**World War I**

**HIST 351; CRN 13261**

**Nicholas Michael Sambaluk, PhD**

**1:30-2:20am MWF, University 219**

**Introduction:** Few guessed at the time that the Great (i.e. Big) War would become, a generation later, the *First* World War. World War I was a monumentally large conflict, with land combat on three continents (Europe, Asia, and Africa) and in three oceans (Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian). New technologies and tactics were tested and used throughout the war, as were bold operational plans and brutal strategies. World War I is most remembered for the stalemated trench combat on the Western Front in Europe, across northern France and in southwestern Belgium. This course seeks to come to grips with the vast horrors of the Western Front, with the events and patterns at the policy, strategy, operational, and tactical levels of war, of developments in technology, and the impact that the global conflict had on the fighting in Europe and also throughout the rest of the planet.

**OBJECTIVE:** Examining World War I in a meaningful way demands developing and using critical and creative thought, enabling historical analysis and constructive discussion and communication among students and as a class. Key skills include understanding the confluence of different forces in history (technological, social, political, economic) on warfare and innovation, communication of clear and historically informed concepts, and a demonstrating a willingness to pursue progressive and continued intellectual development.

**COURSE ORGANIZATION:** Analysis of major events and trends will be engaged in essentially a chronological order. A crucial trait of dynamic environments (and a frequent characteristic of innovations) is that multiple changes are in progress simultaneously, changing the impact and context of other changes by presenting unanticipated challenges and opportunities. Attention to this fact will be paid during the semester.

**GRADING:** Grades are determined on the basis of three main factors: a midterm exam; your reflections and analysis regarding the Versailles simulation project; and a final exam.

MIDTERM EXAM: The midterm exam will consist of several multiple choice or fill in the blank questions and an essay. The essay will be worth up to 150 points and the rest of the exam worth up to 150 as well. See the end of the syllabus.

*VERSAILLES REFLECTION PAPER*: The semester schedule includes space to prepare for and enact a simulation of the dynamics at the Versailles Peace Conference. This is, to a degree, the “peace” counterpart to the idea of “wargaming” that was pioneered by Prussian military strategists as they sought to solve the most threatening military problem up to 1914: the challenge of war on multiple fronts against larger opponents.

For the simulation, which will occur in class, your task will be to participate in the negotiation simulations in ways befitting the objectives of your role. You will be assigned a relevant role—as a head of state, top diplomat, military officer, or advisor, or as a head of a nationalist delegation attempting to achieve statehood. Further rules and guidance on the simulation will be forthcoming in the following weeks. Pursue the goals of the person who occupied your roles in a meaningful way, and you’ll be conducting the simulation admirably. My purpose is neither to necessarily *duplicate* Versailles’s outcome nor to *fix* it, but to establish a scenario so that you can work out the problems and come to understand it in a new way.

Your reflection paper is to be a two-page (do not go over two and a half pages) reflection on your experience in the simulation, also comparing its course and outcome with that of the actual conference. Your understanding of the actual conference is to be founded on the course readings.

Your two pages must be double-space in Times New Roman 12-point font. Your writing clarity, effectiveness of writing, correct use of the Chicago citation format (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>), and grammatical precision will contribute in your grade, as will your command of the material. Your paper will be worth up to 200 points. This is an analysis paper, so you should not stop merely by describing or listing differences or similarities—analyze them, consider *why* these things happened.

FINAL EXAM: The final exam is a pair of essays, one engaging in particular with the second half of the semester material and the other drawing from anywhere in the essay questions list from the syllabus. Each is worth up to 250 points. The final exam will be in class on April 29.

PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS: A major element in any learning environment is an open space in which to discuss ideas, interpretations, and perspectives, based on evidence and analysis. Your active participation in discussions is a central component of your learning, and it helps your colleagues succeed as well. Consequently, the active participation of others, asking earnest questions and adding constructive comments and insights, is an important element in your learning as well as in their own. Active learning is a necessary component for successful learning, and it is a graded component of this course. By discretion, exceptional class participation can also exert an extra addition in semester grade. This addition is a supporting, rather than primary, source of points. A participation is never to exceed 40 points for the semester, and it is an opportunity for a bonus in recognition of exceptional participation; attendance is expected, and this is *not* a source of points to be presumed on behalf of any student as an “attendance” grade.

**GRADE SCALE:**  There are 1000 points available for the course, which translate into a 100‑percent grade scale. For example, 876 points for the course equates to 87.6%. The scale is indicated below:

Letter Grade % Grade Level of Achievement

A+ 97 - 100%A 93 - 96.9% ExcellentA- 90 - 92.9%B+ 87 - 89.9%B 83 - 86.9% GoodB- 80 - 82.9%C+ 77 - 79.9% C 73 - 76.9% SatisfactoryC- 70 - 72.9% D 67 - 69.9% MarginalF Below 67% Unsatisfactory

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**  People learn through doing their own work. Academic misconduct in any form cheats all concerned, and it will not be tolerated. Minimum penalty for plagiarized work is a “0” for the assignment – I *may* consider recommending a “0” for the assignment *only* this is if someone, beset by conscience, comes forward *before* I discover the instance. Whenever I discover plagiarism or other misconduct, the penalty will be severe: assignments take time to grade and they are worth doing.

**LATE WORK:** Late papers cannot be accepted and will not be graded.

**CLASS RECORDING:** Unapproved students’ electronic voice or image recordings of class lectures or discussions are expressly prohibited and result in forfeiture of the participation grade for the semester as a whole.

**ADA ACCOMMODATIONS:** Reasonable ADA accommodations will be arranged as necessary and practicable. All reasonable accommodations will be made, if needed, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a need in this area, please get in touch with me immediately, so that it can be possible to address any situation regarding reasonable accommodations.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Required textbooks are:

Margaret MacMillan.  *Paris 1919.* Random House, 2003.  ISBN 978-0375760525

*Empires at War, 1911-1923*.  ed. Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela.  Oxford, 2015.  ISBN 978-0198702511

Hew Strachan.  *The First World War.*  Penguin, 2005.  ISBN 978-0143035183

You will also have a Skyepack online reader that you will need for class.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:** The calendar for the semester appears below.

1. Introduction to World War (Jan 11)
   1. *Empires*, introduction
2. Education & Culture, Colonial Models, Armies, Industrial Tools (Jan 13)
   1. *Empires*, 4 begin; Skyepack, 1
3. The Naval Arms Race and Policy, Weapons Innovation, Crises (Jan 15)
   1. *Empires*, 4 continue; Skyepack, 2
4. Sarajevo, War, and Strategies (Jan 20)
   1. *Empires*, 4 end
5. War Plans and the Opening Weeks on the Western Front (Jan 22)
   1. *First World War*, 1 begin
6. Britain Enters (Jan 25)
   1. *First World War*, 1 end
7. From Mons to the Marne, and the Race to the Sea (Jan 27)
   1. *Empires*, 3 begin
8. The Context of the Cruiser War (Jan 29)
   1. *Empires*, 3 continue
9. Warships, Blockades, and Zeppelins (Feb 1)
   1. *Empires*, 3 end
10. Tannenberg and the rise of Hindenburg and Ludendorff (Feb 3)
    1. *First World War*, 2
11. Taking Stock: Situation, Media, Christmas Truce, Champagne Offensive (Feb 5)
    1. *Empires*, 6 begin
12. Machine Guns and Artillery in Combat (Feb 8)
    1. *Empires*, 6 end
13. Trenches (Feb 10)
    1. *Empires*, 5 begin
14. Cycle of Surprise: Neuve Chapelle, Fokker Scourge, Poison Gas (Feb 12)
    1. *Empires*, 5 end; Skyepack, 6; Skyepack 7
15. Dynamics of Coalitions: Gorlice-Tarnow and Chantilly (Feb 15)
    1. *First World War*, 5
16. Partners and Envelopment: Italy, Bulgaria, Ottoman Empire (Feb 17)
    1. *First World War*, 3
17. Gallipoli and Amphibious Warfare (Feb 19)
    1. *First World War*, 4
18. Occupation and Genocide (Feb 22)
    1. *Empires*, 1; Skyepack, 8
19. **MIDTERM EXAM (Feb 24)**
20. War and Identity in the Dominions, Empire, fighting in Africa (Feb 26)
    1. *Empires*, 8
21. Questioning the Attrition Thesis: German Chief of Staff Leadership Through March 1916 (Feb 29)
    1. *First World War*, 6
22. The Verdun Charnel House (Mar 2)
    1. *Empires*, 9 begin
23. Technology for War, 1914-16 (Mar 4)
    1. *Empires*, 9 continue
24. The Somme (Mar 7)
    1. *Empires*, 9 end
25. Naval war, Jutland and U-Boats through 1916; Turnip Winter; Unrestricted Subs, Convoys, Escorts (Mar 9)
    1. *First World War*, 7
26. Allies Hunt for Decisiveness: Brusilov, Neville, Passchendaele, Cambrai (Mar 11)
    1. *First World War*, 8
27. From Elastic Defense to Storm Trooper Tactics (Mar 21)
    1. Skyepack, 4
28. The USA Declares War (Mar 23)
    1. *1919*, Part 1; skim Skyepack, 5
29. Strategic Situation and Emerging Technologies, 1918 (Mar 25)
    1. *1919*, Part 2 begin
30. Russia's Collapse, Mar 1917 – Mar 1918 (Mar 28)
    1. *1919*, Part 2 end
31. NO CLASS—ARMY CYBER COMMITMENTS (Mar 30)
    1. *1919*, Part 3; skim *First World War*, 9
32. Germany's Spring Offensives (Apr 1)
    1. *1919*, Part 4 begin
33. The US Role in the World War (Apr 4)
    1. *1919*, Part 4 end
34. US Impact on the War (Apr 6)
    1. *1919*, Part 5 begin
35. The Combined Arms Solution (Apr 8)
    1. *1919*, Part 5 end
36. German Collapse (Apr 11)
    1. *1919*, Part 6 begin
37. NO CLASS—ARMY CYBER COMMITMENTS (Apr 13)
    1. *1919*, Part 6 end; *1919*, Part 7
38. NO CLASS—ARMY CYBER COMMITMENTS (Apr 15)
    1. *1919*, Part 8
39. Postwar Cultural Issues (Apr 18)
    1. *Empires*, 13
40. Postwar Strategic Issues (Apr 20)
    1. Finish any remaining readings and prep for simulation
41. NO CLASS—ARMY CYBER COMMITMENTS (Apr 22)
    1. Prep for simulation
42. Versailles Simulation (Apr 25)
43. Postwar and the Changes in Retrospection (Apr 27)
    1. Skim *First World War*, 10
44. **FINAL EXAM IN CLASS APRIL 29**

**COUNSELING AND ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:** Your work will in large part be directly evaluated by my Graduate Teaching Assistant, Mr Luke Howard. Your first contact in outside-of-the-classroom discussion must be with them. The best way to contact me is either by email ([sambaluk@purdue.edu](mailto:sambaluk@purdue.edu)) or to drop by during my office hours (M 10:30-12:00pm and W 10:30-11:00 or by appointment) after having spoken with your GTA.

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ANNEX 1: COURSE QUESTIONS

1. Describe and explain the outbreak of WWI.
2. Describe and explain Britain’s role in the war from 1914-15
3. Describe and explain the role of military technologies on land and sea through the campaigns of 1915.
4. Describe and explain the approaches to coalition warfare undertaken by Germany and its partners and by France and its partners through 1915.
5. Describe and explain the actual uses of naval power as explored to date in the course. What are the purposes? How successful do they seem to be? Why?
6. Describe and explain German and French strategies on the eve of war in 1914.
7. Describe and explain why the Western Front gave way to stalemate by the end of 1914.
8. Describe and explain the war on the Eastern Front in 1914 and 1915.
9. Describe and explain, in view of events from 1914 and 1915, the relationship between stalemate in tactics and operations on one hand, and decisions about strategy and policy on the other.
10. Describe and explain Entente (Allied) strategy during 1916. What was the strategy? How was this developed? How successful was it?
11. Describe and explain the battle of the Somme, its outcome, and its role in the war.
12. Describe and explain the battle of Verdun, its outcome, and its role in the war.
13. Describe and explain naval affairs in the North Sea and regarding U-Boats. Address German naval policy during the war, its driving factors, its objectives, and the degree to which it succeeded or failed.
14. Describe and explain naval affairs in the North Sea and regarding antisubmarine action. Address British naval policy during the war, its driving factors, its objectives, and the degree to which it succeeded or failed.
15. Describe and explain the shift in German tactics toward elastic defense and then toward Stormtrooper tactics. What occurred? How did it occur? Why? What was the impact?
16. Describe and explain the role of the United States in the war, at the political and strategic levels of war.
17. Describe and explain the approaches that the Entente (Allies) and the Germans each devised to try to overcome stasis on the Western Front in Europe. What were these? How successful were they? Why?
18. Describe and explain events in Russia from 1916 through 1923.

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**Skyepack Instructions for students – to include in syllabus**

Version: May 15, 2015

This course uses low-cost materials on the Skyepack Platform instead of a traditional printed textbook. The cost for access to these materials is **$10**

To access these materials, please complete the following steps in a web browser (Firefox, Chrome, or IE 11 are recommended):

1. Create an account at [www.skyepack.com](http://www.skyepack.com) **USING YOUR @PURDUE.EDU email address**. Skyepack will send an email to you to verify your account.
2. After creating an account and logging in, locate the Purdue Student Marketplace by either:
   1. Accessing the Purdue Student Marketplace by selecting “Channel Guide” on the left sidebar, then selecting “Purdue Student Marketplace”.
   2. Going directly to the Purdue Student Marketplace: <https://app.skyepack.com/purdue/students>
3. Locate the content for your course. Courses in the Purdue Student Marketplace are organized by course designation (for example, CHM 261 is in the “CHM – Chemistry” category).
4. Hover your mouse over the pack for your course, and select “Add to My Collection” from the drop-down menu.
5. Purchase access to your course content using a credit or debit card.
6. After you complete the purchase, the content will now reside in your pack collection (accessed via the “My Pack Collection” tab on the left sidebar.
7. To open the pack and view the content for your course, hover over the pack icon in your My Pack Collection page and select the “Play” icon button.

After you have added the pack for your class to your collection, you may access the content on your desktop/laptop, or via the Skyepack mobile app, which can be found by searching for “Skyepack” in iTunes, Google Play, or the Amazon App Store. Purchasing must be completed through a web browser and not the mobile applications.

If you have any problems accessing the materials for your course, please contact Skyepack support at [support@skyepack.com](mailto:support@skyepack.com)