

LS 814: Liberty and Authority: War

Fall 2022 - Tuesdays – 6:30 – 9:20 pm – In Person

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War is a part of human social existence. Why is this so? What compels humans to engage in legal murder? What do humans achieve from it? How do humans grapple with its horror and aftermath?

The course will focus on the Great War (1914-1918) and how it was experienced by everyday people: soldiers and civilians, women, men, and children. It was brutal and involved dozens of nation states and, in the end, killed millions of people, thousands of animals, and left behind environmental wastelands. The first and final sessions will highlight more general questions about war itself.

A range of literary genres will be used, as well as film and online sources.

Each student will make one seminar presentation on a select source or sources and will submit a final essay of about 15 pages on a topic related to the course.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

September 13

Watch Margaret MacMillan, *War and Humanity* lecture, October Trinity College, U of T

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCDJhvwSrbo>

MacMillan is one of the leading contemporary scholars of WWI. This lecture is based on her most recent book, *War: How Conflict Shaped Us* (2020).

Read Chris Hedges, *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* (2002)

A war correspondent for over three decades with an educational background in literature, the classics, and theology, Hedges discusses why nations and individuals go to war, and the consequences of it.

September 20

Read Béla Zombory–Moldován, *Burning of the World: A Memoir of 1914* (2014)

A young Hungarian artist is holidaying in Croatia in July 1914 when he sees a notice that he must report for military duty. His experiences on the Eastern Front changes his life and, as he observes, the then known world.

September 27

Watch *Freedom Had a Price* (NFB 1994) – online SFU library

Canada evoked its War Measures Act shortly after the declaration of war and, between 1914 and 1920, Ukrainians (and others) were designated “enemy aliens.” Many were sent to internment camps.

Read Garnik Banean, *Goodbye, Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (2015)

A child when the war began, Banean writes of the deportation of his family by the Turks under the guise of protecting them from the invading armies. Most of his family members die in a refugee camp in Syria and he is placed in an orphanage.

October 4

Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a2xYvXwGiw> (Women's Peace Conference 1915)

Read <https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/10152> (Jane Addams Carnegie Address 1915)

The conference in the Hague brought together over 1200 women – including those from “belligerent” nation states - and they called for peace mediation between the warring nations. They were ridiculed and condemned by many men in power.

Read Karyn Burnham, *The Courage of Cowards* (2014)

<https://archive.org/details/courageofcowards0000burn/mode/2up>

Conscription was introduced in Britain in 1916, but not all men could conscientiously – for various reasons – fight in the war. Such a decision resulted in some brutal consequences.

October 11

Watch *Shell Shock*, WWI documentary (1998)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPJW3A-e6jo>

Read part one and part two of Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (1991)

Barker's novel is the first of her trilogy on WWI. It concerns the treatment of shell-shocked British soldiers at a war hospital in Edinburgh, focusing on Dr. William Rivers and his treatment of his patients, including Sigmund Sassoon and Wilfred Owen.

October 18

Watch *War Poet Wilfred Owen – A Remembrance Tale* (BBC 2007)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsPdEgC0wdk>

Read part three and part four of Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (1991)

October 25

Watch *Paths of Glory* (1957) – based on the Souain corporals affair of 1915

https://archive.org/details/pathsofglory1957_201908

Read Charles Yale Harrison, *Generals Die in Bed* (1930)

Harrison's anti-war novel drew from his experiences fighting on the Western Front. An international bestseller upon its release, numerous voices called for it to be banned.

November 1

Watch *John McCrae's War* (NFB 1998)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJexUjbcKgk>

Read Gaby Morgan, selector, *Poems from the First World War* (2013)

Read Kurt Tucholsky, *Prayers After the Slaughter: Stories and Poems from WWI* (2015)

Tucholsky was drafted into the German Army in 1915 and penned some of the most haunting poems and essays during – and after – what he called the “theatre of war.”

Read Mandy MacMillan, ed., *Love Letters of the Great War* (2014)

November 8

Read Michael Morpurgo, *War Horse* (2004)

An award-winning play and film have both been based on this bestselling children's book about Joey, an English farm horse bought by the British army to serve in the war.

Watch *War Horse: The Tragic True Story* (very disturbing)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwEQyH5_1VU

Read Hilda Kean, “Animals and War Memorials” in *Animals in War*, R. Hedger, ed. (2013) – pdf provided

November 15

Watch *A Testament of Youth* (2014) based on Vera Brittain’s autobiography – online SFU library

Read Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier* (1918)

West’s first novel, it has been compared in style to Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*, focusing on how the women in a soldier’s life cope with the returned man. Can war traumas be cured? Has been adapted into a play, a movie, and a musical.

November 22:

Watch “And We Knew How to Dance: Women in World War One” (NFB 1993)

https://www.nfb.ca/film/and_we_knew_how_to_dance/

Read “Mobilizing Women for War” by Joan Sangster, chapter 7 in *Canada in the First World War* (2018) – pdf provided

Watch “Forgotten Faces of the Great War: The Chinese Labour Corps” (2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFpawm9vdm8>

Read Mark O’Neill, *Chinese Labour Corps* (2014)

Read Barton C. Hacker, “White Man’s War, Coloured Man’s Labour (2014) – pdf provided

November 29:

Read “Starvation Stalks Europe,” by Erik Sass

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/85224/wwi-centennial-starvation-stalks-europe>

Watch *1917: The Making of a Revolution* (ARTE France 2007) – online SFU library

The Russian Revolution would probably not have happened in 1917 without the war.

Read Katherine Anne Porter, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939) – read the third novella from this book

<https://ia801602.us.archive.org/2/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.184599/2015.184599.Pale-Horse-pale-Rider.pdf>

A short novel by an exceptional writer and one of the few pieces of literature that connects the war and the Spanish Flu epidemic. The main character is an American woman who meets an American soldier who is soon to be shipped overseas.

December 6:

Watch *Paris 1919* (NFB 2008) – based on Margaret MacMillan’s book

https://www.nfb.ca/film/paris_1919/

Read Gwynne Dyer, “Alarm Bells for Civilization” in *Queen’s Quarterly*, Spring 2005 – pdf provided

Read Azar Gat, “Is war declining – and why?” in *Journal of Peace Research* (50)2 – pdf provided

Read: To be determined

December 13:

Final essays due