

History and Literature 97: Britain and America

Spring 2008

Thursdays 1-4 pm

Barker 114 (Kresge Room)

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This Sophomore Tutorial is an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of Britain and America. We will look at a variety of texts from the First World War and postwar era; our primary sources range from poems to memoirs to political debates, and our secondary sources represent approaches from literary analysis to social and cultural history. Our goals for the course are to learn to ask critical questions about some of the central issues and texts in both British and American history and literature, to develop close reading skills, and to hone your writing. This is not a survey course, but rather is designed to introduce you to diverse aspects of the field. Each week, regardless of the subject, we will ask you to make detailed observations, to raise pointed questions, and to broaden your sense of the definitions of “history” and of “literature.” In addition, we will ask you to broaden your definitions of “Britain” and “America.” We have all chosen this field because we believe that there exists a unique connection between these two entities, but what is the nature of that connection? This course will explore possible answers to that question by investigating moments of transatlantic correlation and shared concerns.

To provide depth as well as breadth, we will focus on Anglo-American responses to one of the watershed events in modern history: the First World War. During the early years of the conflict, writers, artists, and political thinkers all predicted that the war would fundamentally change transatlantic culture; and they agreed after the Armistice that a change had indeed taken place. But the precise nature of that change was hotly contested (as, of course, it remains). For this reason—because it was an interpretive conflict as well as an armed conflict—the study of the Great War foregrounds the role of the “literary” in history. In “low” forms (*Home to Harlem*, “Sergeant York”), “high” art (*To the Lighthouse*, “The Waste Land,” Britten’s *War Requiem*) and mediating texts (war monuments, the poems of Sassoon, the stories of Hemingway), the war accumulated the meanings that eluded its trenches. It became Wilfred Owen’s war, Vera Brittain’s war, Paul Fussell’s war—each writer offering a different perspective on tragic events, and each text representing a different kind of evidence, suited to different kinds of arguments about the war’s ultimate significance.

Assignments:

Active participation and attendance in tutorial is the primary requirement of the course. Before our meeting, finish the reading, and have in mind some key passages or questions you’d like to discuss, and be prepared to share your findings and thoughts with the class. We expect to hear thoughtfully from all of you each week.

We will work on several short papers during the first few weeks that will help to build your close reading skills. As we move to the middle of the term, we will begin a longer research and writing project that will help develop the skills you will need for the Junior Tutorial. Written assignments are marked with an asterisk (*).

In the final weeks of the semester, the Sophomore Oral Exam will test your ability to analyze and discuss texts orally, while helping you to prepare for the oral component of the Junior Tutorial. This 30-minute exam will be based on a topic that you will design yourself, based on our assigned course readings.

List of graded writing assignments:

Close reading paper (4-5 pp.)

Sequenced Research & Writing Assignment (SRWA):

-- Primary source reading (4-5 pp.)

-- Annotated bibliography

-- Draft (8 pp. minimum)

-- Final paper (12-15 pp.)

Grade breakdown:

Participation 30%

Close Reading Paper 20%

Sequenced Research & Writing Assignment 50% (of which the source reading is 10%; annotated bibliography is 5%; rough draft is 10%; and final draft is 25%)

Readings:

The following required texts are available for purchase at the Coop (under the name "Tessitore"):

Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War*

Pat Barker, *Regeneration*

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*

Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*

David Kennedy, *Over Here: the First World War and American Society*

Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*

Katherine Anne Porter, *The Collected Stories*

Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

A course packet, with photocopies of our other assigned readings, will be kept in our Sophomore Tutorial box in the Hist & Lit office (Barker 122). We recommend that you take the packet to Gnomon or Kinko's to make your own course reader. Please use the sign-out sheet when you borrow and return the packet.

Jan. 31

-- Introduction and academic advising

Feb. 7

--Pat Barker, *Regeneration*

--LIBRARY VISIT, 2:30-4 pm

Feb. 14

-- Selected poems of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg

-- Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Ch. 1, 2, 5

-- Walter Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, Ch. 14

-- SRWA (Sequenced Research & Writing Assignment): select subject and primary source

-- In class: informal presentation on your SRWA subject choice.

Feb. 21

-- Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War*, Preface, Ch. 1-4, 11, and Afterword

-- John Dewey, "American Intervention--A Pragmatist's View"

-- Randolph Bourne, "The War and the Intellectuals" and "A Moral Equivalent for Universal Military Service"

-- W.E.B. Du Bois, "An Open Letter to Woodrow Wilson," "Another Open Letter to Woodrow Wilson," "We Should Worry," "Returning Soldiers"

-- David Kennedy, *Over Here*, Prologue and Ch. 1

*SRWA primary source reading due Monday, Feb. 25 (4-5 pp.)

Feb. 28

-- Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, selected sections: Preface, Forward, Ch. 1 (complete), Ch. 2 # 1-2 and 7-9, Ch. 3 # 1-2, Ch. 4 (complete), Ch. 5 #1-3 and 7, Ch. 6 #1-6 and 11-13, Ch. 7 #9-15, Ch. 8 (complete), Ch. 9 #1-5 and 9-11

-- Angela Woollacott, "Sisters and Brothers in Arms: Family, Class, and Gendering in World War I Britain," from *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Woollacott and Miriam Cooke

-- Sandra Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War," from *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, ed. Margaret Higonnet et al.

March 6

-- Edith Wharton, "Writing a War Story" (online through HOLLIS)

-- Katherine Anne Porter, "Old Mortality," "Noon Wine," and "Pale Horse, Pale Rider"

-- Christine Stansell, *American Moderns*, Ch. 7: "Sexual Modernism"

*Close reading paper due Monday, March 10 (4-5 pp.)

March 13

-- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Karen L. Levenback, *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*, Ch. 1: "Myths of War, Illusions of Immunity, Realities of Survival"

March 20

- Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*
 - T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land"
 - David Kennedy, *Over Here*, pp. 213-230
 - George Chauncey, *Gay New York*, Ch. 4: "The Forging of Queer Identities and the Emergence of Heterosexuality in Middle-Class Culture"
- *SRWA annotated bibliography due

March 22-30: Spring Recess

April 3

- Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*
- Langston Hughes, selected poems
- David Kennedy, *Over Here*, Ch. 3

April 10

- Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Introduction and Ch. 1-4
- Thomas Laqueur, "Memory and Naming in the Great War," from *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*
- G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, Preface, Introduction, Ch. 3: "Remembering the War to End All Wars"
- In class: tour of Harvard's war memorials (Memorial Church, Widener Library murals)
- ORALS topics due

April 17

- Benjamin Britten, *War Requiem* (audio recording, 1962)
- Musical analysis and text of the *War Requiem*
- Janis P. Stout, *Coming out of War*, Ch. 10: "Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* and the Hope of Learning Peace"
- Jayne Rosefield, "'What Passing Bells?': Memorializing Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*," Ch. 3
- In class: practice orals

April 24

- ORALS (no regular class meeting)
- *SRWA essay draft due (8 pp. minimum)

May 1

- *Sergeant York* (film, 1941)
- Michael E. Birdwell, *Celluloid Soldiers*, Ch. 4-5

*SRWA final draft due during reading period (12-15 pp.)