

History 510:318, Era of World War I

The First World War has been called The Birth of the Modern Age, but it came at a massive cost. It toppled empires and forged new states. The total human cost in lives lost and uprooted can be counted, but will never be fully measured. One hundred years after the conflict, its consequences still reverberate, not least of all because it created new ways to remember—and forget—the horrors and the lessons of total war.

This course examines the causes and consequences of the war that decisively broke with the past and created the twentieth century. We will study the integral role of nationalism and imperialism, liberalism and socialism, industrialism and militarism in provoking the Great War. Using novels, poetry, art, letters, memoirs, film, propaganda, and policies to reconstruct lived experiences and events, we will examine the war, and the turbulent peace that followed, from many different perspectives.