

**The University of Western Ontario**  
**Department of History**  
**HISTORY 2814F**  
**The History of Aviation**  
**Fall 2021**  
**Thurs. 9:30-12:30**  
**in FNB 1240**

**Instructor: Dr. Jeffery Vacante**

Office Hours: Thurs. 12:30-1:30 pm

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**This is a draft syllabus. Please see your course OWL site for the final syllabus.**

**Course Description:**

This course explores the history of aviation from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. It focuses on the key events and personalities associated with the history of aviation from the romantic era of flight to the development of the modern aviation industry.

***Antirequisite(s):***

The former History 2215F/G

**Course Syllabus:**

This course explores the idea of flight. When people began to experiment with flight they were seen as visionaries but also as somewhat eccentric. To those who pursued such experiments, balloons and then flying machines represented great scientific and technological advances as well as the hope that technology 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, too. The early dreams of flight persisted into 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 were a 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 simply one among many other means of transportation. This course focuses on the key events and personalities in the history of aviation, including Orville and Wilbur Wright, Charles Lindbergh. We will also consider how some literary figures, including H.G. Wells, Norman Mailer, and Tom Wolfe, have understood flight. As well, we will trace the development of the commercial aviation industry,

including the rise of such 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.

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 in the form of written exams and assignments.

### **Course Materials:**

All course readings will be made available on the course owl page or on reserve at the Weldon Library.

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

Midterm Examination (Oct. 7)	30%
Essay (due Nov.11)	40%
Final Examination	30%

The expectation will be that students attend the lectures and complete all of the weekly readings. In addition, students will write a **midterm examination** in class on **October 7**. Students will also write an essay, which will be due in class on **November 11**. The essay, which will be 2500 words in length, will be a response to a question that will be made available to you in advance of the submission deadline. All of the material that students will need to write the essay will be found in the course readings and slides. No outside research will be expected. These essays are to be typed, well-written, provide sound analysis, draw upon the appropriate course material, follow proper scholarly conventions (including citation style and bibliography) and include a cover page. You will submit a printed copy of the essay in class on November 11 and also upload a copy to the course web page on owl, where it may be subject to Turnitin analysis. Essays submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty of five percent the first day and one percent for every day thereafter (including weekends). Students will also write a **final examination** during the exam period in December.

### **Accommodation for missed tests/midterms, including Self Reported Absences (SRA):**

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test will be required to write a makeup test.

Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Online courses will have online makeup tests.

In person classes have scheduled makeup tests scheduled at the following times:

#### **Fall Term**

- Tests scheduled before November 1 – the makeup will take place November 8 at 9:30am.
- Tests scheduled between November 2 and December 7 – the makeup will take place December 8 at 9:30pm.

## Winter Term

- Tests scheduled before February 19 – the makeup will take place February 28 at 9:30am.
- Tests scheduled between February 20 and March 31 – the makeup will take place April 1 at 12:30pm

No other make-up opportunities will be provided. Students who fail to write a makeup test in the designated time slots will receive a grade of zero.

Course professors may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup test slots.

Students should be aware that when they have submitted an SRA for one test, they are not permitted to write a test or complete an assignment for another course during the period covered by the SRA. Failure to observe this regulation will result in the cancellation of the SRA and the possible application of late penalties.

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

If a student reports a SRA for an assignment (i.e. an essay) the new due date will be 48 hours after the SRA was submitted.

## Course Schedule and Readings:

**Sept. 9:** Introduction

**Sept. 16:** The Idea of Flight

• Laurence Goldstein, *The Flying Machine and Modern Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 14-62.

**Sept. 23:** Balloons

• Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder* (London: Harper Press, 2008), 125-162.

**Sept. 30:** The Pioneers

• Joseph J. Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's Romance with Aviation, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 3-70.

**Oct. 7:** Midterm Examination

**Oct. 14:** The Age of Lindbergh

• John W. Ward, "The Meaning of Lindbergh's Flight," *American Quarterly* (Spring 1958): 3-16.

• Augustus Post, "Columbus of the Air," *North American Review* (Sept-Oct, 1927): 353-364.

• Laurence Goldstein, *The Flying Machine and Modern Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 97-109.

• Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), 241-274.

• Thomas Kessner, *The Flight of the Century: Charles Lindbergh and the Rise of American Aviation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 224-240.

**Oct. 21:** The Bush Pilot

- Jonathan F. Vance, *High Flight: Aviation and the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Penguin, 2002), 133-158.
- Shirley Render, *Double Cross: The Inside Story of James A. Richardson and Canadian Airways* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1999), 21-67.

**Oct. 28:** Commercial Aviation in Canada

- Peter Pigott, *Wingwalkers: A History of Canadian Airlines International* (Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Pub., 2003), 187-231.
- Ronald A. Keith, *Bush Pilot with a Briefcase: The Happy-Go-Lucky Story of Grant McConachie* (Toronto 1972), 226-315.

**Nov. 4:** Fall Break (Nov. 1-5)

**Nov. 11:** Commercial Aviation in the United States

- Robert Gandt, *Skygods: The Fall of Pan Am* (New York: William Morrow, 1995), 3-43.
- Jenifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air: Aviation and the American Ascendancy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 89-130.

**Nov. 18:** The Jet Age

- Jenifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air: Aviation and the American Ascendancy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 239-272.

**Nov. 25:** Paradoxes of the Air

- Jenifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air: Aviation and the American Ascendancy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 272-80.
- Charles Lindbergh, "A Letter from Lindbergh," *Life* (July 4, 1969).
- Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff* (New York: Picador, 1979), 15-101, 141-168, 283-288.

**Dec. 2:** Conclusion

**Use of Electronic Devices:**

The use of electronic devices during examinations is not permitted.

**Additional Statements:**

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,

<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>,

for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness

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