

WAR DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPECIAL TRAINING
SECTION OF TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION BRANCH
WAR PLANS DIVISION, GENERAL STAFF
593 STATE, WAR AND NAVY BUILDING

Washington, September 10, 1918.

FROM: The Committee on Education and Special Training.
TO: Institutions where Units of the Student Army Training Corps are located.
SUBJECT: Course on the Issues of the War.

NOTE:—This Memorandum supersedes the tentative instructions on this subject dated August 27, 1918, and distributed at Fort Sheridan and Plattsburg. The only changes from the original Memorandum are contained in paragraphs 2, 6, 8 and 10, and these changes are not such as to disturb plans made on the basis of the original Memorandum.

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 officer material. The statement in the regulations of the Student Army Training Corps on this subject is as follows:

“The program of study in allied subjects must include a course on the underlying issues of the war. This may be planned as a special War Issues Course with a minimum of 3 class-room hours per week, with corresponding time for study, covering three terms; or the requirement may be met by a course or courses in history, government, economics, philosophy or modern literature where these courses are so planned as, in the opinion of the Educational Director, to accomplish substantially the same purpose.

“The Regional Director may empower colleges to excuse from this course: (1) Members of the S. A. T. C. who have had a similar course even though not identical in every detail, or (2) Members of the S. A. T. C. who have already had at least two years of work of collegiate grade in an approved institution and who should be required to concentrate the whole of their time on advanced studies.”

3. **TIME:** The course on the Issues of the War should occupy three class-room hours per week, with appropriate time for study, during nine months. It should be divided into units of three months each, each self-contained and complete as 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 6 below.

4. **ORGANIZATION:** The Committee recommends that the course on the Issues of the War be planned by men representing the points of view of history, government, economics, philosophy and modern literature, 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 course on the Issues of the War 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 course on the Issues of the War. Suggestions for the type of composition work which should be given in this combination course will shortly be issued by the Committee.

6. **CONTENT:** In order to achieve the end which has just been outlined the course should cover 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; the remoter causes as shown by the development of political and economic rivalry between European states during the 19th century; and the conflicts 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-part division of the course suggested in paragraph 3 above and made necessary by the fact that the soldiers may be called from the colleges into field 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 governments and social 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. This arrangement of the material is only suggestive. An alternative arrangement, perhaps harder to administer but possessing many advantages, would be to devote the first term to the Central Powers, the second term to the Allies, and the third term to the United States, considering each group of countries from all the points of view mentioned above. In any arrangement of the course it will probably be found advisable to begin with some general lectures on geography and on the part which the various countries are playing in the war at the present moment.

The Committee will not issue a hard and fast syllabus for the conduct of the course week by week, but will leave it to the various institutions to form their own plans and choose their own texts. Student soldiers will be required to buy textbooks for use in the work in exactly the same way as civilians. 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 30 men each, or by 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 lecturers.

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 certain 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:

(1) A selection from some thousands of questions on the war asked by soldiers in the Training Detachments, representing the doubts and difficulties which present themselves to the average man. These questions will be printed in pamphlet form, with reference to the sources of information which will answer them. This pamphlet will be sent in a few weeks to all instructors giving the course. While it would be futile for any instructor to attempt to deal with all of these questions in his lectures, 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.

(2) A brief bibliography of books which have been found useful in giving this work and which should be provided in every college library will also be sent to each institution about October 1st.

(3) A selection of the most important publications of the Committee on Public Information will be supplied free of charge to instructors in this course who send a request to the Committee on Public Information at

10 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C. Duplicate copies of these publications will be furnished free of charge by the Committee on Public Information to institutions for the use of soldiers in the Student Army Training Corps up to the limit of the editions available. Institutions are urged not to order a larger number of these pamphlets for their libraries than will actually be used. The new War Cyclopeda will probably be found especially valuable in this course.

(4) Copies of the Strategic Map of Central Europe, 60 by 72 inches in size, prepared by the War College Division of the General Staff, may be procured by educational institutions from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., at 30c. each.

(5) A brief list of suggestions for instructors based on the experience of the Committee in conducting a course of this type in our Vocational Training Detachments will be sent direct from this Committee. Additional suggestions and materials will be issued to the institutions from time to time.

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. Its purpose should be to develop the minds of the men as well as to enhance their morale.

10. **NOMINATION OF INSTRUCTORS:** Immediately upon receipt of this letter institutions are asked to report to Frank Aydelotte, Director of War Aims Course, 146 Old Land Office Building, Washington, D. C., and also to their Regional Director of the Student Army Training Corps, the name of the professor who will have charge of the course, or who will act as chairman of the group of men designated to conduct it, and to whom further suggestions may be sent. The professor so nominated is asked to send to the Regional Director at his earliest convenience a brief statement of the character and organization of the course which he is planning. In case institutions plan to set up some alternative to the course here outlined, it is especially important that the Regional Director have notice of this as early as possible in order that he may inspect it and determine whether or not it should be approved by the Committee as a substitute for this course.

By order of the Committee,

GRENVILLE CLARK,

Lt.-Col. A. G. O., Secretary.