

**The University of Western Ontario  
HISTORY 4711F  
The First World War:  
A Revolutionary Experience  
Fall/Winter 2020-21  
Tuesdays 9:30-11:30AM**

**Instructor: Jonathan F. Vance**

Office Hours: Monday 1-2PM, Wednesday noon-2PM  
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**This is a draft syllabus. Please see your course OWL site for the final syllabus.**

Seminars will be in-person synchronous – students can attend class in-person or virtually through a videoconference platform.

The University is investigating a blend of online and live course delivery, and is being guided by recommendations from health authorities and the provincial and federal governments. The Department of History is committed to providing a superior learning experience for all students, and our faculty members are reimagining their course offerings to take advantage of the best new technologies and practices available in online teaching and learning. Please monitor the department website for course information - we will post updates as soon as they are available.

The syllabus was prepared under the assumption that the course will be held live, with appropriate physical-distancing measures. Should it need to go on-line, there will be adjustments to the format for each week's meeting, but the assignments and expectations will remain the same.

**Course Description:**

This 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 causes of the war, the experience of battle, conflicts on the home front, war culture, 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.

**Prerequisite(s):**

2.0 courses in History at the 2200 level or above. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be

deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

***Antirequisite(s):***

History 4709E.

**Course Syllabus:**

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
- spell your name with semaphore flags
- 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
- 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

**Course Materials:**

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

Hew Strachan, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (any edition)  
George Walter, *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry* (2006)

Additional readings are available on the course website.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Students must complete all coursework. Failure to complete all assigned coursework will result in a failing grade.

***Assignments:***

Poetry analysis	15%
Film review	30%
Postcard analysis	35%
Seminar presentation and participation	20%

***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 five 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.

### ***Film review***

For this assignment, each student will write a critical review that examines a film from the list below. You should not simply summarize the film, but rather explain its place and significance in the historiography of the First World War. You should also discuss how the film illuminates the history of the events it describes, and what it says about the time it was made. In doing so, you should feel free to consult other critical reviews of the film. The review should be six to eight pages in length, written in proper scholarly format. You will find some notes for the film review on the course website. For further information on the films, including plot summaries, casts, and production details, consult the invaluable Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/>

*The African Queen* (1951)

*All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930)

*Beneath Hill 60* (2010)

*The Big Parade* (1925)

*The Blue Max* (1966)

*The Dawn Patrol* (1930)

*A Fairy Tale* (1997)

*A Farewell to Arms* (1932)

*The Fighting 69th* (1940)

*Flyboys* (2006)

*Gallipoli* (1981)

*La Grande Illusion* (1937)

*Hell's Angels* (1930)

*Johnny Got His Gun* (1971)

*Journey's End* (2017)

*Joyeux Noël* (2005)

*Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)

*The Lighthorsemen* (1987)

*The Lost Battalion* (2001)

*My Boy Jack* (2007)

*Oh! What A Lovely War* (1969)

*Regeneration* (1997)

*Sergeant York* (1941)

*The Trench* (1999)

*A Very Long Engagement* (2004)

*War Horse* (2011)

*What Price Glory?* (1952)

*Wings* (1927)

### ***Postcard analysis***

You will be given an original postcard from the First World War to research and analyze. You should approach it as an exercise in historical detection – how much can the postcard tell you about the time, and about the people and events to which it refers? Your analysis should be at least ten 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 OWL. You should sign up early to secure the subject of your choice.

\*\*\* Note: Any late assignment 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.

### **Accommodation for missed assignment deadlines with a Self-Reported Absence:**

If a student reports an SRA for an assignment, the new due date will be 48 hours after the SRA was submitted. For example, if you complete an SRA on 19 March at 3pm, your new due date will be 21 March at 3pm.

### **Seminar Schedule:**

15 September – Introduction

22 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

29 September – August 1914

Jean-Jacques Becker, "'That's the death knell of our boys ...'" in *The French Home Front, 1914-1918*, ed. Patrick Fridensen (1992)

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

Erik Ringmar, "'The Spirit of 1914': A Redefinition and a Defence,' *War in History* 25/1 (2018)

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)

6 October – Atrocities and Propaganda

Paul G. Halpern, 'The War at Sea' [in Strachan book], esp. on unrestricted submarine warfare

John H. Morrow, 'The War in the Air' [in Strachan book], esp. on strategic bombing

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)

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

Wilfrid Gibson, 'Air-Raid' (185)

Nancy Cunard, 'Zeppelins' (186)

\*\*poetry analysis due\*\*

13 October – War as a Gendered Experience?

Gail Braybon, 'Women, War, and Work' **OR** Susan R. Grayzel, 'The Role of Women in the War' [in Strachan book]

Kimberly Jensen, 'Women's "Positive Patriotic Duty" to Participate: The Practice of Female Citizenship in Oregon and the Expanding Surveillance State during the First World War and its Aftermath,' *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 118/2 (2017)

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)

20 October – Trench Culture and Morale

Jane Chapman and Ross Wilson, 'Illustrating War-time: Cartoons and the British and Dominion Soldier Experience during the Great War, 1914–1918,' *War in History* 26 (2019)

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

Robert L. Nelson, 'Soldier Newspapers: A Useful Source in the Social and Cultural History of the First World War and Beyond', *War in History* 17 (2010)

27 October – Mutiny, Desertion, and Disobedience

David Englander, 'Mutinies and Military Morale' **OR** Alexander Watson, 'Mutinies and Military Morale' [in Strachan book]

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

Gilbert Frankau, 'The Deserter' (163)

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

\*\*film review due\*\*

3 November – Reading week – no seminar

10 November – 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* (2015)

Joe Lunn, 'The Great War and Senegalese Memory: The Veterans' Legacy,' *First World War Studies* 10 (2019)

Michelle Moyd, 'Centring a Sideshow: Local Experiences of the First World War in Africa,' *First World War Studies* (2016): 111-30

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

17 November – 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  
Woodrow Wilson's speech to Congress on the Declaration of War, 2 April 1917  
Woodrow Wilson, 'Fourteen Points,' 8 January 1918

24 November – 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  
Corinne Gaudin, 'Rural Echoes of World War I: War Talk in the Russian Village' *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 56 (2008)  
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

1 December – Veterans Reconstructing the War Experience

Teresa Jacobelli, 'A Participants' History?: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Manipulation of Oral History,' *Oral History Review* 38/2 (2011): 331-48  
Ian Isherwood, 'The British Publishing Industry and Commercial Memories of the First World War,' *War in History* 23/3 (2016)  
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)  
Wilfred Owen, 'Disabled' (252)  
Ivor Gurney, 'Strange Hells' (254)

8 December – 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)  
\*\*postcard analysis due\*\*

### Additional Statements

#### **Academic Offences:**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

### ***Accessibility Options:***

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 Student Accessibility Services at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

### ***Medical Issues***

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://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. 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 should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation.

Please visit [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/index.html](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html) to view all updated academic policies regarding medical accommodations.

### ***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>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

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 another writer's ideas.

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 receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

### ***Scholastic Offences***

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### ***Copyright***

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may

not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without my written consent.

### ***Health and Wellness***

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 Student Accessibility Services at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Heidi Van Galen, Administrative Officer, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84963 or e-mail [yangalen@uwo.ca](mailto:yangalen@uwo.ca).

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