

WORLD WAR I AND THE AVANT-GARDE

Five-lecture series

Meeting times: Wednesdays, September 28 and October 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2022, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

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Instructor Biography

Laura Hollengreen is Associate Professor and Associate Director of the School of Architecture at the University of Arizona. Since 2019, she has also served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture. Trained as a medievalist art historian (Ph.D., UC Berkeley), Dr. Hollengreen has published on Gothic architecture, sculpture, and manuscript illumination. She has also edited a book on the medieval culture of translation and co-edited another on world's fairs. Her teaching and advising have ranged even more widely, broaching such topics as museum design and cultures of display, urban public space, environmental behavior and design for dwelling, and modern landscapes of war.

Course Introduction

This course investigates the “ecology” of World War I, the “Great War,” with a view to determining its impact on post-war perception, avant-garde art and architecture, and conceptions of the body, place, and memory. World War I was the first “total war” and it saw the inauguration of many new technologies of offense that were met with defensive modifications of the landscape, resulting in a war of attrition. Combat experience in this war resulted in new psychological diagnoses such as shell shock. It’s worth noting that the relationship between the calamitous violence of war and contemporary cultural production is neatly captured by the increasingly frequent application of the military phrase *avant-garde* to the arts. How did experience of the war parallel or impel new cultural expression in art and architecture?

The course will begin with the landscapes and technologies of World War I and then move to combat experience and the war’s psychological costs. It will conclude with a look at experiments in new media such as film and in new movements such as Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, Surrealism, and the International Style. How was the irony of the destruction that ended nineteenth-century narratives of progress figured in three subsequent cultural polarities: abstraction vs. representation, reason vs. unreason, and universality vs. particularity?

Readings and class meetings will deal with a range of topics including the philosophy and culture of war, landscape modification, technologies of war, combat experience, the psychological costs of war, war and art, the emergence of new media and their representation of war, memory and mourning, reconstruction and architecture, and utopian proposals for the pre- and post-war city.

Course Objectives

The course is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To equip students to analyze attitudes toward and experience of landscape in and after conditions of war.
2. To provide exposure to the interdisciplinary study of human environmental behavior in such conditions.
3. To consider anew the relationship between socio-political conditions and the production of culture.
4. To broaden awareness of the ferment of artistic expression in early modernism and the ways it responded to, thematized, or resisted the influence of World War I.
5. To assess the value of study of extreme conditions for design, even in less-than-extreme circumstances.

Course Texts

The lectures will be accompanied by a variety of texts. Everyone is encouraged to buy the following, both available from Amazon and other booksellers:

Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1989; repr. Mariner Books, 2000).

These books—the first a primary source, the second a secondary source—are well worth reading in their entirety. Scans of specifically assigned chapters will also be available to students.

Additional readings specific to each lecture will be provided digitally by the instructor in .pdf. These are divided into “required” and “recommended” readings.

NB: Given the huge volume of scholarship on World War I, there may be many more texts assigned than you can reasonably get through. That's OK! Follow your personal interests in making your way through the “required” readings first (which should relate best to the coverage in lecture) and then follow your personal interests in through other readings. You may be surprised at just how interested you get.

Finally, further texts may be recommended for exploration once the course is underway, depending on the interests and questions of those enrolled.

Lecture 1: Battlefield Ecology in The Great War: New Weapons, Old Tactics

- Overview: Holger H. Herwig, "War in the West, 1914-16," in *A Companion to World War I*, ed. John Horne (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 49-65.
- 1^o: Ernst Jünger, "Les Eparges," "Douchy and Monchy," and "Guillemont," in *Storm of Steel*, trans. Michael Hofmann (New York: Penguin, 2004; first published in 1920), 23-50 and 91-110.
- Req Modris Eksteins, "Rites of War" and "Journey to the Interior," in *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 139-69 and 208-38.
- Paul Fussell, "The Troglodyte World [excerpt]," in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975; illustrated edition, New York: Stirling, 2009), 42-57.
- Allyson Booth, "Maps" and "Physical Borders [excerpt]," in *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space between Modernism and the First World War* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 88-103 and 67-81.
- Rec Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, "Combat," trans. Heather Jones, in *A Companion to World War I*, ed. Horne (as above), 178-87.
- Charles E. Closmann, "Introduction: Landscapes of Peace, Environments of War," in Charles E. Closmann, ed., *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 1-9.
- George L. Mosse, "The Appropriation of Nature," in *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 107-25.
- Tim Travers, "Morale, Firepower and Technology, c. 1900-1918," in *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987), 62-82.
- Rolf-Dieter Müller, "Total War as a Result of New Weapons? The Use of Chemical Agents in World War I," in Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 95-111.
- Dennis E. Showalter, "Mass Warfare and the Impact of Technology," in Chickering and Förster, eds., *Great War, Total War* (as above), 73-93.

Lecture 2: The Soldier's Experience and Psychological Displacements

- 1°: Jünger, "Daily Life in the Trenches," in *Storm of Steel* (as above), 51-66.
- Req Eksteins, "Reason in Madness," in *Rites of Spring* (as above), 170-91.
- Mary R. Habeck, "Technology in the First World War: The View from Below," in Jay Winter, Geoffrey Parker, and Mary R. Habeck, eds., *The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 99-131.
- Booth, "Corpses," and "War Calendar," in *Postcards from the Trenches* (as above), 50-63 and 104-21.
- Paul Lerner, "Introduction," in *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1-11.
- Rec Eric J. Leed, "Myth and Modern War [excerpt]," in *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 138-50.
- Samuel Hynes, "'Fourteen-'Eighteen: Civilian Soldiers [excerpt]," in *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 51-73.
- Wolfgang U. Eckart, "'The Most Extensive Experiment the Imagination Can Conceive': War, Emotional Stress, and German Medicine, 1914-1918," in Chickering and Förster, eds., *Great War, Total War* (as above), 133-49.

Lecture 3: The Avant-Garde in Pre- and Post-War Art: Ghosts and Exorcisms

- Req Sandra M. Gilbert, “‘Unreal City’: The Place of the Great War in the History of Modernity,” in Douglas Mackaman and Michael Mays, eds., *World War I and the Cultures of Modernity* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), ix-xv.
- Annette Becker, “The Avant-Garde, Madness and the Great War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 35/1 (2000): 71-84.
- Amy Lyford, “The Aesthetics of Dismemberment” and “Advertisement of Emasculation [excerpt],” in *Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post-World War I Reconstruction in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 47-94.
- Rec Anton Kaes, “The War at Home,” “Tales from the Asylum,” and “The Return of the Undead,” in *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 7-130.
- Dora Apel, “Cultural Battlegrounds: Weimar Photographic Narratives of War,” *New German Critique* 76 (1999): 49-84.

Lecture 4: The Avant-Garde in Pre- and Post-War Architecture: Leaving the Past Behind

- Req Booth, "Forgetful Objects" and "Glass Objects [excerpt]," in *Postcards from the Trenches* (as above), 125-62.
- Anthony Vidler, "Introduction" and "Nostalgia," in *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 3-14 and 63-66.
- Eleanor Gregh, "The Dom-ino Idea," *Oppositions* 15-16 (1979): 60-87.
- Katerina Rüedi Ray, "Charnel-house," in *Bauhaus Dream-House: Modernity and Globalization* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 43-63.
- Rec Detlef Mertins, "Architectures of Becoming: Mies van der Rohe and the Avant-Garde," in Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, eds., *Mies in Berlin* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2001), 106-33.

Lecture 5: The Waste Land, Memory, and Modernity

Req Jay Winter, "Homecomings: The Return of the Dead," in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 15-28.

Booth, "Corpselessness" in *Postcards from the Trenches* (as above), 21-49.

Modris Eksteins, "War, Memory, and the Modern: Pilgrimage and Tourism to the Western Front," in Douglas Mackaman and Michael Mays, eds., *World War I and the Cultures of Modernity* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 151-60.

Rec Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, "Collective Mourning," in *14-18: Understanding the Great War*, trans. Catherine Temerson (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 182-202.

Thomas W. Laqueur, "Memory and Naming in the Great War," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 150-67.