

Western University
Department of History
2014-2015

History 4709E - The First World War: A Revolutionary Experience

Jonathan F. Vance
661-2111 ext. 84974
jvance@uwo.ca

Tuesday 9:30 - 11:30 AM

This research-intensive course provides an examination of selected aspects of the First World War, including its origins and aftermath, in a variety of combatant nations. Among the themes to be discussed are the alliance system, the experience of battle, conflicts on the home front, social factors, strategic and tactical decision-making, and the memory of the war. Students will have an opportunity to debate the most contentious historiographical issues surrounding the war and use a wide range of primary sources, both in discussions and assignments.

Texts:

Students should purchase the following texts, which will be used throughout the year:

Hew Strachan, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (2000)
(any edition)

George Walter, *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry* (2006)

Additional readings are available on the course website.

Assignments:

Poetry analysis (28 October 2014)	10%
Document analysis (2 December 2014)	20%
Essay proposal (20 January 2015)	10%
Seminar presentation and participation	20%
Major research essay (7 April 2015)	40%

Poetry analysis

Students will write a short analysis, roughly 500 words in length, of a poem from George Walter's *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry* (you may *not* write about a poem that appears on the syllabus for the first seven weeks of the course). It should not be a literary analysis, but rather should focus on the poem as an historical document, discussing the author and the context of the work and identifying any terms or proper names that are significant. Although some research beyond the course materials may be required, the assignment is intended to evaluate your writing skills – grading will be based primarily on the clarity of expression. A sample poetry analysis can be found on the course website.

Document analysis

You will be given an original document from the First World War to research and analyze. You should approach it as an exercise in historical detection – how much can the document tell you about the time, and about the people and events to which it refers? Your analysis should be at least seven pages in length. Because of the nature of the assignment, it does not need a thesis statement, like a conventional research paper, nor does it need to be presented in prose

paragraphs – point form or bulleted sections is acceptable. It should include reference notes and a bibliography. The evaluation will be based largely on the depth and quality of the research – asking the right questions rather than getting all of the answers. A sample analysis can be found on the course website.

Seminar presentation and participation

The success of the seminar depends on the willingness of students to keep up with the readings on a weekly basis and to take part fully in the discussion. Your participation will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Each student will also be required to prepare a brief oral presentation (of no more than 10 minutes – time limits will be enforced) on some aspect of the session's readings (the specific question to be addressed will be given to you two weeks before your presentation). A schedule of presentations is posted on my office door. You should sign up early to secure the subject of your choice.

Major research essay

Students will write a research paper on a topic of their choice, to be arrived at in consultation with the instructor. In selecting a topic, you should be as imaginative as possible, bearing in mind the availability of sufficient primary materials (upon which the essay must be largely based) and the soundness of the topic in a theoretical sense. The paper should be roughly 20 pages in length and must be presented in proper scholarly format.

To ensure that work on the major paper is not left to the last minute, you will submit an essay proposal on 20 January 2015. The proposal should be no more than five pages in length and should include a brief outline of your subject and the research questions you intend to explore, a discussion of the primary sources to be used, and a bibliography of some representative secondary sources.

***** Note:** Late assignments will be subject to a deduction of two marks per day (including weekend days). Assignments submitted more than seven days after the due date will not be graded.

Please note the University Senate's statement on plagiarism: "Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offense, at the following website:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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.

Course Expectations and Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- show familiarity with accurate factual information about a wide range of people, groups, events, and documents relating to the First World War, and understand their significance
- demonstrate superior oral and written communication skills
- analyze secondary sources, including their documentary basis, methods, arguments, strengths, limitations, implications, and significance for the field
- solve research problems by identifying a topic, refining it to a significant and answerable historical question, determining the essential components of the argument, organizing those components in essay form, and drawing conclusions
- spell your name with semaphore flags
- appreciate and understand the nature of the First World War in the context of its own time
- grasp the ongoing impact of the First World War in various societies and in various ways

Seminar schedule:

9 September - Introduction

16 September - The Road to War

Samuel R. Williamson, 'The Origins of the War' [in Strachan book]

Thomas H. Russell, *The World's Greatest War* (1914), ch. 1

J. William White, *A Primer of the War: Written and Compiled by an American* (1914), ch. 2

23 September - August 1914

L.M. Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* (1920), ch. 3 and 4

Robert Rutherford, 'Canada's August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and Social Memory,'
Canadian Historical Review 77 (1996)

Geoffrey Faber, 'The Eve of War' (4)

Isaac Rosenberg, 'On Receiving the First News of the War' (5)

John Masefield, 'August, 1914' (8)

Rupert Brooke, '1914: Peace' (11)

John Freeman, 'Happy is England Now' (12)

Rudyard Kipling, 'For All We Have and Are' (13)

30 September - Gas Warfare

Sir John French on the Use of Poison Gas at the Second Battle of Ypres, 15 June 1915

German Statement on the Use of Poison Gas at the Second Battle of Ypres, 25 June 1915

Ellwood B. Spear, 'Some Problems of Gas Warfare,' *Scientific Monthly* 8/3 (March 1919)

Jonathan Krause, 'The Origins of Chemical Warfare in the French Army,' *War in History* 20
(2013)

Wilfred Owen, 'Dulce et Decorum est' (141)

7 October - Atrocities

The Bryce Report, 12 May 1915

John Horne and Alan Kramer, 'German "Atrocities" and Franco-German Opinion, 1914: The Evidence of German Soldiers' Diaries,' *Journal of Modern History* 66/1 (1994)

Edward Thomas, 'This is no case of petty Right or Wrong' (15)

Charles Hamilton Sorley, 'To Germany' (15)

14 October - Targeting Civilians: Air Bombing and Unrestricted Submarine Warfare

Paul G. Halpern, 'The War at Sea' [in Strachan book]

John H. Morrow, 'The War in the Air' [in Strachan book]

Nicoletta F. Gullace, 'Friends, Aliens, and Enemies: Fictive Communities and the *Lusitania* Riots of 1915,' *Journal of Social History* 39 (2005)

Jonathan F. Vance, *High Flight: Aviation and the Canadian Imagination* (2002), ch. 2

Wilfrid Gibson, 'Air-Raid' (185)

Nancy Cunard, 'Zeppelins' (186)

21 October - Propaganda

J.M. Winter, 'Propaganda and the Mobilization of Consent' [in Strachan book]

Jessie Pope, 'The Call' (21)

E.A. Mackintosh, 'Recruiting' (22)

Siegfried Sassoon, 'Blighters' (181)

Wilfrid Gibson, 'Ragtime' (182)

Osbert Sitwell, 'Ragtime' (183)

Wilfred Owen, 'Smile, Smile, Smile' (211)

Propaganda posters [links on course website]

28 October - Conscientious Objection **** poetry analysis due ****

James McDermott, 'Conscience and the Military Service Tribunals during the First World War: Experiences in Northamptonshire,' *War in History* 17/1 (2010)

D.H. Lawrence, 'Rondeau of a Conscientious Objector' (28)

4 November - Defending Freedom by Restricting Freedom?

J.A. Turner, 'The Challenge to Liberalism: The Politics of the Home Fronts' [in Strachan book]

The Defence of the Realm Act, 1914

The War Measures Act, 1914; The Military Service Act, 1917; The Wartime Elections Act, 1917

11 November - Remembrance Day

Christina Theodosiou, 'Symbolic Narratives and the Legacy of the Great War: The Celebration of Armistice Day in France in the 1920s,' *First World War Studies* 1/2 (2010)

St John Adcock, 'The Silence' (239)

Edward Shanks, 'Armistice Day, 1921' (241)

Armistice Day / Remembrance Day programs [on course website]

18 November - War as a Gendered Experience?

Gail Braybon, 'Women, War, and Work' [in Strachan book]

Kimberley Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women and the First World War* (2008): ch. 3

Jessie Pope, 'War Girls' (169)

Jessie Pope, 'Socks' (189)

Theresa Hooley, 'A War Film' (190)

Vera Brittain, 'The Superfluous Woman' (255)

May Wedderburn Cannan, 'Lamplight' (261)

25 November - The Riddle of Trench Warfare

Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, 'Eastern Front and Western Front' [in Strachan book]

Holger H. Herwig, 'The German Victories, 1917-1918' [in Strachan book]

Tim Travers, 'The Allied Victories, 1918' [in Strachan book]

2 December - TEWT ** **document analysis due** **

6 January - Movie Day

13 January - Morale, Mutiny, and Desertion

David Englander, 'Mutinies and Military Morale' [in Strachan book]

Edward Madigan, "'Sticking to a hateful task": Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of
Combatant Courage,' *War in History* 20 (2013)

Rudyard Kipling, 'Epitaphs: The Coward' (162)

Gilbert Frankau, 'The Deserter' (163)

Ivor Gurney, 'Portrait of a Coward' (206)

20 January - The Trial of Private George West Arnold ** **essay proposal due** **

27 January - Religion and Mysticism

Tim Cook, 'Grave Beliefs: Stories of the Supernatural and the Uncanny among Canada's Great
War Trench Soldiers,' *Journal of Military History* 77/2 (2013)

Arthur Machen, *The Bowmen* (1915)

Henry Van Dyke, *The Broken Soldier and the Maid of France* (1919)

J.C. Squire, 'The Dilemma' (19)

Wilfrid Gibson, 'The Conscript' (27)

Marjorie Pickthall, 'Marching Men' (43)

Siegfried Sassoon, 'The Redeemer' (62)

Siegfried Sassoon, 'They' (205)

G.A. Studdert Kennedy, 'Dead and Buried' (232)

3 February - The First WORLD War?

David Killingray, 'The War in Africa' [in Strachan book]

Dan Bullard, "'Loyal until Death": Memories of African Great War Service for Germany,' in Kellen Kurschinski et al, *The Great War: From Memory to History* (2014)

Timothy J. Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (2006): ch 3

10 February - Selling the War to Americans

David Trask, 'The Entry of the USA into the War and its Effects' [in Strachan book]

Robert Lansing and Louis F. Post, *A War of Self-Defense*

Andrew C. McLaughlin, *The Great War: From Spectator to Participant*

John S.P. Tatlock, *Why America Fights Germany*

Woodrow Wilson, 'Peace Without Victory,' 22 January 1917

Formal US Declaration of War with Germany, 6 April 1917

Woodrow Wilson, 'Fourteen Points,' 8 January 1918

17 February - Reading Week - no class

24 February - Russia

John Horne, 'Socialism, Peace, and Revolution, 1917-1918' [in Strachan book]

Marc Ferro, 'The Russian Soldier in 1917: Undisciplined, Patriotic and Revolutionary,' *Slavic Review* 30 (1971): 483-512

Igor V. Narskii, 'The Frontline Experience of Russian Soldiers in 1914-1916,' *Russian Studies in History* 51 (2013): 31-49

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 3 March 1918

3 March - The Peace

David Stevenson, 'War Aims and Peace Negotiations' [in Strachan book]

Zara Steiner, 'The Peace Settlement' [in Strachan book]

President Raymond Poincaré's Address, 18 January 1919

Woodrow Wilson's Opening Address, 18 January 1919

David Lloyd George's Opening Address, 18 January 1919

Georges Clemenceau's Opening Address, 18 January 1919

Report of the Commission to Determine War Guilt, 6 May 1919

The Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919

Siegfried Sassoon, 'Everyone Sang' (226)

Osbert Sitwell, 'Peace Celebration' (227)

May Wedderburn Cannan, 'Paris, November 11, 1918' (228)

10 March - War Literature

Modris Eksteins, 'The Memory of the War' [in Strachan book]

Charles Yale Harrison, *Generals Die in Bed* (1930)

Jonathan F. Vance, 'The Soldier as Novelist: Literature, History and the Great War,' *Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism and Review* 179 (2003)

Ivor Gurney, 'War Books' (265)

17 March - Veterans

Bruce Scates, 'Soldiers' Journeys: Returning to the Battlefields of the Great War,' *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 40 (2007)

Robert Graves, 'The Survivor Comes Home' (171)

Margaret Postgate Cole, 'The Veteran' (213)

Siegfried Sassoon, 'Repression of War Experience' (214)

Wilfred Owen, 'Mental Cases' (218)

Robert Graves, 'Two Fusiliers' (230)

Wilfred Owen, 'Disabled' (252)

Ivor Gurney, 'Strange Hells' (254)

24 March - Mourning and Commemoration

Michael Durey, 'The Great Trust: Mrs Edith Ash's Campaign of Remembrance, 1916-1954,' *History* 96 (2011)

R.J. Wilson, 'Remembering and Forgetting the Great War in New York City,' *First World War Studies* 3/1 (2012)

Ivor Gurney, 'Butchers and Tombs' (152)

Laurence Binyon, 'For the Fallen' (235)

Charlotte Mew, 'The Cenotaph' (237)

Siegfried Sassoon, 'Memorial Tablet (Great War)' (244)

Rudyard Kipling, 'Epitaph: Common Form' (245)

Siegfried Sassoon, 'On Passing the New Menin Gate' (247)

Philip Johnstone, 'High Wood' (257)

Robert Graves, 'Recalling War' (263)

Siegfried Sassoon, 'Aftermath' (267)

31 March - no class - spare

7 April - Conclusion ** **research essay due** **