

Germany and the First World War
History 423 / Fall 2023 / CRN 14102
MWF 9:30 – 10:20 in UNIV 201

Learning Outcomes

Completing this course will enhance your ability to:

- > read, analyze, and discuss book-length historical monographs
- > understand key elements of historical interpretation, including historiography and causation
- > respond to complex paper assignments & exam questions with clearly written essays
- > discuss the origins, key turning points, and specific outcomes of World War I
- > contemplate questions of individual morality, war crimes, and national belonging

Course Requirements

This is a senior-level course, so expectations are high in terms of reading, writing, and participation. You will read four books and write three papers as well as three response papers.

Participation (10% of course grade). This is a reading-intensive course, with a substantial emphasis on classroom discussions. To encourage ongoing individual participation, an occasional reading quiz may also factor into the participation grade.

First paper (20% of course grade). This 1,500-word paper involves an analysis of German war crimes. Due Tuesday, Sept. 26 by midnight.

Second paper (20% of course grade). This 1,500-word paper will explore the dynamics of the Verdun and Somme battles. Due Sunday, Oct. 22 by midnight.

In lieu of a formal paper on the Jünger memoir/novel *Storm of Steel*, you will write **three** shorter reaction papers in response to my prompts; each will be due at the start of class on the day we are discussing that section of the reading. (Total of three reaction papers = 20% of course grade.)

Double book review: You will choose two historical monographs from an approved list and write a comparative book review of at least 2,000 words. Due by Friday, Dec. 15. (30% of course grade)

Course Readings

The following four books are required for this course and should be available at Follett's and the University Bookstore. In case you wish to search for these items from an on-line retailer, be sure to make use of the ISBN numbers below to ensure that you wind up with the right edition.

Chickering, Roger. *Imperial Germany and the Great War*, 3rd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. ISBN-13 (paper): 978-1-10769-152-0.

Hull, Isabel. *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006. ISBN-13 (paper): 978-0-80147-293-0. [on-line @ Purdue Libraries]

Jankowski, Paul. *Verdun: The Longest Battle of the Great War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN-13 (paper): 978-0-19061-971-8. [on-line @ Purdue Libraries]

Jünger, Ernst. *The Storm of Steel*. Trans. Michael Hofmann: New York: Penguin, 2004. ISBN (paper): 978-0-14243-790-2. **Please buy this edition only, so that we can literally be on the same page when discussing this book!**

Course Policies

Attendance is essential. You are allowed *six* unexcused absences; after that, each absence may be counted against your course grade. I don't need to know why you've missed class – that's your business. But use your absences wisely.

There are, of course, some asterisks to this attendance policy: Purdue has a COVID-19 policy, and there is a new Medically Excused Absence Policy for Students (MEAPS). But those only apply to serious illnesses.

Common courtesy suggests that you should arrive on time. If you must leave early, please inform us ahead of time and then raise your hand at the appropriate time. A lecture is not the same thing as a television viewing! Your coming and going may represent a significant distraction.

Please do not use electronic devices during class. No iPhones, iPads, or laptops. Srsly. Otherwise your casual meanderings around the World Wide Web will distract everyone around you. If you want to take notes, use pen/pencil and paper. I would urge you to **buy physical copies of the course books** so that you can refer to the readings during class discussion.

Academic integrity: The assignments in this course require you to formulate complex thoughts in your own words. Attempts to pass off another's words as your own – be it on an exam or in your written work – will carry harsh penalties. Plagiarized papers will earn a “zero” for the assignment and may lead to further consequences, including notification of the Dean of Students Office. The “University Regulations” handbook contains further information on dishonesty.

-> Is the use of AI tools such as “ChatGPT” a violation of academic integrity? Yes, in the sense that letting a computer write your papers is not an authentic expression of your own voice. Also, thus far AI tools are not especially good at upper-level history courses. You'll only learn the skills you need to develop as a history major if you do the work the hard way!

Disclaimer: In the event of a major campus emergency (which has happened in recent memory!), the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructor via email or phone.

Contact Information

Prof. William G. Gray (wggray@purdue.edu)
Office Hours in UNIV 121:
M 10:30 – 11:30 and Th 10:30 - noon

Reading and Discussion Schedule**Read for class**

Aug. 21	Introduction	
Aug. 23	Imperial Germany – the world’s most advanced society? (L)	Chickering, 1-9
Aug. 25	The Franco-German antagonism (L)	Nolan chapter
Aug. 28	The Anglo-German antagonism (L)	
Aug. 30	Historiography and the origins of WW I (D)	Langdon chapter
Sept. 1	The “spirit of 1914” (L)	Chickering, 10-18
Sept. 4	LABOR DAY (NO CLASS!)	
Sept. 6	Flashback: colonial violence against the Herero (D)	Hull, 1-90
Sept. 8	READING DAY (NO CLASS!)	
Sept. 11	Flashback: Military culture in Imperial Germany (D)	Hull, 91-196
Sept. 13	How the war bogged down (L)	Chickering, 18-31
Sept. 15	German war crimes in Belgium (D)	Hull, 197-262
Sept. 18	The Library at Louvain (D)	Kramer chapter
Sept. 20	Germany and the Armenian genocide (D)	Hull, 263-333
Sept. 22	Poison gas & the Lusitania	Chickering, 104-110
Sept. 25	Mobilizing resources	Chickering, 32-65
[Sept. 26]	[First paper due, 11:59 pm]	
Sept. 27	War and culture, I: the intellectuals (L)	
Sept. 29	War and culture, II: social responses to war (D)	Gray essay
Oct. 2	Occupied Europe and war in the colonies	Chickering, 83-104
Oct. 4	Verdun, part I (D)	Jankowski, 3-63 Afflerbach chapter
Oct. 6	CONFERENCE DAY (NO CLASS!)	
Oct. 9	FALL BREAK (NO CLASS!)	
Oct. 11	Verdun, part II (D)	Jankowski, 64-130

Oct. 13	Verdun, part III (D)	Jankowski, 131-194
Oct. 16	Verdun, part IV (D)	Jankowski, 195-264
Oct. 18	The Hindenburg Program (L)	Chickering, 66-83
Oct. 20	The social burdens of war (D)	Chickering, 111-53
Oct. 22	[Second paper due, 11:59 pm]	
Oct. 23	The war coalition weakens (D)	Chickering, 154-191
Oct. 25	Fomenting revolution (L)	
Oct. 27	The submarine gamble, 1917 (D)	Herwig chapter
Oct. 30	Germany, Russia, and the Ukraine (L)	
Nov. 1	The Ludendorff Offensive (L)	Chickering, 192-207
Nov. 3	Collapse and Revolution (L)	Chickering, 207-218
Nov. 6	Aftermaths (L)	Chickering, 219-238
Nov. 8	War and memory: The Weimar Republic (L)	
Nov. 10	Ernst Jünger's war, part I (D)	Jünger, intro + 5-66
Nov. 13	Ernst Jünger's war, part II (D)	Jünger, 67-156
Nov. 15	War and memory: the Third Reich (L)	Rohkrämer chapter
Nov. 17	Ernst Jünger's war, part III (D)	Jünger, 156-289
Nov. 22	Final assignment overview	
Nov. 22-24	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Nov. 27	Film: <i>Joyeux Noel</i>	
Nov. 29	Film: <i>Joyeux Noel</i>	
Dec. 1	Film: <i>Joyeux Noel</i>	
Dec. 4	Film: <i>Westfront 1918</i>	
Dec. 6	Film: <i>Westfront 1918</i>	
Dec. 8	Wrap-up and conclusions (D)	