page. Essays submitted after the due date will be subject to a late penalty of five percent the first day and one percent for every day thereafter (including weekends).

*All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and <http://www.turnitin.com>.*

Students will also write a **midterm exam** on **October 23** and a **final exam** during the December exam period.

**Lecture Schedule:**

**Sept. 11:** Introduction

**Sept. 18:** The Idea of Flight

- Goldstein, *The Flying Machine*, 14-62.

**Sept. 25:** The First Flights

- Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder*, 125-162.

**Oct. 2:** The Pioneers of Flight

- Tom Crouch, *Wings*, 19-118.

**Oct. 9:** The Dream of Flight

- Joseph Corn, *The Winged Gospel*, 3-70.
- John W. Ward, "The Meaning of Lindbergh's Flight," *American Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1958): 3-16.
- Modris Eksteins, "Night Dancer," in *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Toronto 1989): 241-274.

**Oct. 16:** The Nightmare of Flight

- Robert Wohl, *The Spectacle of Flight*, 213-249.
- Peter Fritzsche, "Machine Dreams: Airmindedness and the Reinvention of Germany," *American Historical Review* 98, no. 3 (June 1993): 685-709.

**Oct. 23: Midterm Exam**

**Oct. 30:** Bush Pilots

- Ronald A. Keith, *Bush Pilot with a Briefcase*, 25-30, 43-66, 78-126.

**Nov. 6:** Commercial Aviation

- Shirley Render, *Double Cross*, 39-67, 228-252
- Ronald A. Keith, *Bush Pilot with a Briefcase*, 226-78, 289-315

**Nov. 13:** Commercial Aviation II

- Robert Gandt, *Skygods: The Fall of Pan Am* (New York 1995): 3-43.

**Nov. 20:** The Jet Age

- Ronald A. Keith, *Bush Pilot with a Briefcase*, 279-88.

**Nov. 27:** The Space Age

- Charles Lindbergh, "A Letter from Lindbergh," *Life* (29 August 1969).

**Dec. 4:** Conclusion

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

*Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.*

## THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

### PLAGIARISM

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

#### MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to [https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical\\_accommodations\\_link\\_for\\_OOR.pdf](https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf) to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. Please go to <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf> to download the necessary form. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation is warranted. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once a decision has been made about accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for term tests, assignments, and exams.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or [rdashfo@uwo.ca](mailto:rdashfo@uwo.ca)