

F302: FILMS OF THE GREAT WAR, Part II

This course continues the film exploration of World War I begun in the spring of 2013. Providing a three dimensional complement to the ongoing NPS and other courses marking the centennial of the Great War, it is a historical examination of representative aspects of that war as seen through the medium of film. World War I arguably set the stage for the remainder of the 20th Century. Its tumultuous impact on our present world is significant. In this course we will explore other areas and topics such as the war in Gallipoli and the Balkans and the war's impact on individual families. The films are different from the spring course, but one of the earlier favorites may be repeated, and I welcome your comments as to which of the earlier favorites would be essential for the new enrollees.

The class goal is to understand how serious films produced about the war reflected contemporary reality or perceived reality of the war. The films look to balance the horrifying, the hopeless and the ugly with the humane and the courageous. The theme of significant World War I films has remained overwhelmingly focused on the utter futility and anti-heroic nature of that war for the better part of a century. And indeed the disparate films in this course are linked by their portrayal of World War I in that light. Chosen for their artistic merit, historical accuracy, and realism, the films range from classics such as *La Grande Illusion* to more recent productions such as *My Boy Jack* and *Capitaine Conan*.

In the past, time constraints and film length limited us to five films. We are going to try six films in this class by starting a few minutes early and remaining in class for part of the lunch hour. In the interests of continuity only films two hours or more in length will be split. Expect historical background commentary and class discussion of the films and the Great War.

To assist your understanding, please check out the additional course materials, including commentary on the films, posted on the OLLI DocStore prior to class. You can reach me at bopest@verizon.net with any questions or comments.

