

Course Outline
Engl 44426 / GE 44426
Remembering the Great War in Britain and Germany
TTH 12:45-2:00, Fisher Hall, Room 4.12

Course Description

August 2014 marks the centenary of the Great War, an event that will be commemorated throughout Europe over the course of the following year. The London Undergraduate Program gives Notre Dame students a unique opportunity to observe these commemorations and learn about the various ways in which the war contributed to the formation of modern European identity.

Our course will focus on two case studies (Great Britain and Germany) drawn from opposite sides of the military conflict, and will investigate the various ways in which poets, artists, historians, and ordinary people have tried to make sense of these cataclysmic events over the course of the last 100 years. About half of the semester will be devoted to the actual participants in the war, who left us a rich body of literature reflecting on their experiences. In the second half of the course, we will examine how memories of the Great War shaped the subsequent histories of Britain and Germany and we will observe the centenary celebrations in all their diversity (parades, speeches, exhibits, television features and newspaper reports) to arrive at an answer to the question what the Great War still means to people at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Topics to be studied include:

- the so-called “Ideas of 1914” and other intellectual attempts to justify the outbreak of the Great War
- the various ways in which British and German soldiers on the Western Front experienced modern mechanized warfare
- the “Home Front,” and especially the experience of women during the War
- war memorials and collective memory
- the centenary celebrations and their connection to contemporary European identity

Objectives:

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- describe the lasting cultural impact of the Great War, using illustrative examples from both Great Britain and Germany
- identify formal innovations pioneered in war literature and describe how these relate to historical tradition
- analyze and critique statues, memorials, museum exhibits and other material manifestations of collective memory
- situate contemporary responses to the Great War in a historical context

This course counts towards the university literature requirement.

Course Structure and Expectations

This class will be taught as a reading- and discussion-intensive seminar. Over the course of the semester, we will take several field trips to London sites such as the Imperial War Museum and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, as well as one weekend trip to the battlefields and war memorials of Flanders.

Course expectations:

- regular attendance and participation
- two longer papers
- in-class report on an event or exhibit connected to the centenary celebrations
- final exam

Because of the large number of trips and supplementary activities for this class, the London Center may be forced to impose an additional fee. Student accounts will be charged no more than £45 for photocopying, performances, required field trips and/or travel for this course.

Books Available for Purchase

Michael Howard, *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0199205592, £7.99

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Vintage, ISBN 978-0099532811, £7.99

Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*, Virago Modern Classics, ISBN 978-1844086986, £8.99

Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel*, Penguin, ISBN 978-0141186917, £9.99

Pat Barker, *Regeneration*, Penguin, ISBN 978-0141030937, £8.99

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

As with all university classes, the academic code of honor will be strictly enforced. It is expected that all of the written work that you submit, as well as the ideas expressed therein, are your own. Whenever you do group work, all members of the group should contribute in roughly equal part. Evidence of intentional plagiarism will result in the appropriate punishment, up to and including course failure

You may find further information on Notre Dame's honor code at the following web site:

<http://www.nd.edu/~hnr/code/>.

Course Schedule

Tuesday, 8/26 Introduction to class; Visit to Trafalgar Square

Thursday, 8/28 Walk through City of Westminster. Julian Barnes, "Evermore."
Required background: *The First World War – A Very Short Introduction* (1-4)

Two Short Stories of the World Before the War

Tuesday, 9/2 Arnold Bennett, “The Hungarian Rhapsody” (available online at <http://fullreads.com/literature/the-hungarian-rhapsody/>)
Required background: *The First World War – A Very Short Introduction* (5-7)

Thursday, 9/4 Alfred Döblin, “The Murder of a Buttercup”
Required background: *The First World War – A Very Short Introduction* (8-9)

Literature and Modern Memory (I)

Tuesday, 9/9 Stefan Zweig, “The First Hours of the War of 1914” and “The Struggle for Intellectual Brotherhood (from *The World of Yesterday*)

Thursday, 9/11 Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller”

Thursday, 9/11 Lecture by Professor John Deak, University of Notre Dame

Literature and Modern Memory (II)

Tuesday, 9/16 Paul Fussell, “The Troglodyte World”

Thursday, 9/18 **[No class]**

Tentative date of Saturday, 9/20 Field Trip: Visit to Imperial War Museum

Poems of the Trenches

Tuesday, 9/23 British war poems

Thursday, 9/25 German war poems

The Madness of Mechanized Destruction (I)

Tuesday, 9/30 Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Thursday, 10/2 Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

10/4-10/5 Field Trip to Ypres

The Madness of Mechanized Destruction (II)

Tuesday, 10/7 Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Thursday, 10/9 Selections from diaries by nurses and other female observers of the war from the collections of the Imperial War Museum

Friday, 10/10 First Paper Due

Shell Shock and the Home Front

Tuesday, 10/14 Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*

Thursday, 10/16 Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*

[Fall Break]

The Rapture of Mechanized Destruction

Tuesday, 10/28 Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel*

Thursday, 10/30 Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel*

Aftereffects: The Case of Germany

Tuesday, 11/4 Excerpts from Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*

Thursday, 11/6 Thomas Mann, “Disorder and Early Sorrow”

Thursday, 11/6 Lecture by Professor Jonathan Long, Durham University

Collective Memory, Collective Loss

Tuesday, 11/11 **[Field Trip: Armistice Day Observation]**

Thursday, 11/13 Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”; Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”

Mourning the Dead – Then and Now

Tuesday, 11/18 Group work: Jay Winter and George Mosse on war memorials

Thursday, 11/20 Pat Barker, *Regeneration*

The World War a Century Later

Tuesday, 11/25 Pat Barker, *Regeneration*

Thursday, 11/27 **[No class]**

Friday, 11/28 Second Paper Due

Monday, 12/1 Field Trip to New London Theatre to see *War Horse*

Tuesday, 12/2 War Horse debrief (+ presentations)

Thursday, 12/4 Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (+ presentations) // **Final Exam TBA**