
HISTORY 357, FALL 2017

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

PROFESSOR MARY LOUISE ROBERTS
TEACHING ASSISTANT: ROBERT CHRISTL

Description:

The Second World War is arguably the most important global event in the twentieth century. It brought nearly the entire world into its vortex of violence, hatred and industrial killing. It was a racial war begun by Germany and Japan in their quests for dominance. It was also a total war which demanded complete loyalty to the state and which consumed the natural, material and human resources of combatant nations. This course will explore these three themes of violence, racism and total war during the years 1939-1945. Lectures, screenings and readings will emphasize the war as a turning point in global politics; the role of leaders such as Hitler, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Charles de Gaulle, the lived experience of war and occupation for soldiers, civilians, and prisoners, and the execution of Nazi genocide and Japanese atrocities. During weekly screenings of popular films, students will come to distinguish “popular” from “historical” memory of the Second World War, and gain critical distance on how the war has been remembered personally, officially, and in American culture. This is a 4 credit course which meets as a group for 4 hours per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 8 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

Learning Goals:

In this course, you will learn the main narrative of the Second World War in both the European and Pacific theaters. In your sections and in writing the two papers, you will become skilled at how to interpret primary historical documents, as well as how to place them within a proper historical context. The two exams will advance your ability to master the dates and details of history as well as synthesize broad themes such as fascism, totalitarianism, genocide, collaboration and resistance, survival, and the everyday life of a soldier.

Requirements:

Active Participation in Lecture and Section Discussions (15%)
Two papers, due October 8 and December 3 (20% each)
One midterm in-class exam: November 5, Essay and Identifications (20%)
One final exam: December 19, Essays and Identifications (25%)

Books to Purchase at the UW Bookstore:

Lucie Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo*
Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*
Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*
Lauren Hillenbrand, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption*

Günter Koschorrek, *Blood Red Snow: The Memoirs of a German Soldier on the Eastern Front*
Yoshida Mitsuru, *Requiem for Battleship Yamato*
John Rabe, *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*
Andy Rooney, *My War*
Short readings are available on class page at learn@uw

Movies

All movies are required. They are available on the course website. Click on "Pages," then click on the link for the movie.

Office hours

Professor office hours, Tuesdays, 1:15 to 3:00, 5101 Humanities.
Email addresses are PROFESSOR ROBERTS, maryroberts@wisc.edu; ROBERT CHRISTL rchristl@wisc.edu

Schedule of Classes

Week One:

9/5 Public Memory/Historical Memory

Watch:

Steven Spielberg, "Saving Private Ryan" (1998)

Week Two:

9/10 World War I and the Development of Fascism

9/12 War Clouds over Europe

Read:

Defying Hitler Introduction, 3-139

Week Three:

9/17 Poland, Finland, Scandinavia

9/19 France and the Netherlands

Watch: "Dunkirk"

Read:

Defying Hitler, 140-226, 269-296

Week Four:

9/24 The Blitz in London

9/26 War Clouds over Japan

Watch:

"The Pianist" (2002)

Read:

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*, Preface, xv-xxii; pp. 1-113, Afterword, 191-223.

Week Five:

10/1 The Rape of Nanking

10/3 The Invasion of the USSR

Read:

Fukushima Yoshie, "Manchurian Days" at learn@uw
John Rabe, *The Good Man of Nanking*, Foreword, vii-xvii; 3-124

FIRST PAPER DUE, October 8

Week Six

10/8 America Stands By

10/10 The New Order

Watch:

"Defiance" (2008)

Read:

Vasily Grossman, "The German Capture of Orel" (on website).

Week Seven: The Pacific Front Widens

10/15 The Entry of the United States into the War

10/17 The Pacific War

Read:

Lauren Hillenbrand, *Unbroken*, Preface, 3-175

Week Eight: Homefronts

10/22 Resistance in Europe

10/24 Homefront USA

Watch:

"The Train" (1964)

Read:

Lucie Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo*, 9-44, 63-83, 103-177, 188-199, 222-230 (Entire recommended)

Week Nine: Turning Points

10/29 Midway and Guadalcanal

10/31 Stalingrad

Read:

Gunter Koschorrek, *Blood Red Snow*, Introduction, pp. 15-184

Week Ten: A New Allied Front

11/5 MIDTERM EXAM

11/7 The War in the Mediterranean

Watch:

"Patton" (1970)

Read:

Excerpt Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* on website

Week Eleven: Moving towards Victory

11/12 The Campaign in Italy

11/14 D-Day and France

Watch:

"Day of all Days" Band of Brothers

Read:

Andy Rooney, *My War*, 3-18, 51-226

Week Twelve: Camps

11/19 Death Camps

11/22 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Read:

Vasily Grossmann, "Treblinka" on class website, learn@uw
Hillenbrand, *Unbroken*, 179-318

Week Thirteen: The Last Days I

11/26 POW Camps

11/28 Hiroshima and the Defeat of Japan

Watch: "Letters from Iwo Jima"(2006)

Read:

Yoshida Mitsuru, *Requiem for Battleship Yamato*

SECOND PAPER DUE December 3

Week Fourteen: The Last Days II

12/3 The Last Days

12/5 Coming Home

Watch:

"Downfall" (2004)

Read:

Koschorrek, *Blood Red Snow*, 184-259

Week Fifteen: The Aftermath

12/10 Occupation

12/12 Who won the Second World War?

Watch:

"The Best Years of our Lives" (1945)

Read:

Hillenbrand, *Unbroken*, 319-380

Final Exam, December 19, 7:25-9:25pm