

HUMANITIES SEMINARS PROGRAM

World War I

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Mondays 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

September 24 – December 10, 2018 (no meetings on November 12 and 19)

2018 marks the centennial of the Great War, as World War I was originally known. The War ended the Concert of Europe, reworked global geography and transformed the domestic structures of the combatants. This course will examine the War's origins, explore how it ended the major world empires, and trace the ways it still casts its shadow across the international community today. We will also consider the factors that motivated individuals to continue fighting even as the casualty lists reached catastrophic levels and few families avoided the loss of loved ones from battle, disease, or persecution. Finally, we will examine how World War I increased the United States' participation in world affairs and set it on its path to global hegemony.

Throughout the course, I will be focusing on three major themes:

(1.) to consider why individuals in all the combatant nations continued (or did not) to fight; (2.) to examine how the effects of the War continue to affect our contemporary world; (3.) to reflect on the consequences for the domestic history of each country.

I would like to encourage student participation in the seminar. I am sure that many of you had relatives who took part in the War, either for the United States or perhaps one of the other combatant nations. So I welcome questions and comments at all times as we investigate so much of the diversity now associated with the War.

Text:

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Ballantine Books, 1987.
ISBN-10: 0449213943.

Films:

All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)
Gallipoli (1981)
Oh, What a Lovely War (1969) Week
Paths of Glory (1957)
The King of Hearts (1966)

Students are expected to watch these films on their own.

These movies vary greatly in content. Yet, they all have an iconic final scene, one that remains with the viewer forever. Three, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Gallipoli*, and *Paths of Glory* are dramas based on real events that occurred in the course of the War. *The King of Hearts*, however, is fictional and is set in a French insane asylum, a fantasy that is as much an anti-war film as any of the others. *Oh, What a lovely War* was originally a play that is tied together by songs that were popular in wartime Britain. Its message is conveyed without bloodshed but with ample use of the red poppy.

Course Schedule:

September 24: The international scene, 1815-1914

October 1: The domestic history of the major combatant nations, 1815-1914

October 8: The July Crisis 1914

October 15: The first months, 1914;

Read and watch *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Oct. 15

October 22: 1915: the 'sideshow'; watch *Gallipoli* by Oct. 22

October 29: War on the home front

November 5: War in the air and at sea

November 26: 1916; watch *Oh, What a Lovely War* by Nov. 26

December 3: 1917; watch *Paths of Glory* by Dec. 3

December 10: 1918 and the armistice; watch *The King of Hearts* by Dec. 10