**Government 1732**

**The Origins of Modern Wars**

World War I, Part II – War Guilt

Last section we talked about the *deep causes* of World War I that lay in the structure of states and the international system. In our next section we’ll talk about the *proximate causes* of World War I, and the way statesmen behaved in the July Crisis. The Howard book is your main source for this, and in preparing for next section you should focus on understanding the basic timeline of important events.

As you read, try to develop your own ideas about who or what was responsible for World War I. To draw out some of these ideas (and to have some fun with it in the process), we’ll organize next section around a simulation.

The scenario is the debate over the War Guilt Clause in the negotiations at Versailles. This debate actually took place and it had high stakes. Germany ended up with the blame for WWI: for this reason it was saddled with crippling reparations and a blow to German pride. This was not only unpleasant for Germany: in some ways, these sanctions may have led directly to the onset of World War II. Our goal next section will be to replay this debate, to determine whether we believe Germany really was responsible for WWI, and to see who else might deserve to be singled out, as well.

For this debate, each person will serve as an advocate for the state to which they’ve been assigned. Your job next section will be to defend your state and to make accusations against the others. Your primary goals are to make sure your state escapes unscathed, and to make sure someone else ends up with the blame. (After all, you’d like to get some reparations out of them.) Maybe you will also want to help out your allies. Or maybe you will want to sell them out.

Since this is a simulation, you don’t personally have to believe anything you say, but of course, your arguments should have a factual basis. There are some specific questions below that you might want to consider as you prepare. We’ll start next section by briefly reviewing the July Crisis; then we’ll split into groups to let you plot strategy; and then we will hold the debate. Good luck! -J.A.F.

For Russia: Why should anyone else care about your Pan-Slavism? What were you thinking when you ordered partial mobilization? *Mon: Diana, Mary Rebecca; Tue: Kyle H., Catherine*

For Austria-Hungary: Why did you risk World War over a country as small as Serbia? Why did you have to be so aggressive about your ultimatum to the Serbs? *Mon: Eeke, Laura; Tue: Alexandria, Kyle C., Lila*

For Great Britain: Why do you care so much about Belgian neutrality? Why did you make your alliance commitments so vague? *Mon: Georgia, Paula; Tue: Larmon, Naji*

For Germany: Why did you give Austria-Hungary a blank check? Why were you so duplicitous in the run-up to the war? *Mon: Dan, Mauricio, Joan; Tue: Rob, Meseret, Teddy*

For France: Why did you need offensive war plans? Why didn’t you help the Belgians defend their German border? *Mon: May Lan, Rodolfo; Tue: Billy, Becca*