HIST 512A THE GREAT WAR

Time: Tue Thu 12:30-1:45pm  
Instructor: Prof. Frieberg  
Place: Com 206  
Office Hours: Tue Thu 11am-noon, Tue 2-3pm AL 576 or by appt.

Course Objectives:
While World War One is often overshadowed by World War Two in collective memory, it was a watershed moment in European history. Called the Great War by contemporaries, it was the first large-scale industrial war. It changed military concepts of warfare, discrediting offensive military tactics and introducing new weapons technology. As an early instance of Total War, this conflict saw some of the earliest cases of genocide, such as the Armenian one, and it contributed heavily to the Russian Revolution. Culturally, the First World War changed gender roles and led to new directions in art and culture. Finally, it reshaped the European map and laid the foundation to the Second World War, which broke out only twenty years later.

The assignments for this course include two shorter papers, two take-home exams with questions from lectures, discussions and readings, and a longer term paper. You will be asked to read between 50 and 100 pages a week, depending on the type of materials.

Course Structure:
This class meets twice a week and is primarily a lecture course though I will expect active class participation through engagement with readings in a number of class discussions.

Course Literature

1. Title: Empires, Soldiers, and Citizens: A World War I Sourcebook  
   ISBN: 9780470655832  
   Author: Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee, Frank Coetzee

2. Title: Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918 (New Approaches to European History)  
   ISBN: 9780521547802
In the two focus questions, you will use your readings to deal with key questions in the history of the First World War. The questions will be 2-3 pages long, double-spaced. You are expected to answer them directly and precisely. YOU MUST CITE YOUR SOURCES WITH PAGE NUMBERS in these questions. If you do not cite your sources, you have automatically failed your assignment.

The midterm and final will be take-home exams of 8-12 pages in which you use the discussions and readings from the semester to answer larger discussion questions concerning the historiographical questions about WWI in an essay format. I will pass out the questions about 10 days ahead of the due dates.

The final paper will be an argumentative essay, 7-9 pages long, which will discuss a World War I-topic outside of Europe. There will be two pre-selected topics or you may
choose an independent topic. You will need to submit an outline, thesis and bibliography to me for feedback by November 13. For expectations on style, citations, and grammar, see Blackboard “course documents.”

**Participation** A high participation grade requires regular attendance, speaking up in class frequently and giving evidence of having read the texts. As a rule of thumb, near perfect attendance and no class engagement is evaluated as a C-level performance, near perfect attendance and occasional participation as B-level, and near perfect attendance and high activity in class conversations as A-level. Spotty participation and great engagement in class and readings would be low B-level.

**Policies and Expectations**

**Attendance:**
I will not take attendance. However, you are responsible for any material covered in class and you will need to find out from a friend, from the text book and readings or by coming to my office hours if you have missed anything. You will only be able to make up in-class assignments in case of an excused absence. Excused absences should be discussed with me BEFORE or as they occur. I will only grant an excused absence if you can present official documentation.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:**
Will not be tolerated in this class. For a minor case of plagiarism, you will receive an F for the assignment. For a major case of plagiarism (such as lifting an entire paper from the internet or presenting someone else’s work as your own), you will receive an F for the course. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, consult the American Historical Association’s definition via this link:
http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm#Plagiarism

**Expectations and a Contract:**
College should be a preparation for professional life and an institution for adults. For our mutual work place to function well, we need a contract of expectations on each other in order to maintain a professional, pleasant atmosphere in this class (see attachment A, sign and return).

**Disabilities and Special Needs:**
I am happy to accommodate any student with a special need or disability but in order to help you effectively I need to be notified of this need early in the semester, in the first two weeks. Grades or deadlines cannot be adjusted retroactively. You may contact Student Disability Services for documentation/assessment. You do have the right to privacy with regards to your special needs, and to simply provide me with the documentation from SDS stating which accommodations you would need. For directions on how to receive accommodations, call SDS at (619)594-6473 or consult:
http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds

**Paper late policy:**
- The Focus Questions cannot be turned in late except in the case of an excused absence or for a valid reason.
• If you turn in either of the two exams, or the paper late without an approved excuse, you will lose ½ grade off the grade I would have given your paper (C+ to C-, C- to D etc.) and another 1/2 grade for each additional day the paper is late except in the case of an excused absence. You cannot turn the final in late except if you have a documented and serious reason approved by me. If you do, I will calculate and submit your grade without the final exam grade.

Student Learning Objectives
• To identify, discuss, and describe parallel and conflicting perspectives by multiple nationalities, genders, groups, and ethnicities on one historical event.
• To read and analyze primary sources critically within a larger historical context.
• To evaluate multiple primary sources against one another, determining the more likely course of events.
• To understand short- and longterm cultural and political legacies of WWI.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Background

Tue., Aug. 25: introduction and syllabus

Thur., Aug. 27: lecture and discussion: Why War?
Topics:
  1. Empires...: Read the excerpts by observers in France, England, and Germany. Which feelings, hopes and doubts did they share at the outbreak of the war?
  2. Chickering: Which factors in 19th century European or German society lead to “The Spirit of 1914”?
  3. Chickering: Why were the military leadership surprised by or disappointed in the first months of the war?

Week II: Outbreak and Background

Tue., Sept. 1: lecture: The Shot in Sarajevo, and Its Background.

Thur., Sept. 3: lecture and discussion: Industrialization, Nationalism, and Imperialism
Discussion: Empires, Soldiers, and Citizens: pp. 40-69
Topics:
  1. “Us” versus “Them”: How do British, German, and Indian texts describe the enemy?
  2. What are the greatest challenges for and complaints by soldiers just arriving on the fronts?
  3. How do these challenges differ depending on who you are?
Week III: The First Weeks

**Tue., Sept. 8:** lecture: The Western Front

**Thu., Sept. 10:** film: All Quiet on the Western Front
Read: Chickering, 32-64

**Focus Question #1:** Use Chickering pages 1-64, and at least two primary sources from *Empires, Soldiers, and Citizens* to describe the expectations and hopes of participants and leaders in August 1914, and how/why these were disappointed.

Week IV: The Eastern Front

**Tue., Sept. 15:** lecture: WWI in the East
Discussion: Chickering, 65-93, Yashka, Chapters 1-VI.
1. Chickering: Why did Hindenburg and Ludendorff succeed in the east?
2. Yashka: how does Yashka describe her and her surroundings’ reaction on the news that war had broken out?

**Thu., Sept. 17:** film: “All Quiet on the Western Front”

Week V: Major Battles

**Tue., Sept. 22:** lecture: Verdun, Somme, Ypres, Siege of Przemysl -

**Thu., Sept. 24:** lecture and discussion: Naval Warfare
Topics:
1. Conrad: How does the officer in “the Tale” describe the war at sea? What are the implications of submarine warfare as described by the story and in *Empires*?
2. Perry: What has Holt done and why? How does Joseph handle the situation and why doesn’t he allow it to become public? Is justice served?

Week VI: Total War

**Tue., Sept. 29:** documentary: PBS 2006 “The Armenian Genocide”

**Thu., Oct. 1:** discussion: Total War and the Home Front
Discussion: Chickering, 94-129, Jay Winter, “Under the Cover of War” (blackboard)

**Focus Question #2:** Describe the reasons to why the Armenian genocide happened. How was Turkey’s participation in the war, and Total War in general connected to the outbreak of genocide and ethnic cleansing?

Week VII: Homefront
Tue., Oct. 6: Lecture: Mobilization, Leaves, and Civilians

Thu., Oct. 8: discussion:
Topics:
1. How does the old woman in “Them Other” understand the war? How does she understand the enemy?
2. In which ways did the war impact the home front based on the sources in Empires?

Week VIII: The Global War

Tue., Oct. 13: lecture: The War in the Middle East

Thu., Oct. 15: Midterm

Week IX: Women and the Great War

Tue., Oct. 20: lecture: Women and the War

Thu., Oct. 22: discussion: Women – Civilians and Soldiers
Topics:
1. Give examples of how Yashka is treated differently from other soldiers because of being a woman – by her mother, by the recruitment office, by the soldiers on the front?
2. How does she use being a woman to her advantage? How does she respond to the efforts to prevent her from going to war?
3. What are the sources of conflict between the husband and wife in the German couple in Empires? Why do they seem to live in different worlds?

Week X: Dissenters, Socialists and Revolutionaries

Tue., Oct. 27: lecture: Dissenters, Pacifists, Socialists, and Revolutionaries
Chickering, 130-158

Thu., Oct. 29: lecture: Ghosts, Myths, and Superstitions of the Great War
Topics:
1. What might be the psychological function of the belief in the supernatural during war?

Week XI: End Stages

Tue., Nov. 3: lecture: The Entry of the United States and American Mobilization

Thu., Nov. 5: lecture: The Russian Revolution
Topics:
   1. How do the Bolsheviks (Lenin and Trotsky) deal with Yashka? What are their attitude toward her?
   2. Is Yashka’s story a tragedy or a triumph, both, or neither. Motivate your answer.
   3. What were the differences in how Yashka and Lenin understood Russia’s participation in World War I?

Week XII: The End and the Versailles Treaty

Tue., Nov. 10: lecture: The Weakening of the Central Powers

Thu., Nov. 12: lecture: The End of the War

Bibliography, Outline, Thesis of final paper due

Week XIII: Political Legacies

Tue., Nov. 17: Lecture: Versailles and The Legacy of WWI on Germany
Read: the Versailles Treaty (Blackboard)
Topics:
   1. What is the aim of the treaty?
   2. Can you identify weaknesses or problems inherent in the treaty text?

Thu., Nov. 19: Class Cancelled.

Week XIV: Cultural Legacies

Tue., Nov. 24: Final Paper due

Thu., Nov. 26: THANKSGIVING

Week XV: Roots of WWII

Tue., Dec. 1: Film: Black Adder: Goodbye!

Thu., Dec. 3: Discussion:

Topics:

1. Which challenges did the winning and losing states and state leaders face after the war?
2. Which challenges did veterans encounter after the war was over?

Week XVI: The End

Tue., Dec. 8: Lecture: Poets, Dada, and Artists

Thu., Dec. 10: Review/Consultation

Final Exam is due in my office on December 17, no later than 12:30.