The last survivors of the Great War of 1914-18 are dead, and those old enough to remember it all are rare. There are many of us who, when younger, did know some who fought or had some other experience of that war. The United States only entered the war in 1917 and few Americans faced combat before the late spring of 1918. The American experience of the does not compare with that of Europeans, for whom the war remains a searing memory. Here, Armistice Day has become Veterans Day. In the United Kingdom on Remembrance Day, the poppies that commemorate the Great War appear on every breast.

The Great War, as first popularly known, became the World War, as the 13th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica indexed it. It is now World War I, or the First World War, after the Second. The term appeared before the Second, in 1933, as title of The First World War: A Photographic History, edited by veteran and playwright Laurence Stallings (1894-1968).

The Great War shattered the West’s growing optimism about the world’s future. Its legacy includes cultural disillusionment, enduring territorial disputes, the rise of Communism, Fascism and Nazism, the Second World War, the Cold War, the end of colonialism, and current crises in the Middle East and Africa.

We shall survey the historical treatment over the past hundred years of the world that went to war, the war’s conduct and its import for future wars, and the consequences of the war in the short and long term. We shall also look at the war’s depiction in fiction, the fine arts and film. There will be weekly handouts and a suggested reading list. We shall also have projected images, and even a bit of recorded music.

Course Sequence
I. April 8. The World that Went to War: Why and How?
   The Western World in 1914: Europe, the Americas and Australasia
   Western Culture at the Century’s Turn
   Western Imperialism: Africa, South Asia, Indo-China, Dutch East Indies, Philippines
   Ottoman Turkish Empire, Persia, China, Japan, Siam
   Diplomacy, Crises and the Outbreak of War
   Blame: Initial Responses by Belligerent Powers
II. April 15. The War and the Blame
   The Conduct of the War and Military Theory
   Unrestricted Submarine Warfare and the Entry of the United States
   Armistice and the Breakup of Empires, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, Russian, German
   Woodrow Wilson, the Versailles Treaty, the United States Senate and Henry Cabot Lodge
   The Versailles Treaty and Article 231, War Guilt: Germany and Its Allies
   The Versailles Treaties and New Boundaries
   Conflicts and Settlements, 1920-23: The Baltic, the Balkans and Asia Minor
   Victors and the Spoils of War: Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific
   Post War Studies of the Outbreak of the War and Revisionism
III. April 22. The Post War World, 1920-1930
   The Soviet Union and Third International (Comintern)
   The League of Nations and Search for Perpetual Peace
Pacifism
The Rise of Fascism in Italy
Weimar Germany
The Cultural Response: Thought, Literature, Art, Music and Film

IV. April 29. The Post War World, 1930-1939
The Great World Depression
Germany from Weimar Republic to Nazi Dictatorship
Italy, Ethiopia and the League of Nations.
Nazi Germany and the Rhineland
The Spanish Civil War
Sudetenland and Munich Agreements of 1938
Cultural Responses in Literature, Music, Film and Art

V. The Wider World and the Second World War
Anti-colonial Tensions in Africa, the Middle East, India and Far East
Zionism and the British Mandate in Palestine
Japanese Militarists: Manchuria, 1931; China, 1937
World War II: Europe 1939-1941
The United States, 1939-1941
The Second World War 1941-45

VII. The Legacy of World War I after World War II
The United Nations
Independence of the Philippines, 1946
Independence of India and Pakistan, 1947
French Indo-China, 1946-54, An Exception:
The Iron Curtain, the Cold War and end of the Soviet Union
Israel and the Middle East, 1948-2000
The End of Colonialism in Africa
The Middle East and Islamic Extremism, 2000-present

VIII. Continuing Memory of the Great 1914-1918 War
The Hundredth Anniversary
Recent Historical Studies
Literature
Film and Television
Conclusion