

HIST 6686 Topics in European History
The First World War
Tues. 5:30 – 8:00 pm
CRN 10990
Spring 2008
TLC 3205

Professor: Dr. Tim Schroer
Office: Technology-Enhanced Learning Center (TLC) 3218
Phone: 678-839-6040
Email: tschroer@westga.edu
Office hours: T/Th 9:00 to noon, 1:30 to 2:30, or by appointment

Course Description

This course provides students with the opportunity to conceive and execute their own original historical study. In the first five weeks of the course we will explore together readings in the history of the First World War. The purpose of the readings will be to introduce some of the big questions that have occupied historians and to offer possible models for students' own studies. In the second part of the course, the focus shifts to the research and writing of students' projects. Along the way, there will be several milestones that must be reached. Students may choose to explore questions of political, economic, social, intellectual, and cultural history related to the First World War.

Learning Outcomes

My hope is that in this course each student will produce a 20-25 page research paper that can serve as the heart of a publishable article.

Required Materials:

John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (New York: Penguin, 1983) ISBN 9780140048971.

Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000) ISBN 0395937582.

There will also be several reserve readings.

Grading

Participation	20 percent
Primary source presentation	10 percent
Introduction and historiography section	10 percent
Final paper	50 percent
Paper presentation	10 percent

In the primary source presentations, each student will pick one important primary source from among the primary sources used for the paper. The presentation will describe the source to the class and explain how the paper will make use of the source in its argument. Students should come to class with copies of the source or relevant extracts of the source

for everyone in the class. The presentation should address questions such as: Who wrote the document? Who was the audience of the document? What was the purpose of the document? What does it say? Why is it significant? Each student will also answer questions from the group about the source. Grades will be based primarily on the quality of the analysis.

On April 1 students will turn in the introduction and historiography section of their papers. That section should be about three pages in length. It should introduce the historical question the paper examines and briefly state the paper's answer to that question. It should also place the paper in its historiographical context and identify the paper's original contribution to the existing historical writing related to the question under examination. Note that the section handed in **should not be a rough draft**. It should be a polished draft, as good as it can be, since it will be graded, and that grade will weigh 10 percent the final grade for the course.

I will comment on the introduction and historiography section and assign it a grade. Each student should take into account those comments in the final paper and incorporate a rewritten introduction and historiography section in the final paper. The final paper should represent an improvement over the earlier version of the section. The marked-up draft of the introduction and historiography section must be turned in along with the final paper.

In the final presentations, each student will describe the paper's argument and supporting evidence to the class in a ten-minute talk. Students will then answer questions from the group. Grades will be based on the quality of the oral presentation of the paper's argument and evidence and responses to questions posed.

Thoughtful contributions made in class discussions will be credited in the class participation grade. Behavior (such as tardiness) that impedes other students' learning will be penalized.

No extra credit will be offered.

Policies

I expect each student to understand and to comply with the University of West Georgia's policies on Academic Honor and Academic Dishonesty. They may be found in the Student Handbook, on the web at <http://www.westga.edu/documents/catalogs.php>. Academic honesty prohibits taking credit for someone else's work. Academic dishonesty will result in failing the course and may also bring additional penalties imposed by the university.

I encourage any student who has questions or needs help with the course to come to my office hours or send me an email to set up some other time to talk.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and university policy, I will make reasonable accommodation for any recognized disability. Students should contact me during the first three weeks of the course and present documentation from the University's Student Development Center.

Students are expected to attend every class meeting. All submitted written work must be unique to this course and original. Late papers will be penalized by deducting one letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Course Schedule

Jan. 15 Introduction

Jan. 22 The history of war: what is it good for?

Readings: John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (New York: Penguin, 1983) (skim chapters on Agincourt and Waterloo).

Jan. 29 Some questions to consider

Readings: Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, "Three Historiographical Configurations," in *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6-33. On reserve.

Heather Jones, "The Final Logic of Sacrifice? Violence in German Prisoner of War Labor Companies in 1918," *The Historian* 68 (2006): 747-69. On reserve.

Tim Cook, "The Politics of Surrender: Canadian Soldiers and the Killing of Prisoners in the Great War," *The Journal of Military History* 70 (2006): 637-66. Access through library database.

Susan Grayzel, "Liberating Women? Examining Gender, Morality and Sexuality in First World War Britain and France," in *Evidence, History and the Great War*, ed. Gail Braybon (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 113-34. On reserve.

Statement of topic due

Feb. 5 Conceiving questions and finding sources

Readings: Russell F. Weigley, "Strategy and Total War in the United States: Pershing and the American Military Tradition," in *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, ed. Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (Cambridge: German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C. and Cambridge University Press, 2000), 327-45. On reserve.

Mary Habeck, "Technology in the First World War: The View from Below," in *The Great War and the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter, Geoffrey Parker, and Mary R. Habeck (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 99-131. On reserve.

Steve Norris, *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), introduction and chapter 7 on the Great War. On reserve.

- Feb. 12 Pushing the limits
Readings: Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).
Statement of question and bibliography due
- Feb. 19 Individual meetings
- Feb. 26 Primary source presentations
- Mar. 4 Primary source presentations
- Mar. 11 Individual meetings
- Mar. 18 Spring Break
- Mar. 25 Individual meetings
- Apr. 1 Introduction and historiography section due
- Apr. 8 Writing workshop
- Apr. 15 Peer review of drafts
- Apr. 22 Final presentations
- Apr. 29 Final presentations
Papers due

Five Guidelines for a Paper

1. Be honest. Acknowledge your sources and do not plagiarize. As a general rule, every paragraph in the paper (except the introductory and concluding paragraphs) should have a footnote at the end of it. I have never lowered a student's grade for excessive citation to the sources. I have failed students for the course for failing to cite only a single source from which they drew. A paper that draws extensively from a source such as an internet site and fails to cite it will result in a failing grade for the course.
2. Have a point. State the historical question and the paper's thesis. Frame your argument within the context of the existing historiography. What's new in your paper that historians did not already know? Note that an argument is not new in the historical discipline merely because it is unknown to an average high school student.
3. Do the work. The paper's grade depends to a considerable degree on the amount of effort that demonstrably went into the paper. Papers seven pages in length are less impressive than papers that meet the minimum standard of twenty pages. Papers based on twenty primary sources and twenty secondary sources are generally more impressive than those based on one primary source and three secondary sources. Archival research in unpublished sources is particularly impressive.
4. Use evidence persuasively. The paper represents an answer to a historical question based on evidence. Show engagement with the evidence and skillfully support your argument based on evidence from primary sources.
5. Write with your reader in mind. I am your reader and I especially value clarity and precision in writing. I care deeply about all of the rules of writing history papers.
 - a. Use standard written English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
 - b. Write in the past tense when discussing events or documents in the past. The historical actors, their actions, and their writings existed in the past, and so use the past tense to describe them. Use the present tense only to discuss the arguments of historians about what happened in the past.
 - c. Format citations correctly in accordance with *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
 - d. Write in a formal tone appropriate to a published article.
 - e. List primary and secondary sources separately in the bibliography.
 - f. Number the pages of the paper.