

# ***History 4820: World War II in Europe (ETO)***

Summer 2008 (June 9-August 1)

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Main 321J; Office hrs. W,Th 9:45-10:45 or by appointment

***Scope: While the focus of the course is on “war” in Europe (including the area of the Soviet Union under Nazi attack) and the Mediterranean region, the aims of the class go beyond “battles” and campaigns and weaponry; the goals include the following: to acquire insights into the “lesser known” features of World War II (WWII), such as the Winter War, activities in Palestine during wartime, and British intelligence activities (in Norway, regarding the German Enigma, etc.); to increase our awareness of individual acts of heroism and bestiality (i.e., the evolution of the “Final Solution”), to promote our understanding of the “human condition” (i.e., to examine underpinnings of the Nazi-Soviet war of annihilation) and to clarify the role of the Soviet Union in the Allied victory.***

More than 60 years after World War II, most students know the “basic” elements of the Second World War, especially in Europe. American students, raised on *Saving Private Ryan* and other Hollywood classics on WWII, know a great deal about the Anglo-American victories in World War II; most Americans—and others—know less about the Nazi-Soviet titanic clash of the Second World War. In part, this lack of familiarity results from the Cold War, which involved the US and the “West” on one side and the Soviet Union and the “communist bloc” on the other. Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the “end” of the Cold War, archival material has become available in both the former East Germany and the Soviet Union. Scholars, such as Laurence Rees, Antony Beevor and others, have accessed this new information to provide a further dimension to our understanding of World War II. This course will use these new insights, provided through film and documents, to enhance our understanding of this “war of the century” or war of annihilation, as the Nazi-Soviet conflict is often called. By examining this theater of war, students can gain an enhanced awareness of the role of propaganda and racism in producing the incredible viciousness of WWII. The Nazi-Soviet theater of war is crucial to an understanding of the evolution of the Final Solution. It is important for an appreciation of the factors which gave rise to the Cold War in the postwar period. So while special attention will be given to the “War of the Century” between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, we will also examine more familiar aspects of the conflict in the West (France’s Maginot Line, Battle of the Atlantic, Battle of Britain, Anglo-American bombing, etc.). Time will also be spent examining the resistance movements in Norway and France, intelligence work—especially of the British at Bletchley Park, the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union (1939-40), British policy in Palestine during the Second World War, and much more. While attention will be directed toward certain battles (Stalingrad in particular) and military strategy, class time will be devoted to stories of individual bravery (military and civilian) and the “lessons” we can learn from studying this most horrible war.

***Books: (In bookstore; copy of each on reserve at Media Collections Dept., USU Library)***

Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad* (potentially used in paper)

Charles Messenger, *The Second World War in Europe* (basic textbook)

Oliver North, *War Stories III: The Heroes Who Defeated Hitler* (potentially used in paper)

**On Reserve (three examples—on the Holocaust)**

Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*

Wladyslaw Szpilman, *The Pianist: The Extraordinary True Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945*

David Wyman (ed.), collection on Holocaust documents

For more on reserve material and electronic reserve articles (see library webpage: [www.usu.edu](http://www.usu.edu); select Course Reserves)

### **Requirements**

1. **A 4-5 page (typed) paper (75 pts) based on ONE of the following options:**

a. on the Holocaust, utilizing the Szpilman or Borowski book (on reserve) and the Holocaust documents collection (edited by Dr. David Wyman) on reserve in Media Collection department of USU library, class material (including Laurence Rees's documentaries on Nazis and Auschwitz); OR

b. on heroes (four) of WWII (or villains), based on the North book and classroom material Due August 1, last day of class and in lieu of final exam (more information later—75 points); OR

c. on a battle (example, Stalingrad or El Alamein), an operation (Operation Normandy or Operation Market-Garden or Operation Barbarossa, etc.), a campaign (in North Africa or in Italy), an intelligence operation (or make a suggestion).

2. **A 10-15 page RESEARCH paper (utilizing primary and secondary sources) on ONE of the following topics (worth 100 pts. due Mon. Aug. 4, in lieu of final exam).** Some possible topics include the following: WWII technology (ETO)—such as the German Enigma machine or the Soviet T-34 tank, etc.; Resistance movements (ETO)—such as the role of the French resistance before D-Day or the Norwegian resistance fighters; Soviet contributions to Allied victory in WWII in ETO—or the controversy over US Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union; the Italian campaign (1943-45) or the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign in ETO; or a particular campaign, such as Operation Torch or Operation Overlord (Normandy) or Operation Market-Garden or Operation Blue in the USSR; Allied prison escapes, or suggest a topic if you wish. **Due Monday, Aug. 4 (after final exam day on August 1—no final exam)**

3. Unspecified number of class-designated assignments

4. Responsible attendance expected

### **Readings from the USU Library's Electronic Course Reserve**

**1<sup>st</sup> Week: Hitler's Visions; Polish Realities, French Fears, Finnish Bravery** (in addition to the Messenger book, read material on library course reserve: on Poland, *Image before my Eyes*; Carr and "Poland 1939" from Cowley's book of essays, *No End Save Victory*. For those interested in Hitler's rise to power, see on electronic reserve material: Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution*, Introduction, pages xi-xxii; Nazi Social Ideology, pages 43-72; social opportunity under Nazi rule—especially for youth, pages 261-288) ; for Poland and Finland, see Mosier's "Lessons Mislabeled: Poland and the Winter Wars" from *The Blitzkrieg Myth*; concerning France; read on course reserve, Mosier's "The Maginot Line and Hitler's Response" from *The Blitzkrieg Myth*; Doughty's "Nazi Invasion of France" and Bailey's "Dunkirk I" and Gudmundsson's "Dunkirk II"

**2<sup>nd</sup> Week: British Heroics: Battle of Britain, Battle of Atlantic; North African Campaign:**

Read in electronic reserve, Manchester's Churchill; Bailey's "Dunkirk I" and Gudmundsson's "Dunkirk II" and Balme on the North Atlantic; Kemp on the Italian Navy; also see on reserve if interested, Bodansky's *Battle of Wits* about decoding the secrets of the German Enigma machine); in media collection department, *Decoding Nazi Secrets* (a PBS Nova special on Enigma); on reserve, my personal DVD collection on the Battle of the Atlantic, The London Blitz. Also see North's *War Stories* for material on the London Blitz); Douglas, "Beachhead Labrador" or U-Boats in Atlantic

**3<sup>rd</sup> Week: Operation Barbarossa to Stalingrad** : read from course reserve material on Stalingrad by Oliver North (or from your book); Beevor's *Stalingrad*; my DVD on reserve about the Soviet-Nazi war ("War of the Century")

**4<sup>th</sup> Week: Resistance Movements: French, Norwegian, Dutch** resistance efforts; **Jewish resistance efforts (in Nazi-occupied lands—Poland, such as the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Ukraine, etc.** (for material on Poland, see Szpilman's book on reserve, *The Pianist* or the DVD on the movie; see course reserve, Holt "The Deceivers" on pre-D-Day; Kurzman, "Sabotaging Hitler's Bomb" on Norwegian resistance fighters; my DVD on reserve about World War II Secret Operations (on Norway)

**5<sup>th</sup> Week: Read material in Messenger and North (D-Day, Operation Cobra; Operation Market-Garden; Battle of Bulge, etc.)**

**6<sup>th</sup> Week: Soviet Drive toward Germany (1944-45):** read Messenger; North, course reserve material, class handouts, etc. (more specifics when the class gets closer to this period)

**7<sup>th</sup> Week & 8<sup>th</sup> Week: Catch up; Yalta & FDR's death; Soviet conquest of Berlin; War's end; Nuremberg Trials; assessment of WWII in Europe**