

EDMUND BLUNDEN: A SEMINAR  
MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE, FALL II, 2024  
UMA Center, Brunswick Landing, Room 119  
Mondays, 1.00 to 3.00 p.m.  
Bob Bunselmeyer, [reb21ag@aol.com](mailto:reb21ag@aol.com)

Meetings and Topics:--

1. Nov. 4. Introduction. (1). An overview of the British army on the Western Front, 1914-1918. The Colonial Army and the Home Army. The British Expeditionary Force. Voluntary enlistment versus conscription. Mobile war, trench warfare, frontal attack, and the inevitability of attrition. Why war on the Western Front became a literary war. (2). The British Army in North Africa, 1940-1943. A different war. The transition from horsed cavalry to mobile armor between the wars. Blitzkrieg and other tactics. Cairo-Alexandria versus Paris. A new "western front." The literary aspects.

Nov. 11. Armistice/Veterans Day. No class.

2. Nov. 18. Edmund Blunden, his life, his war. Begin discussion of Blunden, Undertones of War. Discuss poems selected from those appended to Undertones.

3. Nov. 25. Continue discussion of Undertones. Discuss poems selected from those appended to Undertones. Where does Blunden stand in the history of English poetry?

4. Dec. 2. Wilfred Owen, his life, his war, his poetry. The 1931 collection of Owen's poems edited by Blunden and C. Day Lewis. Discuss selected poems by Owen.

5. Dec. 9. Ivor Gurney, his life, his war, his music, his poetry. Blunden and Ivor Gurney. Listen to Gurney's songs. Discuss selected poems by Gurney. The psychological impact of the war.

6. Dec. 16. Keith Douglas, his life, his war, his poetry. Blunden and Douglas. Alamein to Zem Zem. Discuss selected poems by Douglas. Compare the literature of 1914-1918 to that of 1940-1943. Conclusions.

Before meetings 2-6, I will announce the titles of poems I would like to discuss in the following meeting. A title search on your computer will normally produce a clean, printable copy of each poem. Where that is not possible, I will provide a link or a photocopy.

See also the Assigned and Additional Readings pages on the website. The first page is on the already on the course website. Others will appear during the course.

As always, this syllabus is a work in progress, subject to salutary amendments.

