

**History 416**  
**World War II**  
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**Introduction:**

Oral Historian Studs Terkel famously titled his book on America in the Second World War The Good War. Only Americans see the war in such lofty tones. The war made America a superpower and brought the nation out of a depression, but for the rest of the world, the war brought unprecedented suffering. The best guess is that 50,000,000 people died as a result of the war. For the first time in history the majority of deaths were civilians. This course will look at the global tragedy that was World War II in international and comparative perspective.

**Required Books:**

Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992 (B).

Murray, Williamson and Allan Millett. *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000 (M).

Sledge, E. B., *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

**Recommended Web Site For Good Maps:**

<http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlas/atlas%20home.htm>

**Schedule of classes:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
21 Aug	Introduction and causes	
26 Aug	European Origins	M, chapter 1
28 Aug	Military Changes	M, chapter 2
2 Sept	German Designs	M, chapter 3
4 Sept	The Fall of France	M, chapter 4
9 Sept	The Mediterranean	M, chapter 5
11 Sept	Barbarossa	M, chapter 6
16 Sept	Guest presentation by Tommy Lofton National World War II Museum, New Orleans	
18 Sept	No class. Work on Prospectus	
23 Sept	<b>PROSPECTUS DUE</b>	

25 Sept	Asian Origins	M, chapter 7
30 Sept	Japan Triumphant	M, chapter 8
2 Oct	Asia-Pacific War I	M, chapter 9
7 Oct	Britain and the Atlantic	M, chapter 10
9 Oct	Stalingrad	M, chapter 11
14 Oct	CBO and Torch	M, chapter 12
16 Oct	No class. Fall Break	
21 Oct	Asia-Pacific War II	M, chapter 13
23 Oct	<b>EXAM</b>	
28 Oct	China-Burma-India	none
30 Oct	Kursk	M, chapter 14
4 Nov	Italy	B, chapters 1-6
6 Nov	Industry and Home Fronts	B, chapters 7-12
11 Nov	The Holocaust	Finish Browning
13 Nov	Overlord	M, chapter 15
18 Nov	Bagration	M, chapter 16
20 Nov	Iwo Jima and Okinawa	M, chapter 17-18
	<b>PAPER DUE</b>	
25 Nov	Defeat of Japan	Sledge
2 Dec	Post War	M, chapter 19 and 20
4 Dec	Wrap Up	None

Please note that this schedule is subject to change as I have to make trips to France and to the Pentagon this semester, as well as the trip to the Army War College which kept me away on the first day of class. I will announce any changes in advance in class.

### **Assignments:**

Prospectus (15%): September 23

Midterm Exam (25%): October 23

Paper (30%): November 20

Comprehensive Final Exam (30%): December 10

**Paper Prospectus:** You will turn in a 750-word paper that tells me what you wish to write your final paper on, what thesis you plan to prove, and what materials you will use to support that thesis. You must present me with your **THESIS** and your **ARGUMENT** not just your subject. See below for more.

**Paper:** The paper should be roughly 2,000 words, exclusive of footnotes, bibliography, etc. You should feel free to write on any aspect of the war that interests you. You can write on military aspects if you wish, but art, culture, gender relations, music, and literature are all perfectly acceptable. No papers on Patton or Rommel, please. I've already read enough of those for a lifetime.

## **Ten Tips for Better Writing:**

1. Buy and read William Strunk and E. B. White's The Elements of Style. It remains the best short and cheap book on how to improve your writing.
2. Make sure that you know how every word, every sentence, and every paragraph of your paper supports your main ideas.
3. Make the paragraph your primary unit of composition. Focus each paragraph on one main idea connected to your larger thesis.
4. Write in the active voice as often as possible. Example: "Islamic terrorists attacked the World Trade Center" instead of "The World Trade Center was attacked." The second sentence leaves the actor vague. Writing in the active voice forces you to make critical choices in your writing.
5. Be specific in your language. Avoid weak or useless words like "very" and "thing."
6. Omit unnecessary words.
7. Use the positive form as often as possible. Example: "He often arrived late" instead of "He did not often show up on time."
8. When discussing events that occurred in the past, use the past tense. Example: "The Americans entered World War I in 1917" instead of "The Americans would enter World War I in 1917."
9. Write with nouns and verbs as the basis of your sentences. Adjectives and adverbs support nouns and verbs, not vice versa.
10. Revise and rewrite! Do not be content with your first (or your second or even your third) draft.

## **How To Write a Prospectus:**

1. Present your thesis: What, exactly, do you propose to prove? A successful thesis statement should:

\* Be provocative. "General Eisenhower was a good general" is not a thesis because it is neither provocative nor really provable. "General Eisenhower successfully blended operational and coalition requirements in planning the operations of 1944 and 1945" is a thesis;

\* Be sufficiently interesting to you to merit your attention for the term paper. Pick a thesis that interests you. Don't pick a topic because you think it will be

easy or because you once wrote a paper on a similar topic. Pick a thesis that appeals to your intellect;

\* Be provable. Do not select a thesis so obscure that you can't find sources.

2. Present your sources. What sources will you be using? In your prospectus you must demonstrate that you have thought carefully about how you will prove your thesis. You do not need an annotated bibliography, but you must show a range and variety of appropriate materials. The internet is acceptable in small doses and resources like JSTOR and EBSCO are always fine, but otherwise be very careful. Be sure that you demonstrate not only that you found these sources, but have thought about how they will tie in to your paper.

3. Show a connection between the paper you want to write and the themes of the course. How does your paper relate to the course more generally?

Remember:

\* A prospectus is not set in stone. You may change your thesis as you research. If you do make significant changes, you would be well served to check with me first.

\* You can often find a good thesis by following up on a subject that we cover only lightly in class discussion.

### **Some Good Web Sites:**

Do be careful: there are a lot of very bad web sites on World War II, some of them inaccurate and some of them run by neo-Nazi and Holocaust denying groups. For your own sake, do not use Wikipedia. If you find a good web site, email me the URL and I'll add it to the list.

Some good web sites include:

<http://www.ddaymuseum.org> (National WWII Museum, New Orleans)

<http://armedforcesmuseum.us/> (Camp Shelby Armed Forces Museum)

<http://www.ushmm.org> (The US Holocaust Memorial)

<http://www.awm.gov.au> (The Australian War Memorial)

<http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg> (US Army Center of Military History)

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec> (US Army History and Education Center)

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/> (Imperial War Museum, London)

<http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/> (National Army Museum, London)

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/war-military/index-e.html> (Archives of Canada)

<http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/cwme.asp> (Canadian War Museum)

<http://www.yadvashem.org/> (Israel's Holocaust Memorial)

<http://www.invalides.org/> (French Military Museum, some pages in English)

<http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/> (National Museum of the US Air Force)

<http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dspolitic/index.htm> (The World War II cartoons of Dr Seuss)

<http://eng.9may.ru/> (A Russian English-language site)  
<http://worldwar2.smu.edu/> (on line collection of primary documents)

### **A Military Order of Battle:**

The sizes and terms of military units change over time. In peacetime, units tend to be much smaller. What follows is a typical World War II order of battle from smallest to largest:

Squad: 8-11 men commanded by a sergeant  
Platoon: 30-50 men commanded by a lieutenant  
Company: 100-200 men commanded by a captain or major  
Battalion: 600-1,000 men commanded by a lt. colonel  
Regiment: 2,000-3,000 men commanded by a colonel  
Brigade: 4,000-5,000 men commanded by a brigadier (one-star) general  
Division: 12,000-20,000 men commanded by a major (two-star) general  
Corps: two or more divisions commanded by a lieutenant (three-star) general  
Army: two or more corps commanded by a (four-star) general  
Army group: two or more armies commanded by a five-star general or field marshal

Battalions usually formed the basic tactical unit of an army, regiments the basic social units of an army, and divisions the basic administrative units of an army.

### **Extra credit opportunity:**

There are some wonderful World War II resources in the Gulf South. The National World War II museum is not in Washington, DC, but in New Orleans on Magazine Street near Lee Circle. It is an internationally recognized museum and has a number of USM grads working there. The *USS Alabama*, a World War II era battleship, is docked in Mobile Bay just off I-10 and open for tours. Also on site there is a submarine and a number of planes and other military vehicles. The Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola is a bit further away, but also worth a visit if you are headed that way. Closer to home is the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby, run by a USM graduate and free to the public. A museum of the African-American military experience is also due to open here in Hattiesburg soon (check <http://www.hattiesburguso.com> for updates). I strongly urge you to take the time to visit these museums this semester. If you do, write up a one page review of what you learned, including the day you visited, and I'll give you some extra credit.

### **Guide to My Comments on Your Papers:**

TS: You need a stronger topic sentence here. A topic sentence should set up the paragraph that follows. Avoid mere statements of fact and do not use a quotation as a topic sentence.

¶: You need to watch your paragraph structure. A solid paragraph should contain one single main idea set up by a solid topic sentence. Do not write paragraphs less than three sentences or longer than one page as a general rule.

ATQ (answer the question): How is this part of the paper related to the thesis?

fn: You need a footnote or more evidence here.

NAS (not a sentence): The sentence you have written is either a fragment or a run-on.

awk: This part of the paper is awkwardly written.

?: Your evidence does not support your thesis here.

√: This part of the paper is well done.

pv (passive voice): This sentence is in the passive voice. You should use passive voice sparingly.

wc (word choice): You have the wrong word here.

∟: Make the letter lower case

→: Indent

= (when under a letter): Capitalize

*Writing is easy. You just stare at blank pieces of paper until drops of blood appear on your forehead – H. L. Mencken.*

*This is not a book to be tossed aside gently. It should be thrown with great force – Dorothy Parker.*

*There is no great writing, only great rewriting – Justice Brandeis.*

*I am working on an unauthorized autobiography – Stephen Wright.*

*Writing is good. Thinking is better – Herman Hesse*

### **Notes:**

I do expect you to come to class, in large part because I have no intention of using my lectures simply to replicate the readings. I expect you to take notes, be prepared to answer any questions I might pose, and to ask questions if something is unclear. **Please turn off cell phones and have the courtesy to come to class on time.** Be prepared to accept serious deductions in grades for work turned in late and be prepared to give me an electronic version of your written work if I ask you for it. I will be available for office hours, but if these hours are not convenient for you, please email me or see me after class to arrange another appointment. Please also let me know if there are any special circumstances that will require you to be absent or late.

Academic Dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty will not be condoned under any circumstance. See the current Undergraduate Bulletin for a good definition of such behavior. Cheating on an exam or demonstrated plagiarism on a paper will automatically lead to a grade of “F” for the course and can result in dismissal from the college. The instructor reserves the right to use electronic resources, such as turnitin.com, to detect plagiarism. If you have questions or concerns about this policy—please see the instructor during office hours.

Students with Disabilities: If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities Covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies. Mailing address: 118 College Drive # 8586, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001; Telephone: (601) 266-5024; TTY: (601) 266-6837; Fax: (601) 266-6035 or at:  
<http://www.ids.usm.edu/ODA/default.asp>