

World War II in Europe Summer Semester 2009 (Eight-week session)
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Office hrs. Monday-Thursday, 10-11 am

Course Description: Rather than be a mere rehash of the “basic approach” to WWII in Europe—Holocaust, Hitler, D-Day, etc.-- this course aims to touch upon the less familiar, as well as familiar, aspects of this brutal warfare from 1939-1945 in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and the Soviet Union. One concern will be the evolution of war technology (airplanes, tanks, code-breaking machines, radar, computers, etc.); another consideration will be to examine, when possible, the “heroes” of this war—on both sides, civilian and military, as seen in the efforts of the Norwegian Resistance fighters to destroy the heavy-water factory or in the incredible actions of ordinary people such as Londoners trying to protect St. Paul Cathedral during the London Blitz. Of course, the war’s “villains” (a list too long to enumerate now) must also be scrutinized. Issues of concern will be the (1) impact of the war on the “Palestinian Question” while Britain served as the “mandated” ruler of Palestine and (2) the role of British Commonwealth members (especially those from India) who played major fighting roles on the Allied side. (3) Why the Allies won and the Axis powers lost is another topic which we must debate (a good “group” project for the last week of the semester). While FDR and Stalin will not be ignored, Mussolini and Churchill deserve coverage, too (hence, one textbook is on Mussolini and Fascism). Because the History Department offers other courses on World War II (e.g., Hist. 4821, World War Two in Asia; Hist. 3760, US History, 1900-1945, to mention two), the war in the Pacific and the CBI (China, Burma, India) and the US homefront will not be covered in this brief course. While this course does not aim to be the “History Channel” writ large, it will involve much visual material. World War II was heavily filmed by the major powers, for propaganda purposes; hence, much “primary source” material is available to watch, analyze, etc. The “basics” of the course are outlined in Keegan’s book on the Second World War (and I have several others on course reserve if you wish to explore further). **Moreover, I have utilized the library’s course reserve to provide additional online readings for you.** For those who have not used course reserve material, here is a brief sketch: access the material by going to “Library” on USU webpage; click on “course reserve” and then click on reserve material by professor’s name (Conover); a menu of different courses will appear; select Hist. 4820; the next page requires a password: the password is the first three letters of your instructor’s last name (con) and the 4 digits of the course (4820). Another menu will appear: books, articles, videos; select “articles” and the list of articles I want you to read are available. If you decide to print out the

article, when you hit “print” make sure you check the box that allows the article to be printed off in PDF format.

Textbooks:

John Keegan, *The Second World War* (1989)

Giuseppe Finaldi, *Mussolini and Italian Fascism* (2008)

Course Objectives:

1. To enhance the student’s awareness of the key components of the World War II era in Europe—the propaganda , technological innovations, alliance systems, totalitarian rulers, racial hatred of the Nazi regime and its Axis allies, and transformation of the international system (decline of Europe and European colonialism; rise of US and USSR to superpower status)
2. To promote the student’s understanding of the “appeal” of communism to many Europeans who were Resistance fighters; the “appeal” of Nazism to Germans and non-Germans (such as many in Holland); the transformation of the US-Great Britain relationship; Stalin’s foreign policy concerns (before, during and after WWII)
3. To hone the reading/writing/researching skills of the student
4. To build the student’s fascination with and appreciation for the incredible sacrifices and acts of heroism provided by ordinary people during a time of total warfare

Chronology of Topics in Keegan’s book

Week 1: June 8-12: 1939—Attacks on Poland, Finland

Week 2: June 15-19: 1940—Attacks on Denmark, Norway, Belgium, France; “Miracle” of Dunkirk; Battle of Britain and London Blitz

Week 3: June 22-26: 1940-43: Mussolini & North African campaign, Sicily, Allied attack on Italy

Week 4: June 29, June 30, July 1-3: 1941-44: Nazi-Soviet “War of the Century” – attacks and counterattacks (“Barbarossa” to “Bagration”)

Week 5: July 6-10: 1942-45: Allied Strategic Bombing, Resistance

Week 6: July 13-17: 1944-45: Operation Overlord, Breakout, Liberation of Paris, Operation Market-Garden, Battle of Bulge, etc.

Week 7: July 20-23; July 24=Pioneer Day holiday: 1944-1945: Warsaw Uprising, Soviet-Allied Conquest of Germany; Liberation of Death Camps, Red Army in Berlin; Downfall of “Third Reich” and etc.

Week 8: July 27-31: Legacies of WWII

Reading Schedule (Tentative) of two textbooks

Week 1: Keegan—chp. 1 (optional); chps. 6 (Hitler's Strategic Dilemma), 2-5

Week 2: Keegan—chp. 7, chp. 8 (optional); *Mussolini and Fascism* chps. 6-7-8; chps. 17(Churchill's Strategic Dilemma), 18-19

Week 3: Keegan—chps. 9-10 (War Production), 11 (12-14, 16-optional: Pacific), 15 (Occupation and Repression), 24 (Stalin's Strategic Dilemma), 25

Week 4 & 5: (Fri. July 3=holiday) Keegan chp. 20-23, 26 (Resistance/Espionage)

Week 6: Keegan chps. 27-29 (Roosevelt's Strategic Dilemma)

Week 7: (Fri. July 24=holiday) Keegan, chp. 32 (pages 578-85)

Week 8: Keegan, chp. 33 (Legacy of WWII); *Mussolini and Fascism, chps. 1-2*

Additional Reading Assignments from Course Reserve (online documents)

Week 1: Regarding introduction to WWII: read material from Michael Bess's *Choices Under Fire: Moral Dimensions of World War II*, under the separate titles "Bess: Wide World of Racism" and "Bess: Causes of War in Europe" and "Bess: Conclusion" ; regarding Poland and Finland: read documents entitled "Image Before My Eyes" ; "Lessons Mislearned: Poland and Winter Wars" ; "Poland in 1939"

Week 2: Read "Churchill and Hist Generals" and "Almost a Miracle" and "Bloody Marvelous"—about Dunkirk and escape of Anglo-French forces-- and "After Dunkirk" ; "Battle of Britain and London Blitz" (Oliver North); "Decima Mas" (on Italy) and "Eighth Army Witness to El Alamein" and Oliver North's article on Italy, "Battle for the Boot"

Week 3 "The Eastern Front" (Oliver North on Nazi-Soviet war) and "Bess: Tyranny Triumphant" about Stalin

Week 4 "The Deceivers" and "Operation Overlord: Normandy" (Oliver North); "Blitzkrieg Myth D-Day & St. Lo" and "Blitzkrieg Myths & Breakout: Arnhem, Metz, Bulge"

Week 5: "Freeing France from Hitler" (North) and "Bess: Deep Evil and Deep Good"

Week 6: "Failure of Strategic Airpower, 1940-1944" and "Bess: Bombing Civilian Populations" and "Berlin" (North)

Week 7: "Hitler Documents" and "Hitler's Social Revolution" and "Bess: Bystanders" and "Bess: Justice for the Unspeakable"

Week 8: "Bess: Long-Term Consequences of the War (Intro)" and "Bess: Politics of Memory"

Requirements:

1. You must be a student who is interested, attentive, responsible, self-motivated, well-mannered (i.e., no talking, sleeping, working on homework

from another class, texting, using computer—EXCEPT for academic purposes only—and any other ill-mannered behavior that I haven't listed)

2. 5-6 page, typed *essay* on why Germany lost WWII and with what consequences for itself and Europe. Due July 23 (before holiday, July 24).
3. 5-6 page, typed *research paper* (at least 5 primary sources and 5 secondary sources) on the changes in military technology, especially airpower, during WWII (100 pts.) Due the last class, July 31
4. Unspecified number of in-class responses (could be a brief, two-paragraph response to assigned reading or a video clip seen in class, a quiz, etc.); total points could exceed 100 points (hence, class attendance is strongly advised)

Papers due Fri. July 31 or Mon. Aug. 3 (turn in papers at History Office front desk, box with label "Conover" in Main 323.