

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
Fall Semester 2019
History 4453/01
CRN 80932
World War One
Social Sciences Classroom Building, Room 2030

Instructor: Dr. Joseph L. Meeler

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Class Hours: **Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:30 PM to 1:45 PM**

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Unlike all military conflicts before it, the first great war of the new twentieth century set a precedent for all martial conflagrations to come. It was a watershed event of modern history. The earth had never seen war on this scale, involving nations from every corner of the world. This fierce struggle is called by many names: World War I, The First World War, “the war to end all wars,” “The 1914-1818 War,” and “The Great War.” It began in the summer of 1914 and lasted until the autumn of 1918, changing the political map of the world forever. Though its opposing forces fought their battles primarily in Europe, the First World War claimed the lives of up to twenty million people worldwide, producing a “butcher’s bill” that made it one of the most lethal military conflicts of all time.

This war brought about the destruction of several long-standing polities and empires, concluding the reigns of many of the worlds most powerful and influential royal families. These included the Hohenzollerns of Germany, the Hapsburgs of Austria-Hungary, the Romanovs of Russia, and the Ottomans of the Middle East. Further, this great conflict’s conclusion saw the creation of several new states, such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and a recreated/resurrected Poland.

The political situation within Europe had been steadily fermenting in the nine plus decades following the fall of Napoleon’s empire. The factors of industrialization, competitive colonialism, ethnic rivalries, and an attendant arms race made the coming military conflict more than just an isolated episode in the history of humankind. During the nineteenth century, nations had joined in alliances, warred over disputed territories, and garnered bitter rivalries and hatreds. The consequent vintage of these avaricious and fractious years was an epic struggle for the dominance of Europe and, perhaps, the entire world.

The necessity of an honorable victory was a Victorian-minded goal to which the warring opponents doggedly held for over four years. This aim brought nations to invent dreadful weapons, and with them, to execute ignominious tactics, which both sides turned on their enemies with alacrity. Thus, World War One saw the development and implementation of the trench, the airplane, the submarine, the refinement of indirect-fire artillery, poison gas, barbed wire, machine guns, and “storm-trooper” tactics,

all “combat multipliers” that produced a battlefield environment that seemed to become more miserable and deadlier with new each day. Such a ghastly milieu produced unspeakable terror and suffering in the common soldiers, sailors, and aviators of both sides. The experience of soldiers in the trenches made the term “shell shock” -- a nervous condition produced by continuous exposure to artillery and mortar bombardment -- a household word in the English Language. Similarly, the term “trench foot” became the widely used description of a devastating skin condition, affecting the feet of trench-bound soldiers, men who were required stand for days in water that oft-times covered and inundated their boots and socks.

The conclusion of this brutal conflict would introduce western democracies to the threat of spreading communist internationalism, to a briefly belated great world economic depression, and ultimately, just a short fifteen years later, to the rise of Nazi Germany. Arguably, the vengeful bent of Germany’s new Chancellor, Adolph Hitler -- a former Corporal in the Kaiser’s Army and the victim of an Allied poison gas attack -- provided much of the impetus for the aggressive completion of “some unfinished business.” Hitler’s quest for vengeance against his nation’s former enemies is writ large upon the list of causations of the next great global struggle, the bloodiest war of all time, the Second World War.

In this course, we will discuss the major issues and causes of the First World War, study its major battles, its opposing forces and their governments, and the personalities (both military and political) who shaped the events and, ultimately, the outcome of this epic and blood-spattered confrontation. We will also study the social implications for the populations of the warring powers during and after the war. This information should bring the student a basic understanding of the political, military, and social history of the war and the long-range political, implications and consequences of the treaty that concluded it.

Class lectures and textbook readings will give you a general chronological framework. Films and videos shown in class will provide deeper insight into particular problems and periods. **As geography and an understanding of military maps are an important part of this course, tests and quizzes will include maps.** The course schedule is a guide to this course, outlining the student’s reading schedule and the subjects of discussion for each class period. Students should **complete all assigned readings before class.** Do not fall behind on reading assignments. Although there will not be enough time to discuss all assigned readings in a particular class, the information in each assignment may be included on examinations. The course schedule is subject to change. Students are responsible for any amendments to the reading list that the instructor may announce in class during the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After successful completion of the course, students should be able to perform the following in written and oral presentations:

(1) Reconstruct on exams and book reviews the relationship between the military, political, and social developments surrounding World War I and historical continuity and change.

- (2) Identify in the course readings, exams, and book reviews the central question(s) that different kinds of historical narratives address and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it was constructed.
- (3) In classroom discussions and book reviews, draw on historical data to clarify information on the relationship between military, political, and social patterns and historic events.
- (4) In classroom discussions and on exams, analyze cause and effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation.
- (5) In student presentations, bring sound and relevant historical analysis to the lives and careers of important military and or political leaders.

Course Goals:

In this course, we will examine the political conditions and precipitating actions that brought on World War I, its major battles and events, and the political and social consequences for the governments and populations that survived the war. Each week of the semester, we will examine a specific aspect or historical period of the conflict, generally following the outline of the chapters in Dr. Hew Strachan's history of this struggle, *The First World War*. In each lecture, where possible, the instructor will provide extra information or alternate views of the events that Strachan evinces in his book.

Students will learn:

1. Military and World War I specific military terminology
2. The characteristics of the nations involved in World War I
3. The political, military and social factors that precipitated World War I
4. The nature of the battlefield and its conditions as well as the new technologies and tactics, which the opposing powers introduced during the First World War.
5. The major events of the more important battles that took place on the Western, Eastern, Italian, African, and Mediterranean-Middle Eastern Fronts
6. The major events of the more important sea battles
7. The nature of the Treaty of Versailles and the outcomes of the war
8. The personal characteristics of the prominent military and political leaders of the Central Powers during World War I
9. The personal characteristics of the prominent personalities of the governments and military services of England, France, and Russia, the members of the Triple Entente
10. The personal characteristics of the prominent military and political leaders of the for the Associated Powers

REQUIRED READING:

Strachan, Hew, *The First World War*, ISBN 0-670-03295-6

Jünger, Earnst, *Storm of Steel*, ISBN 978-0-14-243790-2

Eisenhower, John S.D., *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I*, ISBN 978-0743223850

EVALUATION:

Midterm Exam:	25%
Final Exam:	25%
Book Reviews	30%
Class Participation	10%
Student Oral Report	10%

EXAMS:

The **TWO exams** will be written in class as essays in student-purchased (8 1/2" x 11" size) "Blue Books," which can be obtained at the campus bookstore. **Students must obtain prior permission (before the scheduled date of the test), from the instructor, to reschedule an examination.**

Without such an arrangement or a valid excuse (personal illness verified by documentation from a health-care professional or a documented death in the family), the instructor may not allow the student to make up a missed examination. If an emergency occurs on an exam day, causing the student to miss that exam, he or she must contact the instructor within 24 hours of the exam time, explaining the nature of the emergency and his or her intention to reschedule that exam as soon as possible.

Grammar or spelling mistakes on examinations will not count against the student, nevertheless, his or her writing must be legible and comprehensible, and those responses should be well organized and reasoned. If the instructor cannot make sense of an answer, there will be no credit given for that response.

BOOK REVIEWS:

Students will write book reviews/exams in class on *Storm of Steel* and *Yanks*. These reviews/exams will be written in (8 1/2" x 11" size) "Blue Books" -- purchased by the student and brought to class -- during the 75 minutes of class time on each of the appointed days listed below. On these days, the instructor will issue each student a series of questions concerning the subject book, questions that will require him or her to possess a thorough knowledge of that work's contents and ideas. The instructor will evaluate these reviews/exams, focusing on the thoroughness, accuracy, and detail of each student's responses. The successful student will know much and write much about the subject book.

Book Review/Exam Dates:

***Storm of Steel*, September 19**

***Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I*, October 30**

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Be in class on time. The instructor will take roll on a regular basis. A student's class participation grade will be based his or her individual contributions to classroom decorum* and classroom attendance. Again: *Any student's class absence over three (3) will result in the loss of that student's entire class participation grade.* Excessive absences will result in a lower class participation grade and will surely impair a student's ability to succeed on examinations. When necessity prevents your class attendance, assure that you obtain notes from a reliable source. Valid reasons for excused absences include personal illnesses, infirmities that a health-care professional verifies by documentation; or a death in the family, that an obituary from a newspaper or a funeral program certifies.

*A lack of contribution to classroom decorum includes sleeping in class, the unauthorized use of telephones, recorders, or computers in class, multiple incidences of tardiness, and multiple incidences of leaving the class early.

THE PROFESSOR RESERVES THE OPTION OF FAILING ANY STUDENT UPON HIS OR HER FOURTH (4TH) ABSENCE.

THE INSTRUCTOR PROHIBITS STUDENT USE OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS AND ANY OTHER SOUND-REPRODUCING DEVICE IN THE CLASSROOM BEFORE DURING OR AFTER CLASS.

STUDENTS SHOULD KEEP THEIR CELL PHONES IN THEIR POCKETS, PACKS, OR PURSES, TURNING THE RINGER TO VIBRATE OR SILENT BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOM. IF A STUDENT'S CELL PHONE SHOULD RING WHILE HE OR SHE IS IN THE CLASSROOM, THAT INDIVIDUAL SHOULD TURN IT OFF IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY PUT IT AWAY. HOWEVER, IF THE PHONE CALL IS IMPORTANT, HE OR SHE MAY LEAVE THE CLASSROOM AND ANSWER IT OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM IN THE HALLWAY. WHEN THAT PHONE CALL IS FINISHED, THE STUDENT SHOULD THEN QUIETLY RETURN TO HIS OR HER SEAT.

NO STUDENT IS TO HAVE A CELL PHONE OF ANY TYPE IN HIS OR HER HANDS FOR ANY OTHER REASON WHILE HE OR SHE IS IN THE CLASSROOM.*

STUDENT ORAL REPORT:

The Student Oral Report grade is a subjective determination by the instructor of each student's performance in presenting appropriate material pertaining to a person of importance in the time and space of military history for the period covered in this course. Student reports should emphasize this famous (or maybe infamous) individual's contribution to the change of warfare over the centuries. During one of several designated class sessions, each student will -- as scheduled by the instructor -- give his or her presentation, each of which will last at least 5 and no more than 7 minutes. Early in the semester, the instructor will assign, from an instructor-compiled list, each student's report subject.

The grading scale for this course's "semester grade" is as follows:

- A = 90% or above = 4.0
- B = 80% to 89% = 3.0
- C = 70% to 79% = 2.0
- D = 60% to 69% = 1.0
- F = 59% and below = 0

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Observe the honor code. Your student handbook and KSU catalog thoroughly explain Kennesaw State University's stance on cheating and **plagiarism**. This instructor will enforce all stipulations of this code. Do your own work! The submission of any plagiarized work will denote an actionable case of academic dishonesty. Examples of plagiarism include papers and study sheets that you may copy from other students and the copying of significant passages from sources such as books, magazines, or websites without attribution. ***It is the instructor's policy that even one incidence of plagiarism will warrant the award of an **F** to that student for the entire course.***

Examples of Plagiarism Avoidance websites:

<http://plagiarism.org/>

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

<http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>

Academic Integrity Statement: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section 5. C of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the university's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to university materials, misrepresentation/falsification of university records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. The instructor will handle incidents of alleged academic misconduct through the established procedures of the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI), which includes either an

“informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement. See also <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-studentcode-conduct>.

OFFICE HOURS:

Students may bring questions concerning readings, lectures, themes, or general concepts, and any other course-related matters to the instructor’s attention. Students may meet with the instructor by appointment (see the first page of this syllabus). Students may see the instructor after class, make contact with him by E-mail, or leave a message in his mailbox in the History & Philosophy Department in order to arrange such a conference.

Electronic Communications. The University provides all KSU students with an “official” email account with the address “*students.kennesaw.edu*.” Commensurate with federal laws protecting educational information and other data, **this is the sole email account students should use to communicate with his or her instructor or with other University officials.**

LEARNING DISABILITIES:

ADA Compliance:

Students with qualifying disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who require “reasonable accommodation(s)” to complete the course may request those from Office of Student Disability Services. Students requiring such accommodations are required to work with the University’s Office of Student Disability Services rather than engaging in this discussion with individual faculty members or academic departments. If, after reviewing the course syllabus, a student anticipates or should have anticipated a need for accommodation, he or she must submit documentation requesting an accommodation and permitting time for a determination prior to submitting assignments or taking course quizzes or exams. Students may not request retroactive accommodation for needs that were or should have been foreseeable. Students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in the Carmichael Student Center in Suite 267. Please visit the Student Disabilities Services website at www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/sds for more information, or call the office at 470-578-6443.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1— August 20-22: Get Acquainted: “To Arms”

Readings: Strachan: Chapter 1

Week 2— August 27-29: “To Arms”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 1

Week 3— September 3 -5: “Under the Eagle”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 2

Week 4— September 10-12 “Global War”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 3

Week 5—September 17: “Global War”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 3

Storm of Steel (Review/Exam: September 19)

Week 6— September 24-26: “Global War”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 3

Week 7— October 1: “Jihad”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 4

OCTOBER 3— MIDTERM EXAM

Week 8— October 8-10: “Jihad”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 4

(October 9 is the last day to withdraw without academic penalty.)

Week 9—October 15-17: “Shackled to a Corpse”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 5

Week 10— October 22-24: “Shackled to a Corpse”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 5

Week 11— October 29-31: “Breaking the Deadlock”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 6

Yanks (Review/Exam: November 5)

Week 12— November 7: “Blockade”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 7

Week 13— November 12-14: “Revolution”

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 8

Week 14— November 19-21: “Germany’s Last Gamble” and Student Reports

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 9

November 22- December 2: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15— December 3- 5: “War Without End” and Student Reports

Reading: Strachan: Chapter 10 & review all chapters

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 12, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

How to Write a Book Review

- 1) A book review is an essay, which the writer/student composes with the purpose of commenting on a particular work or a series of works bearing upon a single subject or related subjects. The most important element about a book review to remember is that it is a **commentary**, not merely a summary. You should devote relatively little space to surveying the contents. Simply present a brief outline or synopsis, indicating the general topic, the chronological scope, the major emphasis (political, economic, intellectual, etc.) and which, if any, aspects of the subject are totally ignored.
- 2) The bulk of your review, therefore, should concentrate on your evaluation of the way the author(s) handled the issues discussed. What is/are the overall thesis/theses -- the points of view or conclusion? What are your reactions? Did the book enhance your understanding of the issues? Be as direct as possible. Remember, you are the expert. In framing your review, you should provide some information on the author(s). What are his or her relevant qualifications and background (or lack thereof) for writing on this subject? What were his or her reasons for writing this book? (Often, the preface contains such information) What evidence does the author cite, and has new documentation become available? If so, identify the new documentation. Alternatively, does the book present a novel interpretation based on previously available documents, or does it provide a new literary or dramatic account of a subject already treated by others? Your conclusions and assessments regarding these aspects, of course, will affect your comparative evaluations of the works. You should also consider the time during which the book was written and, if evident, the author's values and biases. For example, in all likelihood a biography of Senator Joseph McCarthy written by a conservative Republican journalist in 1954 will differ from a biography written by a neo-Marxist academic in 1974.
- 3) It will probably be necessary to refer to specific portions of the books to illustrate your statements and conclusions, but it is generally not advisable to quote extensively from it. Do not try to make more points than can be accomplished thoroughly in your review. It is better to make a few points well than many points poorly. Once you have decided on the central points you intend to make, treat each one as a separate section of your review. Each section should explain the one point, supporting it with your own arguments and with brief examples from the book(s) under review and drawing conclusions as to the meaning and importance of the point.
- 4) Your review should conclude with your personal critique. Refer back to your introductory paragraph(s). What is your ultimate judgment of the style, format, contents, and historical value of the book? Has the author achieved the purpose, explicit or implicit, for writing the book? Has he or she persuasively argued the thesis to your satisfaction? Then, explain why or why not? Compare the evidence cited and argumentation used to support the respective conclusions. Has the book challenged you intellectually, increasing your knowledge, raising new questions, and/or presenting the material in a novel, even provocative manner? On the other hand, does the author simply rehash what everyone already knows?

(Some material excerpted from documents written by
US Army Combat Studies Institute
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas