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The First World War and the Senses Subjective Experience and Cultural Mediation

Wednesday 10-12, Phil.-Geb., Übungsraum 9

Winter Term 2018/2019

Course Description

"Boom! The Cathedral is a torch, and the houses next to it begin to scorch. Boom! [...] The old lady cannot walk. She watches the creeping stalk and counts. Boom! – Boom! – Boom!" Amy Lowell's prose poem "Bombardment" (November 1914) bears witness to the destructive terror of military conflict. Yet more particularly, the poem evokes warfare as an assault on the senses which seemingly cannot be described. Lowell instead recreates the attack in unrelenting repetitions of "Boom! – Boom! – Boom!"

In this seminar, World War I will be approached as an experience which involved, but also radically challenged cultural structures of feeling: from hearing and vision to smell, taste, touch, and – not least – experiences of pain that both involve and obliterate the senses.

The seminar is a part of the faculty-wide project "Krieg und Frieden: Der Erste Weltkrieg." During the Winter Term 2018/2019 courses will be considering the events and impact of World War I from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. The project culminates in an exhibition that will bring together work from a range of seminars in our faculty. These contributions can take graphic-textual form (such as a large-scale posters) or they can bring together film and audio materials. In keeping with the approach of our seminar, our exhibition contributions will explore key 'sense-scapes' of the war.

Course Requirements

- This course requires active (and creative!) participation at three different levels: **1)** in individual project groups, **2)** in all regular seminar sessions, and **3)** in the meta-project meetings on 14 November and 21 November as well as at the exhibition opening and public lecture on 14 January.
- In keeping with the character of the course as a collaborative effort, further readings and tasks will be assigned as our general discussion and the specific projects develop.

Applying for the course & preparatory assignment

As this course aims to challenge common understandings of the First World War and to go beyond conventional modes for academic work, **we ask students who are interested in participating to please send both instructors (see mail addresses above) a statement of purpose.** This text (of one to one-and-a-half pages) should address the following questions:

- In what ways can we – and in what ways should we – approach 'the senses' in literary and cultural studies?
- What strikes you as particularly noteworthy about the relationships between (a) modern warfare, (b) 'the senses' and (c) the (textual, visual, acoustic etc.) forms or media of communication?
- What might a concrete exhibit on the First World War and the senses perhaps deal with / aim for / look like? We are interested in what topics you could imagine looking into and the kinds of media (visual, acoustic, textual, etc.) you would be most interested in dealing with.
- Your statement of purpose should reach us by October 10. We will respond before the end of the registration period. **Please note that there is no self-registration for this seminar.**

COURSE PROGRAM

! Please see also the selected bibliography below.

******* Frameworks & Groundworks *******

17 October **Sensory Studies and/as Cultural Studies and/as War Studies?**

Introduction to Course Concept and Approach

Discussion of the Participants' Original Project Proposals

Please prepare:

- David Howes, "The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies" (2013)
< <https://www.sensorystudies.org/sensorial-investigations/the-expanding-field-of-sensory-studies/> > and
- From: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975; new ed., Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013): (a) introduction by Jay Winter (ix-xiv); (b) "The Troglodyte World" (= ch. 2: 39-81).

24 October **The Things They Carried**

Approaching Primary Sources & Establishing Perspectives

Final Organization of Project Groups

Please *explore* at least one of the following websites and databases (and see the task below):

- <https://www.archives.gov/topics/wwi>
- <https://www.loc.gov/topics/world-war-i/>
- <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/online-collections-database>
- <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/?research-category=first-world-war>
- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/first-world-war>
- <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/>

→ *After exploring the material offered by the websites please decide on ONE specimen (this can be a text, an image or ...) that*

seems particularly relevant, thought-provoking or puzzling in relation to your concerns about 'the First World War and the Senses'. Be prepared to explain your choice in class. You should also be prepared to conceptualize and theorize your specimen. In class, the specimens will be used in the process of forming project groups for the exhibition.

31 October

**Sensing War // Making Sense of War:
The 'Senses', 'Experience' & 'Commemoration'**

Please prepare the following sections/chapters from Nicholas J. Saunders and Paul Cornish, eds., *Modern Conflict and the Senses* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017):

- Paul Cornish, Nicholas J Saunders and Mark Smith, Introduction (1-10);
- Matthew Leonard, "Assaulting the Senses: Life and Landscape beneath the Western Front" (43-60);
- Alys Cundy, "War, memory and the senses in the Imperial War Museum London, 1920-2014" (361-374).

In addition, Please familiarize yourself with some of the following examples of World War I "commemoration" & "musealization":

- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-is-the-cenotaph>
- <https://metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2017/world-war-i>
- <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/william-kentridge-2680/william-kentridge-head-load> &
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2697&v=V1FZIx00OmI
- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/seasons/making-a-new-world>

→ How could/should some of these examples be conceptualized and/or critiqued?

***** Evolving the Projects *****

7 November Presentation of Group Project 1 (Topic – Research – Approach)

14 November Presentation of Group Project 2 (Topic – Research – Approach)

14 November 18-20: "Krieg und Frieden" Meta-Project Session
"Mehr als Fakten: Zum Vermitteln und Gestalten von Poster-Ausstellungen" (Museologie)

21 November Presentation of Group Project 3 (Topic – Research – Approach)

21 November 18-10: "Krieg und Frieden" Meta-Project Session
"Einführung in die Grafik-Software", 18-20

28 November No Class Session / Consultations and Group Work (9-12)

5 December Presentation of Exhibition Draft for Project 1

12 December Presentation of Exhibition Draft for Project 2

19 December Presentation of Exhibition Draft for Project 3

Submission of Final Drafts for Posters and Other Contributions by 21 December

***** Exhibition *****

9 January No Class Session / Exhibition Set-Up on 11 January

14 January Exhibition Opening, with Lecture by Andreas Platthaus
(*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), 18-20

16 January Project Group-Guided Tour of the Exhibition (10-12)

***** Scholarly re-conceptualization *****

23 January War, culture, the senses, and the museum

Assigned reading to be selected in view of the seminar & exhibition process up to this point (see bibliography below).

30 January Course Wrap-Up & Critique

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY (a first *selection* of sources, aids and key texts)

Sensory Studies

Centre for Sensory Studies. Concordia University, Montréal. Web. <<http://www.centreforsensorystudies.org>>. [The website also will alert you to numerous further studies and essays in the field of sensory studies.]

Encke, Julia. *Augenblicke der Gefahr: Der Krieg und die Sinne, 1914-1934.* München: Fink, 2006. [JMU library has the book. Moreover, a PDF can also be accessed through the library's website.]

Saunders, Nicholas J., and Paul Cornish, eds. *Modern Conflict and the Senses.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2017. [Not available at JMU; see scans.]

Memory Studies (as such)

Erl, Astrid. *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen: Eine Einführung.* 3., aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2017. [Full text available via the website of the university library.]

(Cultural) Studies of the First World War & of Remembering the War

Cohen, Deborah. *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939.* Berkeley: California UP, 2001.

Eksteins, Modris. *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. [(Only) the German translation of this key work is available at JMU.]

Encke, Julia. *Augenblicke der Gefahr: Der Krieg und die Sinne, 1914-1934.* München: Fink,

2006. [JMU library has the book. Moreover, a PDF can also be accessed through the library's website.]

Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, ed. *Fastnacht der Hölle: Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Sinne*. Katalog zur Großen Landesausstellung im Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, April 2014 bis März 2015. Stuttgart: Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, 2014. [Not yet available at JMU, but ask ZA and MSK to take a look at our copies of the catalogue.]

Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. 1975. New ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013.

Korte, Barbara. *Der Erste Weltkrieg in der populären Erinnerungskultur*. Essen: Klartext, 2008.

Saunders, Nicholas J. *Trench Art: Materialities and Memories of War*. Oxford: Berg, 2003.

Saunders, Nicholas J., and Paul Cornish, eds. *Modern Conflict and the Senses*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017. [Not available at JMU; see selected scans.]

Schleper, Thomas, ed. *Erinnerung an die Zerstörung Europas: Rückblick auf den Großen Krieg in Ausstellungen und anderen Medien*. Essen: Klartext, 2016.

Todman, Dan. *The Great War: Myth and Memory*. London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005. [Not available at JMU; see selected scans.]

Watson, Alexander. *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.

Watson, Janet S.K. *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. [Not yet available at JMU; will be ordered via interlibrary loan.]

Wellington, Jennifer. *Exhibiting War: The Great War, Museums, and Memory in Britain, Canada, and Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017. [Not yet available at JMU; will be ordered via interlibrary loan.]

Winter, Jay, ed. *The Cambridge History of the First World War*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014.

----- *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006.

----- *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. 1995. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

Media & War

Jameson, Fredric. *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis: The Modernist as Fascist*. London: Verso, 1979. [Examines implications of avant-gardism and its notions of "regeneration through violence."]

Kittler, Friedrich A. *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter*. Berlin: Brinkmann & Bose, 1986.

Lewis, Wyndham, ed. *Blast: Review of the Great English Vortex I & II (1915-1916)*. [Both issues available via the *Modernist Journals Project* http://modjourn.org//render.php?id=1158591480633184&view=mjp_object.]

Virilio, Paul. *Krieg und Kino: Logistik der Wahrnehmung*. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1989.

War, Narrative & Poetry

Das, Santanu, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Poetry of the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013. [Also available as an e-book through UB WÜ.]

----- *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. [Not available at JMU.]

Featherstone, Simon. *War Poetry: An Introductory Reader*. London: Routledge, 1995. Critical Readers in Theory and Practice.

The First World War Poetry Digital Archive. Web. <[LINK](#)>

Kendall, Tim. *Modern English War Poetry*. Oxford: OUP, 2006

Kendall, Tim, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*. Oxford: OUP, 2007.

Korte, Barbara, and Ann-Marie Einhaus, eds. *The Penguin Book of First World War Stories*. London: Penguin, 2007.

Piette, Adam, and Mark Rawlinson, eds. *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century British and American War Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2012.

Poetry Foundation. Web. <[LINK](#)>

Reilly, Catherine, ed. *The Virago Book of Women's War Poetry and Verse*. London: Virago, 1997. [Not yet available at JMU library.]

Sherry, Vincent, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. [Also available as an e-book through UB WÜ.]

Silkin, Jon, ed. *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981.

Silkin, Jon. *Out of Battle: The Poetry of the Great War*. London: Oxford UP, 1972.

Stallworthy, Jon, ed. *The New Oxford Book of War Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014.

Walter, George, ed. *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*. London: Penguin, 2006.

The War Poetry Web Site. Web. [<LINK>](#)

Trauma, Modernity, Modernism

Eksteins, Modris. *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. [(Only) the German translation of this key work is available at our university library.]

Freud, Sigmund. *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*. 1920. *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. XIII. London: Image, 1940. [Available via Freud Online http://freud-online.de/Texte/PDF/freud_werke_bd13.pdf]

Loughran, Tracey. *Shell Shock and Medical Culture in First World War Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017. [Not yet available at JMU; will be ordered via interlibrary loan.]

----- "Shell Shock, Trauma and the First World War: The Making of a Diagnosis and Its History." *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*. 67.1 (2012): 95-119. <https://academic.oup.com/jhmas/article/67/1/94/763864>

Mülder-Bach, Inka. *Modernität und Trauma: Beiträge zum Zeiteinbruch des Ersten Weltkriegs*. Wien: WUV, 2000. . [Not yet available at JMU; will be ordered via interlibrary loan.]

White, Hayden. "The Modernist Event." *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1999. 66-86. [While not directly connected to World War I, White argues that modernist aesthetics allows for the narration of trauma].