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# HISTORY 357, FALL 2021

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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### 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 In your sections and in writing the two papers, you will become skilled at how to interpret primary historical documents, as well as how to place them within a proper historical context.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 5 and November 23** (20% each)

One midterm in-class exam: **November 2**, Essay and Identifications (20%)

One final exam: In-class objective, **December 14**; Take-home essay due **December 17** (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 in the “Modules” section.

## **Office hours**

Professor office hours, Wednesdays, 1:15-3:15

Email addresses are Professor Roberts, [maryroberts@wisc.edu](mailto:maryroberts@wisc.edu); Ludwig Decke, [decke@wisc.edu](mailto:decke@wisc.edu)

## **Schedule of Classes**

### **Week One: Introduction**

9/9 Public Memory/Historical Memory

#### **Watch:**

Steven Spielberg, “Saving Private Ryan” (1998)

### **Week Two: Leading up to War**

9/14 World War I and the Development of Fascism

9/16 War Clouds over Europe

#### **Read:**

*Defying Hitler* Introduction, 3-139

### **Week Three: Blitzkrieg**

9/21 Poland, Finland, Scandinavia

9/23 France and the Netherlands

#### **Watch:** “Dunkirk”

#### **Read:**

*Defying Hitler*, 140-226, 269-296

### **Week Four: The War Widens**

9/28 The Blitz in London

9/30 The Invasion of the USSR

#### **Read:**

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

### **Week Five: China and Japan**

10/5 War Clouds over Japan **FIRST PAPER DUE**

10/7 The Rape of Nanking

#### **Read:**

John Rabe, *The Good Man of Nanking*, Foreword, vii-xvii; 3-124

**Week Six: The Third Reich**

10/12 America Stands By

10/14 The New Order

**Watch:**

“Defiance” (2008)

**Read:**

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

**Week Seven: An Ever-widening War**

10/19 The Entry of the United States into the War

10/21 The Pacific War

**Read:**

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

**Week Eight: “Homefronts”**

10/26 Resistance in Europe

10/28 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**

11/2 **MIDTERM EXAM**

11/4 Midway and Guadalcanal

**Read:**

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

**Week Ten: A New Allied Front**

11/9 Stalingrad

11/11 The War in the Mediterranean

**Watch:**

“Patton” (1970)

**Read:**

Excerpt Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* on website

**Week Eleven: Moving towards Victory**

11/16 The Campaign in Italy

11/18 D-Day and France

**Watch:**

“Day of all Days” Band of Brothers

**Read:**

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

**Week Twelve:**

11/23 no class: **SECOND PAPER DUE**

11/25 THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Read:** Hillenbrand, *Unbroken*, 179-318

**Week Thirteen: Camps**

11/30 Death Camps

12/2 POW Camps

**Watch:** “Letters from Iwo Jima” (2006)

**Read:**

Vasily Grossmann, “Treblinka” on class website, learn@uw

Yoshida Mitsuru, *Requiem for Battleship Yamato*

**Week Fourteen: The Last Days**

12/7 Hiroshima and the Defeat of Japan

12/9 The Bunker

**Watch:**

“Downfall” (2004)

**Read:**

Koschorrek, *Blood Red Snow*, 184-259

**Week Fifteen: The Aftermath**

12/14 Lecture: Who Won the Second World War? Final Exam Objective Part

**Read:**

Hillenbrand, *Unbroken*, 319-380

**Final exam essay due December 17, 5:00pm**