

Negotiating Peace After World War I

The Paris Peace Conference (1919) and America's rejection of the League of Nations (1919-1920)

Course #	19FNP
Format:	Seminar
Moderator(s):	Jay Russell
Date and Time:	Monday, 1:30-3:30 10 weeks, starting September 23
Location:	Smith College, Dewey Hall Common
Maximum number of participants:	18
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to 2

Purpose: This seminar will revisit the Paris Peace Conference and the Senate's rejection of the League of Nations by examining the people who participated, the issues they addressed, the decisions they reached, and the short- and long-term consequences of those decisions.

Description: World War I was supposedly "the war to end all wars." To what extent did the outcomes of the Paris Peace Conference and the Senate's rejection of the League of Nations contribute to the failure to realize that hope?

The Peace Conference was dominated by the victors, the leaders of the Big Four (the United States, Britain, France, and Italy), who, according to Richard Holbrooke, set out to do nothing else than fix the world. The Peace Conference produced five treaties (most notably the Treaty of Versailles), drew national boundaries, awarded German and Ottoman colonies as "mandates" to the victors and imposed reparations on Germany. The League of Nations "fight" in the Senate pitted President Wilson and "internationalists" against "isolationists" and "Irreconcilables" in a debate about the conduct and control of American foreign policy.

This seminar will provide an opportunity to explore the historical figures, issues, decisions, and consequences on the centennial of these events.

Role of participants: Each seminar member will give a 30-35-minute presentation on a topic within the scope of the seminar and will have the opportunity to participate in the question and discussion periods following each presentation.

Resources: For background and presentation topics on the Peace Conference: *Paris 1919* (2001) by Margaret MacMillan, and *Versailles 1919: A Centennial Perspective* (2019) by Alan Sharp. For background and presentation topics on the League Fight: *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (2001) by John Milton Cooper, Jr.

About the Moderator: Jay Russell, a retired attorney, has been a LIR member since 2013. He has co-moderated or moderated several seminars on politics and history.