**Literature of War: World War I and Now**

Fall 2018

Newberry Library

Susanne Dumbleton

Week 1 (October 9)

The Arc of the Course

*The experience of war has inspired artists across human history, who record its pains and glories and puzzle out its meaning. In these months that mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, we will study some of the masterpieces created by men and women who lived that war, then open some superb contemporary works that define struggles in our own time. Throughout we will ask whether the ideas beneath these works are universal to the human experience or particular to a given time or conflict.*

Week I: Enthusiasm and the Quest for Glory.

Welcome

Rationale for the course

Our approach: Syllabus, Website (and invitation)

Introductions: What does each of us bring?

BACKGROUND: *(What do you remember?)*

What were the causes of World War I?

What was the social, political, economic environment?

Some facts

Schiefflin Plan

Western Front

Eastern Front

Combatants and non-combatants (revolutionary shifts)

Trench warfare

Impact

THE LITERATURE: Our text, confusions, controversies

This week’s poems

“The Soldier” (1914) by Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)

“Into Battle” (1915) by Julian Grenfell (1888-1915)

“In Flanders Field” (1915) by John McCrae, MD (1872-1918)

“I have a Rendezvous with Death” (1916 or 17) by Alan Seeger (1888-1916)

“Testament of Youth” (1933) by Vera Brittain (1893-1979) sections

Watch opening of *All Quiet* (1928 / 1930) by Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970) (two weeks in battle before being wounded in June 1917)

??? Wilfred Owen??

Reading Assignment for Week 2

“This is not a case of Petty Right or Wrong,” by Edward Thomas (p. 15)

“Break of Day in Trenches,” by Isaac Rosenberg (p. 48)

“In the Trenches,” by Richard Aldington (p. 51-2)

“Exposure,” by Wilfred Owen (p. 55)

“Apologia Pro Poemate Meo,” by Wilfred Owen (p. 81),

“The Sendoff,” by Wilfred Owen (p. 44)

“Come on My Lucky Lads,” by Edmond Blunden (Handout)

*Testament of Youth* selection*,* by Brittain (pp. 232-244)

Consider maps and photos at the seminar links at <http://www.susannedumbleton.com>

Including materials from Newberry collection.