

History 2121A
Canada and the Two World Wars
Fall 2025

Instructor: **Professor Robert Wardhaugh**

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Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2263**

Office Hours: **Mon-Friday 9:30-11:00**

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

This course examines the history of Canada during the two world wars. It provides the background and context for both global conflicts from a Canadian perspective and examines the lead up, impact, and results. In doing so, the course provides a study of Canadian history during the first half of the twentieth century. While the course studies war, it does so through more than a military lens. Aside from focusing on Canada's military contribution, emphasis is placed on determining how the wars shaped Canada. The course will also examine such issues as politics, religion, class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, and technology.

Learning Objectives

By the course's completion, students will be able to:

- Identify key themes and developments in the history of Canada during the two world wars,
- Understand the development and use of Canada's military in the first half of the twentieth century,
- Relate contemporary issues in Canadian life to their historical developments,
- Analyze the impact of these global conflicts on Canada
- Understand how the wars altered Canada's identity at home and role on the world stage
- Articulate, evaluate, and defend historical arguments and interpretations, about the world wars in Canada

Methods of Evaluation

Mid-term= 40%

Final Exam= 60%

There are two examinations in this course. The exams are designed to be answered in essay format. Students must complete both examinations in order to pass the course.

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Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Course Materials

No materials or textbooks are required for this course.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week #1: The Long Path to War, 1896 to 1914

Week #2: The Golden Summer and the Loss of Innocence, 1914-15

Week#3: Digging In: Life in the Trenches, 1916

Week#4: Slackers and Pacifists: The War at home, 1916-17

Week#5: Breaking the Stalemate, 1917

Week#6: The War to End All Wars and Peace, 1918-19

Week#7: For What? The Impact of the Great War and moving forward, 1919-29

Week#8: The Rise of Totalitarianism, the 1930s

Week#9: The Phoney War and a War of Limited Liability, 1939-40

Week#10: Turning the Tide, 1941-1944

Week#11: Conscription: The War at home, 1942-44

Week#12: A Brave New World, 1944-45

Additional Statements

Students may attend office hours but are also encouraged to drop in at their convenience. If students are unable to attend office hours and wish a set time to meet, this can be arranged. I prefer in-person meetings to email and will keep electronic conversations to a minimum.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.