

HISTORY 2203
WORLD WAR ONE

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Paul Doerr

Fall 2021

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2 to 4 pm or by appointment.

History 2203 examines the causes, progress and consequences of World War One. Considerable attention will be paid to the origins of the war and the period leading up to 1914. The central part of the course, however, will focus on the events of the conflict, including the evolution of strategy and tactics and the impact of new weapons. The social impact of the war and the challenges of coalition warfare will also be considered.

The course has three objectives. First: to improve your understanding of the causes of the war. Second: to gain an understanding of the causes of the trench stalemate which characterized the fighting on the Western Front from 1914 to 1918. Finally, to gain an appreciation of the way the war impacted global history.

“War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied”. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*.

“War provokes more muddled thinking than any human activity I know of”. General Hunter Liggett, 1928.

“Those who believe that wars can be surgical, that they can be won with “shock and awe”, or that they can be directed toward a precise endgame or end state know little about the Great War”. Robert A. Doughty, *Pyrrhic Victory: French Strategy and Operations in the Great War*, 2005.

TEXTS:

Hew Strachan, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Course readings are indicated in brackets.

September 8: Course introduction. The European Great Powers at the turn of the century.

September 10: The Road to War (Strachan chapter 1).

September 13: The Road to War cont'd.

September 15: The final crisis, 1914.

September 17: **FILM TBA (with quiz)**

September 20: Opening Moves, 1914 (Strachan chapter 3).

September 22: Opening Moves, 1914 cont'd.

September 24: **FIRST CLASS TEST**

September 27: Stalemate, 1915, Part One.

September 29: Stalemate 1915, Part Two.

October 1: The Shock of Total War, 1915.

October 4: Life and Death in the Trenches.

October 6: Attrition, 1916-17, Part One. (Strachan, chapters 2 and 4).

October 8: **FILM TBA (with quiz).**

October 11: Thanksgiving holiday, no class.

October 13: Attrition, 1916-17, Part Two.

October 15: **SECOND CLASS TEST**

October 18: The War in the Air. (Strachan, chapter 20).

October 20: New Tactics on the Western Front

October 22: **FILM TBA (with quiz).**

October 25, 27 and 29: Fall Study Break: No classes

November 1: The War at Sea (Strachan, chapter 8).

November 3: Treatment of the wounded.

November 5: **FILM (TBA) (with quiz)**

November 8: The War Outside Europe (Strachan, chapters 6 and 7).

November 10: Grand Strategy and the Diplomacy of War (Strachan, chapter 15).

November 12: **THIRD CLASS TEST**

November 15: The Crisis of 1917 (Strachan, chapters 13, 14 and 18).

November 17: The Crisis of 1917, Part Two.

November 19: **FILM TBA (with quiz).**

November 22: Canada at War.

November 24: The War on the Home Front (Strachan, chapters 11 and 16).

November 26: The German Offensive of 1918 (Strachan, chapter 19).

November 29: The Allied Offensive of 1918 (Strachan, chapter 21).

December 1: Ending the War (Strachan, chapter 22).

December 3: TBA

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Three Acorn class tests worth 20% each for a total of 60%. Test dates: September 24, October 15, November 12.

Film quizzes: 10%. Held in class on September 17, October 8, October 22, November 5 and November 19.

Final exam: 30% (Exam period)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Class Acorn tests: Will consist of multiple-choice format. Questions will be drawn from lectures, films and the course text. More details will be made available prior to the test date – check your emails for updates!

The film quizzes will also be done via Acorn.

This course will make use of e-mail, Acorn, Power Point.

Power points will be posted to Acorn shortly before the relevant classes. My power points contain a basic outline of the lecture, along with important terms, events, names, photos and maps. **I do not** put blocks of text on power points, nor do I post entire class notes. If you skip large numbers of classes, thinking that the power points on Acorn will substitute for class attendance, your mark will not be very good.

Attendance is mandatory for the class tests.

Students are reminded that plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will result in a failing grade, possibly for the whole course. See pages 44-45 of the Acadia University Calendar (Academic Integrity) for details.