

American Art & the First World War

Art History Seminar 396g

Prof. David M. Lubin (lubin@wfu.edu; x 6013)

Tuesday 3:30-6:00, SFAC 103

Fall 2012

This seminar has multiple goals. It will instruct you (which means, in essence, that you will instruct yourself) in the following areas:

- *American history and society in the period leading up to U.S. participation in the Great War (1915-17), during mobilization (Apr 1917-Nov 1918), and in the postwar era (1919-30; the so-called Jazz Age or Roaring Twenties)
- *American art and popular culture as they evolved on separate tracks during the course of this fifteen-year period (1915-30)
- *interdisciplinary approaches to art-historical research
- *laying the groundwork for an international art exhibition

As to that last bullet point, I will be asking you to shoulder research responsibilities with me as I begin the job of co-curating an exhibition on World War I and American art that will open several years from now at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia and then travel to one or more other art museums in the United States or abroad. For those of you considering a career as an art-museum professional, this will be a good opportunity to discover what the job involves, and for those of you who are not interested in that career path, it should still be an enlightening, behind-the-scenes experience.

Each student will select three items from the exhibition checklist and spend the semester conducting in-depth research on these three artifacts, the artists who created them, the public that viewed them, and the social, artistic, and historical context(s) from which they emerged.

A pair of well-written historical surveys of the period provide our core texts: *America's Great War* (2000) by Robert H. Zieger and *Over Here* (rev. ed. 2004) by David M. Kennedy. In addition, you will be responsible for digging up and posting relevant essays for the rest of us to read and discuss.

You will have various writing assignments over the course of the semester – response papers, working bibliographies, and section drafts for your final essay. That essay, approximately 20-25 pages in length, with an additional 4-5 pages of bibliography, will consist of mini-essays on three objects on the checklist, plus 100- to 150-word “wall labels” for those three objects. **This is due in its final form on November 27.**

You will also be expected to provide one or more informal PowerPoint presentations, as assigned, and a formal one to be given near the end of the semester.

In determining final grades, I take into account factors such as:

- *attendance (no more than two absences without prior approval)
- *level of class participation
- *quality of writing and presentations
- *depth of research
- *originality of insight

SCHEDULE

Sept 04	Introduction
Sept 11	Zieger, 1-84
Sept 18	Library Research Session
Sept 25	Zieger, 85-151
Oct 02	Zieger, 153-237.
Oct 09	Kennedy, 3-92
Oct 16	Kennedy, 93-190
Oct 23	Kennedy, 191-295; 348-69
Oct 30	Readings to be assigned
Nov 06	Readings to be assigned
Nov 13	Presentations
Nov 20	Presentations
Nov 27	Presentations Research Paper Due at 3:30pm
Dec 04	Wrap-Up