**This is the syllabus from Fall 2014. There may be changes in the final**

**syllabus for Spring 2017**

**HIST 202-301: The Great War in Memoir and Memory**

**Fall 2014**

**Fisher-Bennett Hall 244**

**Tuesday 1:30-4:40**

**WARREN BRECKMAN**

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-12:00, or by Appointment

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World War One was the primordial catastrophe of twentieth-century history. For all who passed through it, the Great War was transformative, presenting a profound rupture in personal experience. It was a war that unleashed an unprecedented outpouring of memoirs and poetic and fictional accounts written by participants. In its wake, it also produced new forms of public commemoration and memorialization – tombs to the unknown soldier, great monuments, soldiers’ cemeteries, solemn days of remembrance, and the like. On the centenary of World War One’s outbreak, this course will explore the war through the intersection of these processes of personal and public memory. The first ten weeks will be devoted to shared readings on these themes. In the remaining weeks, students will pursue independent research projects investigating the literature of the Great War or aspects of public or private commemoration. Please note: This is not a seminar in military or diplomatic history, but rather an exploration of personal experiences of the War, representations of experience, and the cultural and political dimensions of memory.

The first ten weeks will be devoted to the themes outlined above. The final weeks of the course will be devoted to independent research and writing of an original essay on a topic of your own choice. You might wish to delve deeply into the writings of one or another of the prominent figures we encounter, or build an essay around the diaries or memoirs of a more obscure person. You might choose to look at one or another of the practices of commemoration that we study, at its politics and/or legacy. You could study subsequent political movements in relationship to their ‘uses’ of World War One. You might wish to look at representations of World War One in film, literature, or some other media. The possibilities are almost endless. I am very happy to brainstorm with you, and I encourage you to talk with me early in the course about areas of potential interest. I will eventually want to discuss your topic with you before you proceed.

The ultimate goal of the seminar is thus twofold: to explore the legacies of the Great War in the personal, cultural and political memory of the twentieth century, and to give students an intensive research experience, an experience that lies at the heart of the historian’s craft.

**This seminar fulfills the research requirement of the History Major.**

**Course Requirements:**

Participation 20%

Essay on Soldiers’ Experience (due Sept. 23) 10%

Essay on Peter Englund (due Nov 4) 10%

Research Essay (due Dec 19) 60%

(The essay should be a maximum of 25 double-spaced pages – including the footnotes)

**Course Materials:**

The following books are available at **House of Our Own Bookstore**, 3920 Spruce Street (ph. # 222-1576):

Michael Howard, *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press, 2007.

Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18: Understanding the Great War.* Hill and Wang, 2014.

Leonard V. Smith, *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers’ Testimony of the Great War.*

Cornell University Press, 2014.

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory.* Oxford University Press, 2013.

Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That.* Penguin Modern Classics, 2000.

George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars.* Oxford University Press, 1991.

Ernst Junger, *Storm of Steel*. Penguin Classics, 2004.

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth.* Penguin Classics, 2005.

Peter Englund, *The Beauty and the Sorrow: An Intimate History of the First World War.* Vintage Editions, 2012.

Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*. Yale University Press, 2006.

**All readings will be available on reserve at Rosengarten**

**Sept 2: Introduction**

**Sept 9: A Brief Overview**

Michael Howard, *The First World War*

**Sept 16: The Great War and Meaning**

Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18: Understanding the Great War*

At 3:30, Rebecca Stuhr from Van Pelt Library will join us to talk about WWI resources at Penn.

**Sept 23: Soldiers in their own words**

Leonard V. Smith, *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers’ Testimony of the Great War*

**Assignment:** Drawing on the categories and concepts developed in Smith’s work, analyze the writing of one soldier drawn from the Adam Matthew website ‘The First World War’, available through the University of Pennsylvania library website. The collection of diaries is to be found at: http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:6819/Documents/index?page=1)

**Sept 30: The Great War and Memory: Literature**

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*

**Oct 7: The Narrative Arc of Memoir**

Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That*

**Oct 14: The Politics of Memory**

George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*

(**October 15** film viewing: *Life and Nothing But*, 7:00 – Location TBA)

**Oct 21: War as Inner Experience**

Ernst Junger, *Storm of Steel*

**Oct 28: Gendering Memoir**

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*

(**October 29** film viewing: *A Very Long Engagement*, 7:00 – Location TBA)

**Nov 4: The Historical Reconstruction of Personal Experience**

Peter Englund, *The Beauty and the Sorrow: An Intimate History of the First World War*… (Please follow the chapters dealing with the following characters: Elfriede Kuhr, Sarah McNaughton, Richard Stumpf, Pal Kelemen, Florence Farmborough, Kresten Andresen, William Henry Dawkins, Olive King, Paolo Monelli)

**Assignment:** In his preface “To The Reader”, Peter Englund describes his book as a “work of anti-history”. What does Englund mean? Is it a proper description? Can one ‘do’ history from the perspective that Englund chooses?

**Nov 11: The Great War and the Memory Boom**

Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*

(Please note: I will be away on November 11, so I would like to shift our meeting to the evening of Wednesday, November 12)

**Nov 18: No Class**

**Nov 25: Topic Presentations**

Be prepared to talk about your project for roughly 10 minutes. Introduce the parameters of the topic you have chosen to address. What problem(s)/question(s) do you wish to explore? In what way do you plan to pursue the topic?

**Dec 2: No Class**

In this week, I would like to meet individually with each of you to discuss your progress

**Dec 9: Dinner at my home**

**Research paper will be due on December 19th. Please submit a hard-copy to me by 5:00 p.m.**