American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

Department of History and Military Studies

HIST 558
The Great War

3 Credit Hours
16 Weeks

Graduate students are encouraged to take required or core courses prior to enrolling in the seminars, concentration courses or electives.

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Course Delivery Method

Selected Bibliography

Instructor Information

Course Description

This course examines the origins of World War I; the combatants, strategy and tactics, technological innovation vs. conservatism; the war in France; the war at sea; America's role; the peace settlement; and the occupation. While military aspects of the conflict are studied, the primary focus places the Great War in the context of European and World history, and specific areas include political and diplomatic developments, new developments in weapons technology, economic aspects of the war, and the impact of the war on the culture and social order of the nations involved in the struggle.

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Course Scope

In the summer of 1914, tensions between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and one of its neighbors, the small but aggressive kingdom of Serbia, had risen to the boiling point. This was largely the result of the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne by an anarchist group with covert ties to the Serbia government. Europe and the rest of the world expected that this latest Balkan crisis would be solved by diplomacy, or perhaps another of the small wars that cropped up in this region with considerable regularity. Instead, what had started as a small regional conflict quickly spread to draw in most of the major powers in Europe, and eventually beyond. Rather than a quick campaign of months, the Great War, or the World War as it quickly became known, would last for more than four years, and be responsible for the deaths of an estimated 10 million people, the vast majority of them members of the militaries of the combatant nations.
While there had been other European wars that were truly global in scope and impact – the Seven Years’ War or the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period certainly qualify on those scores, for example – the death and destruction of the Great War quickly rose to a level never before seen in human history, and then proceeded to get worse as time went on.

This was due to a combination of two primary factors – the massively increased size of the armies involved and the vastly enhanced lethality of their weapons. During the Seven Years’ War an army of 20 or 30,000 was considered large. During the Napoleonic period, an army might have in excess of 100,000 men in it. But during the First World War, an individual army might contain hundreds of thousands of men, and the combined armies of a major nation numbered in the millions.

For all of these reasons, a solid knowledge of the First World War is essential to understanding the modern world, and especially the changes it produced in the role of Europe in the world. It is the hope of the instructor that this course will provide that knowledge.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain the impact and significance of World War I within European history.
2. Evaluate the causes of World War I.
3. Assess persons, factors, and events that influenced the course of the war.
4. Discern points of contingency at which the war might possibly have taken a different course.

Note to Students: The course materials, assignments, learning outcomes, and expectations in this graduate course assume that the student has completed all lower level general education and career planning coursework necessary to develop research, writing, and critical thinking skills. Students who have not fulfilled all general education requirements through courses or awarded transfer credit should strongly consider completing these requirements prior to registering for this course.

The Great War is an immense and complex subject, with many fascinating areas. As this course is designed to provide an overview of the entire conflict, it will not be possible to examine all of these subjects in detail, but it is hoped that this course will provide a foundation upon which students may continue to build their knowledge of this critical period. While military aspects of the conflict will be studied, the primary focus of this course will be to place the Great War in the context of European and World history, and to examine its impact. The various subject areas examined in this course will include the following:

To examine the political and diplomatic developments that created the basis for this conflict, and sustained it once begun.
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The political upheaval caused by the war – the transformation of political structures, the destruction of empires, the toppling of governments and the long-term consequences for Europe and the world.
To discover how and why the war was won and lost, the nature of the peace that followed it, and what implications all of this had for the future.

This course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments include Forum questions accomplished in groups through a threaded forum, examination, and individual assignments submitted for review by the faculty member. Dr. Woodworth is the assigned faculty who will support the students throughout this sixteen-week course.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


Herrmann, David G. *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War* Princeton University Press, 1997 0691015953 (soft cover)


Tuchman, Barbara W. *The Zimmermann Telegram* Ballantine Books, 1958, 1994 0345324250 (soft cover)

*The First World War: The Complete Series* A DVD companion to Strachan’s book below, it has excellent period still, movie, and sound footage, as well as comprehensive coverage of the war.

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

Citino, Robert M. *Quest for Decisive Victory: From Stalemate to Blitzkrieg in Europe, 1899-1940* University Press of Kansas, 2002 0700616551 (soft cover)

Herwig, Holger *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918* Hodder Arnold, 1996 0340573481 (soft cover)

Kennett, Lee *The First Air War, 1914-1918* Free Press, 1999 0684871203 (soft cover)

Kinvig, Clifford *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia, 1918-1920* London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006 9781847250216 (soft cover)

Strachan, Hew *The First World War* New York: Penguin, 2005 0143035185 (soft cover)

Willmott, H.P. *World War I* DK Adult, 2007 0756629675 (soft cover)

Since this is a graduate level course on the First World War, it is assumed that the students have at least a working knowledge of the basic facts and events of that conflict. This course will focus in more detail on specific aspects of the war. If you are not familiar with at least the basic elements of the war, it is strongly urged that you obtain and read at least the Strachan book from the Recommended list above, and the Willmott
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book is an excellent reference source as well – lots of maps, photos, paintings and other visual information – and it is inexpensive as well. This should be done as early in the course as possible.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCES (For All History Majors)

Accessible through The Online Library.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Department of History and Military Studies requires conformity with the traditional University of Chicago Style Manual and its Turabian offshoot. Citations will follow traditional footnote attribution. Do not use endnotes or parenthetical (MLA) variation.

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Evaluation Procedures

There will be three types of graded activities in this course – Forums, Reading Opinion Essays, and a Research Paper. There will be seven primary graded Forums, as well as a short personal introduction that will not be graded. For the four assigned textbooks students will write short opinion essays. Finally, there will be one research paper, due at the end of the term. The research paper will also require, by week 4, submission of a proposal that will include information about your chosen topic, thesis and supporting arguments, and sources. An exact breakdown of the points for each of these assignments can be found in the table at the end of this section. Due dates for each assignment may be found in the Course Outline portion of the syllabus, as well as in the Assignments section of the class site. Please pay close attention to these dates; you are advised to write them down and track them on a calendar as well. I expect assignments to be completed on time except in case of exigent circumstances, as approved by me.

The Forums are the most frequent of the graded assignments. There will be a total of seven different Forums, one every other week, following the Virtual Introduction of the first week. See the Course Outline section of this syllabus, as well as the Assignments section of the class site for the due dates. The first topic will begin after the first week of the term, and will continue until the due date listed in this syllabus, when the next topic will begin. Participation in the Forum topics will be graded on both the number and the quality of a student’s postings. Students will be expected to post both a primary response to the instructor’s original subject/question, as well as at least two responses to other student’s posts. The Initial Post for a given topic will be due the first Sunday of the two week period, while the Responses will be due the following Sunday. For example, for the first topic, the Initial Post will be due at the end of Week # 2, and the Responses for that topic due at the end of Week # 3. The topics will be developed in part to encourage the students to do the assigned reading, but also to provoke further investigation and thought about the subjects. For further information on the Forums and the expectations for them, see the Instructions in the Forum folder in the Course Materials portion of the class site.

The reading opinion essays will be short, a minimum of three pages each, and will offer the student’s opinion of the book and its contents. Full information on the book essays may be found in the Book Essays folder in the Course Materials section of the class site.
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The research paper will be the single largest portion of your total grade, and will be due at the end of the term. Complete details on the paper assignment can be found in the Course Materials section of the class site, in a folder titled Research Paper. The basics of the paper assignment are – a minimum of 25 pages of text, exclusive of title page, bibliography, notes, etc. The paper will be double spaced, 12-point font, regular margins. Include a title page, bibliography, and endnotes. Be sure to look at the online Chicago/Turabian style manual for research paper format for history papers – it is different from that used by many other disciplines, and points will be deducted for using an incorrect style of citation or other aspects of formal writing. There is also a PDF in the Course Materials section of the US Army’s official Manual for Writing Military History. This is extremely helpful, and can be downloaded and consulted for your work.

The weekly reading assignments may seem a bit light, especially if you have previous experience with graduate courses. This is because a new school policy has capped all graduate courses at around 60 pages a week for assigned reading. This might seem very reasonable, except that for some reason undergraduate courses are capped at 100 pages of reading per week. I’m not sure why grad students are considered to be capable of doing only half the reading of undergrads, but in any case, feel free to use the extra time to read some of the Recommended books, or to do extra work on your paper reading and research.

The paper will be done on a subject of the student’s choosing that deals with the First World War. It could be a biography of an important figure, a campaign study, an investigation into a particular weapon or technology, an examination of the politics or diplomacy of the various nations, a study of some of the social aspects of the war, or almost anything else relating to the war. Students will be required to turn in, by Week 4, a proposal for the paper. This proposal will include the paper topic, the primary thesis you intend to structure your paper around, several of your primary supporting argument concepts, and a list of sources you intend to utilize. This proposal will be graded and commented on, and you may possibly be asked to revise it, at the instructor’s discretion. It will be possible to change topics after you have submitted your proposal, but you must submit a new proposal to support your new topic. A certain amount of “evolving” is permissible when working on the paper – a student may change emphasis or alter the focus if new information presents itself. But this should not be carried too far – a paper on the Battle of Verdun should not “evolve” into a biography of the Red Baron. If you have any questions about topics, please contact the instructor. You should upload this assignment (and all others) via the appropriate assignment page. Do not submit any assignments in the “Student Comment” section or as email attachment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forums</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Opinion Essays</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Proposal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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Important note regarding the DVD documentary series:

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While the episodes of the DVD series are spread out through the assigned reading during the course, it is strongly recommended that if you are relatively new to the study of the Great War, that you watch the entire series as early as possible during the course. This will help provide you with a base of knowledge from which to discuss the more in-depth topics we will be dealing with during the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s)</th>
<th>Reading(s)</th>
<th>Assignment(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The science of slaughter</td>
<td>The impact of various modern weapons on wars – the examples of the early 20th century</td>
<td>Herrmann, Chapters 1 – 2, pp. 1 – 58; DVD series, Episode 1: To Arms</td>
<td>Virtual Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>War vs. the Industrial Revolution</td>
<td>New weapons made it impossible for the attacker to win – or did they?</td>
<td>Herrmann, Chapter 3, pp. 59 – 112; DVD series, Episode 2: Under the Eagle</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 1 – Initial Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feeding Mars – the economics of mass armies and modern weapons</td>
<td>It is not enough simply to have an effective new weapon – it must be paid for, produced, trained on, and distributed. All of this meant that adoption of newer weapons was uneven before the war</td>
<td>Herrmann, Chapters 4 – 5, pp. 113 – 172; DVD series, Episode 3: Global War</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 1 – Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Personal ambition and the arms race</td>
<td>The degree to which the actions of a few individuals helped create and push the arms race and resulting fear and instability</td>
<td>Herrmann, Chapters 6 – 7, pp. 173 – 232; DVD series, Episode 4: Jihad</td>
<td>Research Paper Proposal; Forum Topic # 2 – Initial Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Raising the stakes</td>
<td>War as an act of calculation, and the need to hold one’s own position in the game of Great Power maneuvering</td>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Herwig, Chapters 1 – 3, pp. 1 – 69; DVD series, Episode 5, Shackled to a Corpse</td>
<td>Herrmann Essay; Forum Topic # 2 - Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Sliding into war”? An examination of the causes of the Great War</td>
<td>To what degree is the traditional explanation of the origin of the Great War – that it was essentially an accident – correct?</td>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Herwig, Chapters 4 – 6, pp. 70 – 129; DVD series, Episode 6, Breaking the Deadlock</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 3 – Initial Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The role of personal decision making in bringing on the war</td>
<td>The amount of control over national policies and decisions for war exercised by a few men</td>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Herwig, Chapters 7 – 9, pp. 130 – 183; DVD series, Episode 7, Blockade</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 3 - Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The power of perception</td>
<td>Why nations were willing to risk possible destruction in war instead of “losing face”</td>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Herwig, Chapters 10 – 12, pp. 184 – 252; DVD series, Episode 8, Revolution</td>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Herwig Essay; Forum Topic # 4 – Initial Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A truly global war</td>
<td>The Great War was far more than the battle in the trenches of France. It must be understood in its global context</td>
<td>Strachan, Chapters 1 – 5, pp. 1 – 79; DVD series, Episode 9, Germany’s Last Gamble</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 4 - Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>War and society</td>
<td>Total war made immense demands on society. Which societies dealt more effectively with those challenges, and why?</td>
<td>Strachan, Chapters 6 – 11, pp. 80 – 162; DVD series, Episode 10, War Without End</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 5 – Initial Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The impact of the war</td>
<td>To look at the effect of the war on Europe and the rest of the world – not only national politics, but economics, social changes, etc.</td>
<td>Strachan, Chapters 12 – 17, pp. 163 – 226</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 5 - Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Neutral nation or unacknowledged belligerent? The role of the United States prior to its entry into the war</td>
<td>The US claimed to be a true neutral when the Great War began. Were we? Why or why not? Why were we so aggressive in asserting that neutrality?</td>
<td>Strachan, Chapters 18 – 23, pp. 227 – 318</td>
<td>Strachan Essay; Forum Topic # 6 – Initial Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reasons for war</td>
<td>Why did Wilson – who was reelected in 1916 based on the fact that he kept us out of war – feel compelled to enter it anyway? How strong were those reasons?</td>
<td>Tuchman, Chapters 1 – 6, pp. 3 – 106</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 6 - Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Patriotism run amok – the US home front</td>
<td>Despite being less directly affected than any other major belligerent, the US home front quickly became among the most intolerant and suspicious of all. Why?</td>
<td>Tuchman, Chapters 7 – 12, pp. 107 – 200</td>
<td>Forum Topic # 7 – Initial Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>We won the war – or did we? America’s contribution to the Allied cause</td>
<td>What was America’s true contribution to Allied victory?</td>
<td>Halliday, Chapters 1 – 6, pp. 1 – 149</td>
<td>Tuchman Essay; Forum Topic # 7 - Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>“A 20 year cease fire” – the impact of the peace treaty</td>
<td>The peace negotiations – why did they develop the way they did, and what was Wilson’s role in them?</td>
<td>Halliday, Chapters 7 – 13, pp. 150 – 306</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE

Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow the accepted guidelines of the American historical profession, which is the Chicago Manual of Style. This course will require students to use the citation and reference style established by Kate Turabian in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), which is the most readily available distillation of the Chicago Manual. See Chicago Style Manual

The Chicago Style Manual for book-length works and its Turabian offshoot for research papers have long been the standard across all fields of study, as well as much of the publishing industry. These texts cover the layout and production gamut—including rules for chapter headings and subheadings, abbreviations, alphabetizing non-English names, and table design/designation.

1. Front matter—e.g., title page, copyright statement, dedication, table of contents, lists of illustrations or tables, acknowledgements, abstract.
2. Narrative with scholarly attributions.

As noted earlier, there is also a PDF in the Course Materials section of the US Army Center for Military History Manual for Writing Military History. This also uses the Chicago Style, and may prove easier to work with than the online version.

NETIQUETTE

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate—both inside and outside the classroom. Forums on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and “flaming.” Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting—basic academic rules of good behavior and proper “Netiquette” must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the Forum of others.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

The staff at American Public University System (APUS) knows how hard it is for students to balance work and other commitments while pursuing a college education. We created the APUS Student Handbook as the ultimate reference for answers to questions about administrative and academic policies and procedures. APUS students do not have to wait for our offices to be open in order to find the information they need to succeed. No matter what location or time zone our students are in, they can consult the online Student Handbook with any questions about financial aid, tuition assistance and refunds, registration, drop/withdrawal or extensions, the University System’s grading system, and the electronic classroom. The handbook also covers issues related to various student services, academic guidance, and each student’s rights and responsibilities. Of course, there may be a unique question that requires additional information outside that which is covered in the handbook. APUS students should use the contact information listed online inside their campus to contact the APUS staff with any additional questions. See Student Handbook.

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.
Online Library Research Center & Learning Resources

The Online Library Resource Center is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Center provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies.

APUS Library Tools

- **Book Catalog** - Link to thousands of *electronic* books
- **Databases** - Find *articles* and reports from scholarly journals, magazines, and newspapers
  - ABC Clio US at War
  - CIAO
  - EBSCO
  - Praeger Security International
  - ProQuest
- **Journal Title Search Engine**
  - *American Historical Review* from 2/01/1975 to 1 year ago in EBSCO
  - *Cold War History* from 08/01/2000 to 1 year ago in EBSCO
  - *Early Medieval Europe* from 03/01/1998 to 1 year ago in EBSCO
  - *Journal of American History* from 03/01/1983 in EBSCO
  - *Journal of Early Modern History* from 02/01/1999 to 1 year ago in EBSCO
  - *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* from 01/10/1997 to 1 year ago in EBSCO
  - *Journal of World History* from 04/01/1998 to present in ProQuest

- **Historical Research Methods**
  - The Historical Approach to Research
  - Historical Research Methods
  - Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students
  - A Student's Guide to the Study of History
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Selected Bibliography

There is a folder in the Course Materials section of the class site entitled “Bibliography”. This folder contains an annotated bibliography with selected sources for the conflict. This and the bibliographies in the assigned texts should provide a starting point for further reading and research. There is also a file containing the complete listing of all the Ballantine books on the “History of the Violent Century”. These books were published in the 1970s, and were often written by experts in their field. There are a number of books that deal with the World War I period, and while they are long out of print, they can often be found in used book stores or on sites like eBay for a very modest price.

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