GENERAL INFORMATION
KU Common Book is a campuswide initiative focused on engaging first-year students. Each year, a new book is selected by a committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students from nominations generated by the KU campus.

A key component of Bold Aspirations is investing in first-year intellectual experiences. KU Common Book promotes community and academic engagement by generating opportunities for shared intellectual experiences that invite analysis, foster critical thinking, and reflect the type of reasoned discourse expected at KU. In addition to building valuable connections to individuals across campus, KU Common Book illustrates the interdisciplinary nature of the subjects we study, and creates an understanding that new students are entering a community that explores topics together.

First-year students receive the 2015-16 KU Common Book – A Farewell to Arms, by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ernest Hemingway – at Orientation. The book explores a variety of themes across academic fields and engages issues related to KU research strengths and several of KU’s strategic initiative areas.

We encourage interested faculty to adopt the book in courses and look forward to many campus conversations. The Office of First-Year Experience is here to assist and offer support. Contact us at 785-864-4270.

Hawk Week KU Common Book Discussions
Faculty are strongly encouraged to lead a KU Common Book discussion on the Sunday prior to the first day of classes.
1 p.m. on Sunday, August 23
Discussions will be held on residence hall floors for those in Student Housing.
Alternative locations will be available for those living off campus. Specific locations to be announced.
If you are interested in being a faculty discussion group leader please contact Howard Graham hgraham@ku.edu

*an updated list of Common Book programming opportunities will be available in the summer. Programs under consideration include a Keynote Address, programming in cooperation with the World War I Commemoration Committee (for more information about WWI events already planned please visit their website http://european.ku.edu/wwi-tribute), as well as programs specific to Hemingway and A Farewell to Arms.
Review Copies
We have a limited number of review copies available for those interested in using *A Farewell to Arms* in their classrooms. Due to high demand, we are only able to provide one book per instructor. To request a review copy, please email commonbook@ku.edu with the following information:

- Name of instructor of record
- Department
- Course name
- Course number
- How do you anticipate using the book in your course? Please review the resources at the end of this guide for more information on the book’s content and themes.

Departmental Orders
KU Bookstore is providing discounted rates for KU departments that are interested in purchasing copies of *A Farewell to Arms*. Pricing is dependent on number ordered.

1-49 copies - $13.00 per book
50-99 copies - $12.50 per book
100+ copies - $12.00 per book

Departmental Orders can be placed at https://www.kubookstore.com/p-128310-a-farewell-to-arms.aspx. Please contact James Rourke with questions about department orders.

2015-16 KU COMMON BOOK – *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*

The following selections of praise and criticism of *A Farewell to Arms* are intended to highlight some ways in which scholars, publishing houses, and authors have interpreted the work.

Biographical Background
Written when Ernest Hemingway was thirty years old and lauded as the best American novel to emerge from World War I, *A Farewell to Arms* is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse. Set against the looming horrors of the battlefield—wearied, demoralized men marching in the rain during the German attack on Caporetto; the profound struggle between loyalty and desertion—this gripping, semi-autobiographical work captures the harsh realities of war and the pain of lovers caught in its inexorable sweep (Simon and Schuster).

Formal Analysis
“Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* is the best written book that has seen the light in America for many a long day…I mean writing that is terse and economical, in which each sentence and each phrase bears its maximum load of meaning, sense impressions, emotion. The book is a first-rate piece of craftsmanship by a man who knows his job. It gives you the sort of pleasure line by line that you get from handling a piece of well finished carpenter’s work. Read the first chapter, the talk at the officers’ mess in Goritizia, the scene in the dressing-station when the narrator is wounded, the paragraph describing the ride to Milan in the hospital train, the talk with the British major about how everybody’s cooked in the war, the whole description of the disaster of Caporetto to the end of the chapter where the battle-police are shooting the officers as they cross the bridge, the caesarian operation in which the girl dies. The stuff will match up as narrative prose with anything that’s been written since there was any English language” (Dos Passos 89).
Gender Studies
“The connection of sex and death is incessant in Hemingway’s writing. In a Farewell to Arms the association is made by the second page of the book: ‘their rifles were wet and under their capes the two leather cartridge-boxes on the front of the belts, gray leather boxes heavy with the packs of clips of thin, long 6.5 mm. cartridges, bulged forward under the capes so that the men passing on the road, marched as though they were six months gone with child.’ The idea that pregnancy is death and the womb an agent of destruction could hardly be stated more clearly. Thus the real source of betrayal in the biological trap is not simply biology; it is, specifically, female biology. Women, who promise life, are in reality death and their world of inner space is finally nightmare. Conversely, the outer world of men which seems overtly to have given over to death, is finally the reservoir of hope and possibility. In the handling of these metaphors of space, then, we once again encounter the immense hostility toward women which underlies A Farewell to Arms (Fetterley 128-129).


Topics/Related Topics in A Farwell to Arms
- Austria-Hungary/Italian Front, the “White War”
- trench warfare
- Battles of the Isonzo and Caporetto retreat
- Camaraderie
- Love and romance
- Gender Relations
- Death
- Separation
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Class conflict
- Volunteerism
- Nationalism
- Catholicism
- Socialism
- Journalism and Media
- Modernism
- Pacifism
- Alliances
- Shell Shock
- Mental Health
- Substance abuse
- Changing conceptions of war

ON-LINE RESOURCES
*all quotes taken from website annotated.

Ernest Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
“A 1968 exchange of letters between Mary Hemingway and Jacqueline Kennedy confirmed that the Hemingway papers would be archived at the Kennedy Library. In 1972, Mrs. Hemingway deeded the collection to the Kennedy Presidential Library and began depositing papers in its Archives.”

“The Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum and Educational Center in Piggot, Arkansas includes a barn studio associated with Ernest Hemingway and the family home of his second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer. Pauline’s parents, Paul and Mary Pfeiffer, were prominent citizens of Northeast Arkansas and owned more than 60,000 acres of land. During the 1930s the barn was converted to a studio to give Hemingway privacy for writing while visiting Piggott. Portions of one of his most famous novels, *A Farewell to Arms*, and several short stories were written in this studio. Both the home and the barn studio were named to the National Historic Register in 1982. The properties have been renovated, focusing on the 1930s era. Areas of emphasis for the Museum and Educational Center include literature of the period, 1930s world events, agriculture, family lifestyles and relationships, and development of Northeast Arkansas during the Depression and New Deal eras.” The website includes an interactive timeline of Hemingway’s life.

“This blog is dedicated to University of Kansas World War I Centennial Commemoration activities, 2014-2018.”

KU WWI Centennial Commemoration [http://european.ku.edu/wwi-tribute](http://european.ku.edu/wwi-tribute)
“KU’s World War I Centennial Commemoration 2014-2018, coordinated by the European Studies Program, explores the historical dimensions of the War and the ways it continues to shape our lives and our understanding of contemporary conflict. European Studies is working with more than thirty KU units and with organizations and institutions in Lawrence and the region to develop, coordinate, and promote programs and educational opportunities related to the Great War.” This site includes a calendar of WWI events planned for the KU community.

KU Spencer Museum of Art [http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/)
The galleries are closed during renovations, but the collection is viewable online and the museum remains AT LARGE with offsite programs.

- **World War I & The End of Empires** [http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/world-war-i-end-of-empires.shtml](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/world-war-i-end-of-empires.shtml)
- **Conversation XVIII: World War I** [http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/world-war-i.shtml](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/world-war-i.shtml)
- **Thousands of World War I era art pieces gifted to Spencer Museum of Art** [http://news.ku.edu/2014/05/08/thousands-world-war-i-era-art-pieces-gifted-spencer-museum-art](http://news.ku.edu/2014/05/08/thousands-world-war-i-era-art-pieces-gifted-spencer-museum-art)
  One of the richest collections of World War I era art in the country can now be found at the University of Kansas’ Spencer Art Museum through Professor Eric G. Carlson’s gift of more than 3,000 pieces.

**Medicine in the First World War** [http://www.kumc.edu/wwi.html](http://www.kumc.edu/wwi.html)
A website “created to tell the story of Base Hospital #28, the 2,500 bed military base hospital that was formed by Kansas City doctors and nurses and which arrived in Limoges, France, in July 1918. During the six months of its active operation it served nearly ten thousand patients. The hospital was led by doctors who were associated with the medical school of the University of Kansas before and after the Great War. The website will also examine unexpected medical challenges, e.g. the influenza epidemic of 1918 and gas gangrene.”

**National WWI Museum, Kansas City** [https://theworldwar.org/](https://theworldwar.org/)

“the Museum operates as non-profit organization dedicated to honoring those who served in the Great War by:

- Maintaining the Liberty Memorial as a beacon of freedom and a symbol of the courage, patriotism, sacrifice and honor of all who served in World War I
- Interpreting the history of World War I to encourage public involvement and informed decision-making
- Providing exhibitions and educational programs that engage diverse audiences
- Collecting and preserving historical materials with the highest professional standards to share the stories of the Great War through the eyes of those who lived it.”

**The Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park** [http://www.ehfop.org/](http://www.ehfop.org/)

Hemingway’s childhood home, the website features virtual tours.

**The Hemingway Society** [http://hemingwaysociety.org/](http://hemingwaysociety.org/)

“The Ernest Hemingway Foundation was established in 1965 by Mary Hemingway, Ernest’s widow, ‘for the purposes of awakening, sustaining an interest in, promoting, fostering, stimulating, supporting, improving and developing literature and all forms of literary composition and expression.’ Within that context, the Foundation’s activities have emphasized ‘the promotion, assistance and coordination of scholarship and studies relating to the works and life of the late Ernest Hemingway.’” The Hemingway Society and The University of Idaho publish the *The Hemingway Review* twice a year. KU Libraries provides online access to the journal [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/hemingway_review/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/hemingway_review/) and print copies can be found in Watson Library.

**Selected Bibliography**

This bibliography is comprised of resource recommendations gathered from KU faculty across a wide number of disciplines.

*A Short History of World War I* – James L. Stokesbury

*Critical Essays on Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms* – George Montiero (editor)

*Dead Wake* – Eric Larson

*Exile’s Return* – Malcolm Cowley

*Fall of Giants* – Ken Follett

*Hemingway’s First War* – Michael S. Reynolds
New Essays On A Farewell to Arms – Scott Donaldson (editor)

Paris 1919 – Margaret MacMillan

Testament of Youth – Vera Brittain

The Beauty and the Sorrow – Peter Englund

The End of American Innocence – Henry May

The First World War – John Keegan

The First World War – Michael Howard

The Great War and Modern Memory – Paul Fussell

The Hemingway Log: A Chronology of His Life and Times – Brewster Chamberlain

The Memoirs of George Sherston – Siegfried Sassoon

The Russian Army in the Great War: The Eastern Front, 1914-1917 – David R. Stone

They Fought For The Motherland: Russia’s Women Soldiers in World War I and the Revolution – Laurie S. Stoff

To End All Wars – Adam Hochschild

Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era – Chad L. Williams

For more information about KU Common Book
The KU Common Book program is coordinated by the Office of First-Year Experience. If you would like to learn more about this year’s selection, related events, the selection process, or the KU Common Book Committee, please visit commonbook.ku.edu. If you have any additional questions, please email commonbook@ku.edu