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TENTATIVE: SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN DETAILS.

WASHINGTON

August 27, 1918

E.D.

FROM: The Committee on Education and Special Training.

TO: Institutions where Units of the Student Army Training Corps are located.

SUBJECT: War Aims Course.

1. PURPOSE: The Committee on Education and Special Training of the War Department has decided to include as an integral part of the work of all members of the Student Army Training Corps a course on the remote and immediate causes of the war and on the underlying conflict of points of view as expressed in the governments, philosophies and literatures of the various states on both sides of the struggle. The purpose of this course is to enhance the morale of the members of the Corps by giving them an understanding of what the war is about and of the supreme importance to civilization of the cause for which we are fighting.

2. MODIFICATION OF EXISTING COURSES: In a great many colleges and universities such courses have already been established and these courses can be continued with only such changes in content and organization as are necessary to make them conform to the requirements of the War Department and to the necessity for uniform training of our officer material. In cases where members of the Student Army Training Corps now in college have already had work which, in the judgment of the institution, is equivalent to the War Aims Course here outlined, they may be excused from taking this course.

3. TIME: The War Aims Course should occupy a minimum of three hours per week during the first nine months. It should be divided into units of three months each, each self-contained and complete so far as it goes, since some of the men may leave college at the end of three months and others at the end of six. Suggestions for the material for each of these three units of the course are contained in paragraph 5 below.

4. ORGANIZATION: The Committee recommends that the War Aims Course be planned by men representing the points of view of History, English Literature and Composition, Philosophy

Economics, and Political Science, together with any other Departments which the head of the institution may wish to associate with them. The course may be organized in any Department or by any group of men whom the head of the institution considers suitable to give it. It is not necessary that any particular departments be formally represented in the group of men giving the course, but only that these various points of view enter into it. This is a war of ideas, and the Committee desires that the course should, in so far as the limited time allows, give to the members of the Corps some understanding of the view of life and of society which they are called upon to defend and of that view against which we are fighting. The policy of the Committee is to give each institution entire freedom in working out the problem, reserving only the right to approve or disapprove of the solution.

5. COMBINATION WITH ENGLISH COMPOSITION: The War Aims Course may be combined with the course in English Composition in institutions where that is considered feasible. The Committee recommends this, but does not wish to make it a requirement. In case such combination is made, care should be taken that the various points of view mentioned in the foregoing paragraph are represented in the work, preferably by calling on men from various other departments to assist in planning and in giving the course. It is obvious that written work connected with the subject-matter here outlined would serve the double purpose of giving the men training in English Composition and of making them think out more carefully the problems of the War Aims Course.

6. CONTENT: In order to achieve the end which has just been outlined, the course should cover; first, the events leading up to the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the occasion of our entrance into it in 1917, and what, according to President Wilson's State Papers, are the necessary conditions for a satisfactory peace; second, the remoter causes as shown by the development of political and economic rivalry between European States during the 19th century; and third, the conflict of points of view as expressed in the governments, philosophies and literatures of the various states on both sides of the struggle.

For the three-point division of the course suggested in paragraph 3 above and made necessary by the fact that the students may be called from the colleges into active service at varying times, the Committee suggests that the first three months be devoted mainly to the historical and economic causes of the war; the second three months to the study of the points of view of the various nations engaged, as expressed in their governmental institutions; and the third three months to the study of their points of view as expressed in their philosophies and literatures. By some consideration in the second unit of the course of the philosophy of government underlying the institutions of each country, the second term's work may be effectively tied up with the work of the third term. Each educational

institution is left to decide whether the historical, literary, economic, and philosophical aspects of the course shall be conducted by different men in rotation, or whether the same instructors shall teach all parts of it. In any case the best men available in these various fields in each institution should be consulted in planning it.

7. OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS: The course should offer abundant opportunity for questions and discussion. This opportunity may be obtained either by conducting it in small sections of from 25 to 50 men each, or in large lectures with smaller sections or individual conferences for fuller discussion. The latter plan would make it possible for all the soldiers to have the advantage of hearing the strongest lectures.

8. MATERIALS: From its experience in conducting a briefer course of this type in about 150 Training Detachments of the National Army during the last few months, the Committee has collected a large supply of materials which will be placed at the disposal of professors and instructors who are giving the course in units of the Student Army Training Corps. These materials consist of the publications of the Committee on Public Information, of various syllabi and outlines from other sources on the study of the Great War, of lists of books which have been found especially useful in this work, and of a collection of some thousands of questions turned in by soldiers in our various Detachments, representing the doubts and difficulties as they present themselves to their minds. A selection from these will be issued in printed form together with references to the information which will answer them. While it would be futile for any instructor to attempt to answer all of them in his lecture, it is believed that the study of them will give him an idea of the difficulties in the minds of the members of his class. The list of books referred to above will be sent to the various institutions as soon as possible, in order that library copies of them may be provided.

9. ATTITUDE: The aim of the course should be to present facts rather than propaganda; the method should be that of the teacher rather than of the orator. The men who are giving the course should be not merely good lecturers, not merely men who have made a special study of the issues of the war, but also men who are patient and successful in getting their classes to ask questions. The success of the work will depend mainly not on eloquence of presentation, or on the completeness of the body of facts, but rather upon making these facts answer convincingly the questions in the minds of the soldiers, even though these questions may seem in some cases trivial or irrelevant. The ideal of the work should be to make the issues of the war a living reality to each man.

10. **NOMINATION OF INSTRUCTORS:** Immediately upon receipt of this letter institutions are asked to report to Frank Aydelotte, Director of the War Aims Course, Room 146 Old Land Office Building, Washington, D. C., the name of the professor who will have charge of the War Aims Course, or who will act as chairman of the group of men designated to conduct it, and to whom further suggestions may be sent. Because of the very great importance of this work, the Committee urges the utmost care in the selection of the men who are to conduct it. The course can hardly be successful unless the lecturers are men who combine a broad background of knowledge of the subject with the personality which will make them successful teachers.

By order of the Committee.

GRENVILLE CLARK,  
Major A. G. O., Secretary.