Honors 4920: The First World War (Spring 2018)

“By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead.” J.R.R. Tolkien.

Assoc. Prof.: Branden Little, Ph.D.
Email: jblittle@weber.edu (allow 24 hours for a reply)
Phone: 801.626.6710 (email is always best)
Office: Rm. 409 Old Science Laboratory.
Hours: Thurs., 12:00-1:00; Fri., 11:30-12:30; and also by appointment
Course Site: https://weber.instructure.com/courses/460151
Meetings: CRN 30433; Tues. & Thurs., 0900-1015, Library Rm. 325

Course Description:
A century ago a global cataclysm, the First World War, erupted and permanently transformed the world. Why did it explode? What did its conduct reveal? What are the echoes of this war that resonate today? Honors 4920 endeavors to answer these questions. It illuminates the war’s global dimensions, the statecraft and strategy of warring and neutral powers, battlespace operations and technologies, and humanitarian responses to industrialized killing, mass casualties, imprisonment, and population displacement. It considers the dynamics of homefront participation in war, including the cultivation of war cultures, the mobilization of children, the demobilization of wounded soldiers, and rituals of commemoration. The course also investigates the improbable resolution of such a vast conflict that shattered empires, inspired the ascent of new ones, and awakened powerful forces across the world. Join us for an exploration of one of the most pivotal events in the history of the world.

Content Advisory:
This course neither seeks to glamorize war, nor to dismiss its object: killing. Course materials (readings, lecture, and discussion) feature graphic violence, industrialized killing, sexual assault, genocide, trauma, and other horrifying subjects.

Course Learning Objectives:
This course cultivates a deeper understanding of the First World War. Students will learn to critically interrogate primary sources and secondary texts and be introduced to their historiographical relevance within the multifaceted and interdisciplinary field of First World War studies. A student who passes the class should be able to demonstrate:
1. Familiarization with the war's contours and its global reach.
2. Familiarization with leading scholarly interpretations of the war’s origins, conduct, and consequences.
3. An ability to engage with and critically analyze primary sources from the war era.
4. An ability to present their own research findings in a public forum.

---

Class Meetings:
Class meetings are an invaluable and mandatory part of Honors 4920. They are designed to encourage student discussion and learning in an interactive environment. In class we will learn to critically examine the materials we read, actively work to improve our verbal and written communication skills, and strengthen our capacity for analyzing the history of the First World War. Please come prepared to participate actively in every class meeting.

Attendance and Participation:
Active attendance and engagement in the classroom is essential for successful completion of the course. Be punctual to class! Chronic tardiness, early departures, and absences may automatically result in a failing grade.

Continuity of Operations & Communications:
In event of a major disaster or pandemic that disrupts classroom attendance, instruction will likely continue via email and Canvas. Note: All email communications during the semester concerning student grades and performance should be sent from and will only be sent to the student’s Weber State email account to ensure compliance with FERPA guidelines.

Required Texts:


5. Additional readings and historical documents as assigned and posted on Canvas.

Class Requirements:
1. Read your syllabus and rely on it to answer many questions throughout the semester.
2. Attend all class meetings—this is not an online course! I encourage you to take extensively detailed notes in class and to forge alliances with classmates with whom you can study, proofread each other’s papers, and borrow notes from in the rare event of being absent from class. I do not share my notes with students who miss class.
3. Complete the required reading assignments before class. I encourage you to take notes while you read.
4. Complete all assignments.

Grade Criteria:
1. Active participation (including consistent attendance, punctuality, preparation for all meetings, and adhering to an unimpeachable code of classroom conduct that includes
but is not limited to treating students, staff, and faculty with courtesy by not engaging in disruptive acts and behavior) and fulfillment of class requirements.

2. Quality of the assignments completed. Late writing assignments will receive a letter grade deduction per day the assignment is late.

**Opportunities to Excel:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Active Participation in Class</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Paper 1: Read professor’s review in <em>UHQ</em> + 5 assigned essays in Powell’s <em>UGW</em> anthology and write a 5-page paper on the theme: The local is global. Answer the question: How did Utah communities participate in an international conflict?</td>
<td>30 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Paper 2: Read Barbusse and write book review of <em>Under Fire</em> according to HNET guidelines—750 words maximum. Although the review should discuss the entire book, it would be wise to focus on a couple of the chapters in <em>Under Fire</em> to exemplify the themes you wish to emphasize.</td>
<td>1 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Read Intro, Chapter 1 + 3 assigned chapters in Tammy Proctor’s <em>CWW</em> monograph and develop list of 5 questions (to be posted on Canvas and brought to class) to ask Dr. Proctor about her <em>Civilians</em> book.</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Capstone Project: Research assigned topic and present it during the end-of-semester symposium (includes: developing a 750- to 1,000-word script, a 10-minute oral presentation, and creating a PowerPoint).</td>
<td>17 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Read/listen to songs &amp; lyrics and ponder their relationship to primary source readings by writing 250-word responses to 3 of the topical modules (e.g., Injury, Atrocity, Homefront, etc.).</td>
<td>24 April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Papers:**

Detailed paper instructions and grading criteria will be circulated at the beginning of the semester and posted online. Plagiarism will result in failure for the course and additional disciplinary action.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in Room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide materials (including the syllabus) in alternative formats. You do not need to divulge specific details of your disability to your professor. All discussions concerning disabilities will be treated with the utmost confidence; your professor is happy to assist you.

**Additional Resources:**

The professor holds regularly scheduled office hours and will schedule additional time to meet with students by appointment to answer questions and concerns you may have about
the course, strategize on ways to improve your performance on future assignments, and is available to discuss professional interests and other matters. You are highly encouraged to come to office hours throughout the semester.

**ORIGINS & EVOLUTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>1. Course Introduction: Fragments of a Total War</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 Jan</td>
<td><strong>2. Sleepwalkers &amp; Suicide Bombers: War’s Outbreak</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Jan</td>
<td><strong>3. Theatres of War: 1914</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Jan</td>
<td>Listen—Themes of Nationalism: Liam Clancy or Rebel Lyrics, “Patriot Game”; Beach Boys, “Be True to Your School”; Clash, “London Calling” and “Death or Glory”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Jan</td>
<td><strong>4. Theatres of War: 1915</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Feb</td>
<td><strong>5. Theatres of War: 1916</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Feb</td>
<td>Read: <em>FWW</em> Chaps. 5-6; <em>UGW</em> 3 chaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Feb</td>
<td>Listen—Themes of War Management: Bob Dylan, “Masters of War”; Cake, “War Pigs” cover; Rolling Stones, “Paint it Black”; The Cure, “Fire in Cairo”; Clash, “Guns of Brixton”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Feb</td>
<td><strong>6. Theatres of War: 1917</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Feb</td>
<td><strong>7. Theatres of War: 1918</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Feb</td>
<td>DUE: Essay on <em>UGW</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Feb</td>
<td>Read: <em>FWW</em> Chap. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Feb</td>
<td><strong>8. Problems of Peacemaking</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read: *FWW* Chaps. 9-10


**CONDUCT & CONTOURS**

6 Feb  9. Industrialized Killing I: Sea Warfare
Read: *UF* Intro-Chap. 4; PS: Deposition of Captain Thomas Andersen’s account of the loss of the SS *Storstad*, Hoover Institution Library and Archive, Stanford, CA.

8 Feb  10. Industrialized Killing II: Land Warfare
Read: *UF* Chaps. 5-7

13 Feb  11. Battle & Its Accoutrements
Read: *UF* Chaps. 8-11

15 Feb  12. The Trench

20 Feb  13. Injury


22 Feb  14. Endurance

27 Feb  **15. Homefronts**
Read: *UF* Chaps. 22-24; *CWW* intro, 1


1 Mar.  **16. Class Discussion with Professor Tammy Proctor (TBD)**
DUE: Book Review of *UF*
Read: *CWW* 3 chaps.

6-8 Mar.  **NO CLASS [Spring Break]**

13 Mar  **17. Shirkers, Scapegoats, & Demagogues**

15 Mar.  **18. Atrocity**


20 Mar  **19. Humanitarians I: Soldiers’ Relief**

22 Mar  **20. Humanitarians II: Civilian Relief**
Read: Branden Little, “A Child’s Army of Millions: the American Junior Red Cross,” in *Children’s Literature and Culture of the First World War*. Lissa Paul, Rosemary Ross Johnson, Emma Short, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 283-300; Melanie...

**CONSEQUENCES & LEGACIES**

27 Mar  **21. New Maps & New Men**


29 Mar  **NO CLASS [Professor accompanying ROTC staff ride]**

3 Apr  **22. Innocence Lost (?)**


5 Apr  **23. Apprenticeship for Apocalypse**


10 Apr  **24. The Centenary: Liturgy or “Goodbye to All That”?**


Listen—Themes of Loss: Black Keys, “Unknown Brother”; Violent Femmes, “Memory”; Billy Murray, “Over Here, Over There”

12 Apr  **25. Rotational Class (TBA)**

Read: TBA

17 Apr  **26. Symposium**

Do: Participate in Symposium, 12-5pm, at Hetzel-Hoellein Room, Library 321

19 Apr  **27. Hotwash / Last Class Meeting**

Last Thing to Do Online Class Evaluations

Text Abbreviations: Strachan, *The First World War* [*FWW*] / Powell, *Utah and the Great War* [*UGW*] / Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War* [*CWW*] / Barbusse, *Under Fire* [*UF*]