

**Catalog description: Exploration of the causes, conduct and consequences of the First World War in a global context.**

**World War I, 1914-1918  
HIST 3xx Spring Quarter 2008**

**Prof. Alan Beyerchen**

**Hours: T-R, 12:30-2:18, or by appointment in Dulles 369**

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**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course centers on one of the most significant turning points in modern world history—the First World War. Known as “The Great War” until the Second World War, the conflict that erupted during the summer of 1914 and endured for the next four gruesome years transformed the global balance of power, social practices in Europe and around the world, cultural trends and attitudes, the nature of politics, and fundamental economic policy. In fact, the final gasps of the war could be felt in a global Flu pandemic that carried off over 50 million casualties between 1918 and 1919. In the end, the pre-war optimism that prevailed in much of Europe, the U.S., and Japan gave way to general pessimism and foreboding around the world. This class will offer students an opportunity to probe this conflict through an examination of the fighting itself as well as the broader trends and changes generating the war and being spawned by it. While the war was a fundamentally European affair, combatants from around the world participated and fighting took place in the Middle East, Africa, the Atlantic, and in Asia. Consequently, we will take a global approach to the Great War and situate it as a transformative event at many levels.

The objectives of this course are for you to be able to:

1. master the basic factual knowledge of the major historical data and narrative presented in this course
2. be able to think critically about historical issues and their interpretations
3. be able to analyze historical data and reach informed conclusions about those data
4. be able to express yourself with both oral and written clarity and precision.

**Requirements and Grading:**

Attendance and participation are required for success in this course. In addition to required readings, film excerpts will aid our class discussions and lectures. Grades are computed on the basis of attendance/participation, two short 5-page papers on assigned topics, and a final exam. Detailed instructions for the papers will be distributed two weeks in advance of the due dates. While no background in European history is required, strong interest in the subject is recommended.

Attendance and Participation:	15%
First 5-Page Paper:	25% (** Due 15 April **)
Second 5-Page Paper:	25% (** Due 20 May **)
Final Exam:	35%

**Grade Breakdown:**

93.5-100 = A, 89.5-93.4 = A-,  
86.5-89.4 = B+, 83.5-86.4 = B, 79.5-83.4 = B-,  
76.5-79.4 = C+, 73.5-76.4 = C, 69.5-73.4 = C-

66.5-69.4 = D+, 63.5-66.4 = D, 59.5-63.4 = D-,  
59.4-0 = E.

**Grading Your Papers and Exam:** Most of your grade in this course will be based on how well you communicate in writing what you have learned. We will talk about this in class, but here is a brief description of how you will earn your essay grades:

"C" essays will include: an introductory paragraph that contains your thesis; a body of several paragraphs in which you offer accurate evidence from the readings, lectures, and discussions to support your thesis; and a conclusion that reiterates your basic argument.

"B" essays will include: all of the above requirements for a "C" essay plus more relevant data and thoughtful analyses than are found in an average essay.

"A" essays will include: all of the above requirements for a "B" essay plus more skillfully selected data and indication of independent or extended thought.

As for "D" and "E" essays: usually, these essays do not include a viable thesis and/or they do not include very much or information from the course.

### **Classroom Conduct:**

In this course we will create and maintain an environment of respect for one another where all will have an equal opportunity to learn, participate, and succeed. Harassment of any kind and disrespect in general will not be tolerated. All have the right to speak freely within the parameters of the course subject as well as the right to listen to others speaking. A student's right to privacy shall in no way be infringed; any information pertaining to a student's performance in the course shall be kept in strictest confidentiality among the interested parties according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

### **University Policies:**

**University enrollment policy:** University policy holds that "all students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the quarter. No requests to add the course will be approved by the Chair of the Department after that time. Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of the student."

**Academic Honesty:** Students will observe all university policies on academic honesty. All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be presented to the appropriate University committee. See this web site for information on plagiarism and writing handouts:  
<http://estw.osu.edu/> especially at [http://estw.osu.edu/writing\\_center/handouts/index.htm](http://estw.osu.edu/writing_center/handouts/index.htm)

### **Disability Services:**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone ☐292-3307, TDD 292-0901;  
<http://www.osu.edu/disability>.

### **Required Texts:**

Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (textbook)  
Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*

Arthur Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace*  
John H. Morrow, Jr., *The Great War: An Imperial History*  
Svetlana Palmer and Sarah Wallis (eds.), *Intimate Voices from the First World War*.

(You should read the book chapters in the order listed by the beginning of each week, except for the first week, of course. Strachan's textbook chapters and Palmer and Wallis' collection of first-person narratives read relatively quickly, but you will need to spend more time with the books by Morrow and Eksteins. Link's book also reads easily.)

**Class Schedule:**

**Week 1 (25 & 27 March):**

Europe on the Edge of Catastrophe:

25 March: Politics and Economy 1900-1914

27 March: European Society and Imperialism 1900-1914

**Readings:** Strachan, Introduction  
Morrow, Preface and Chapter 1

**Week 2 (1 & 3 April):**

The Run-Up to War:

1 April.: European Culture and Intellectual Life Pre-1914

3 April: European Diplomacy, Alliances, and Military Plans

**Readings:** Strachan, Chapter 1  
Eksteins, Preface, Prologue and Act One, Chapter 1

**Week 3 (8 & 10 April):**

Europe Marches Off to War:

8 April: Escalating Crises: Arms Race and Testing the Alliances

10 April: War Erupts: The Western Front (1914-1915)

**Readings:** Strachan, Chapter 2  
Morrow, Chapter 2  
Palmer and Wallis, Foreward, Preface, Chapter 1  
Eksteins, Act One, Chapter 2

**Week 4 (15 & 17 April):**

Stalemate:

15 April: War on the Eastern Front (1914-1915)

17 April: The Home Front and Lives of Women and Children

**Readings:** Morrow, *The Great War*, Chapter 3  
Palmer and Wallis, Chapters 2-5  
Eksteins, Act One, Chapter 3  
**Assignment:** \*\*\*Paper Number 1 due in Class 15 April\*\*\*

**Week 5 (22 & 24 April):**

Empire and War:

22 April: Europe and Its Empires: Racism and Resistance

24 April: War in the Middle East and Africa (1914-1916)

**Readings:** Strachan, Chapters 3-4  
Morrow, Chapter 4  
Palmer and Wallis, Chapters 6-8

**Week 6 (29 April & 1 May):**

**Bloodbath, 1916:**

29 April: Verdun and the Somme: Carnage in the West

1 May: Eastern and Southern Fronts: Disaster for Russia and Italy

**Readings:** Strachan, Chapters 5-6  
Morrow, *The Great War*, Chapter 4  
Palmer and Wallis, Chapter 9

**Week 7 (6 & 8 May):**

Transformation of the War:

6 May: Mutiny and Revolt (1917)

8 May: Enter the United States (1917-1918)

**Readings:** Strachan, Chapters 7-8  
Morrow, *The Great War*, Chapter 5  
Palmer and Wallis, Chapters 10-13  
Eksteins, Act Two, Chapters 4-6  
Link, Chapters 1 and 2

**Week 8 (13 & 15 May):**

The Guns Fall Silent:

13 May: Collapse of the Eastern Front

15 May: Endgame: Final Offensives in the West

**Readings:** Strachan, Chapter 9  
Morrow, Chapter 6  
Palmer and Wallis, Chapters 14-15 and Postscript

**Week 9 (20 & 22 May):**

Sorting out the Mess:

20 May: The Peace Settlements: Reconstructing Order throughout Europe

22 May: Chaos: The Revolutionary and Counter-Revolutionary  
Waves (1918-1923)

**Readings:** Strachan, Chapter 10  
Morrow, *The Great War*, Chapter 7  
Link, Chapters 3-6

**Assignment:** \*\*\*Paper Number 2 due in Class 20 May\*\*\*

**Week 10 (27 & 29 May):**

Postscript to the Conflict:

27 May: Influenza Pandemic and Economic Crisis (1918-1923)

29 May: Cultural Climate: Anti-Modernity, Modernism, and  
Their Consequences

**Readings:** Eksteins, Act Two, Chapter 7 and Act Three, Chapters 8-10

**Final Exam:**

\*\*\*Thursday 5 June 9:30-11:18 a.m. in our classroom\*\*\*