

EUH 4280 – Second World War in Europe, 1939-1945

UFO – Online Course, Spring, 2021

Instructor: Dr. George Esenwein, Associate Professor, History

Tel: 352-273-3369

Office hours via Zoom: Tuesdays, 10-11 via Zoom Conference/Canvas

E-Mail: gesenwei@ufl.edu

Course Description:-

This course offers a survey of the Second World War in Europe. Special emphasis will be placed on its origins, its social, economic, political and military aspects as well as the historical consequences it had for Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. The focus throughout will be on Europe, though, whenever an understanding of European-centered events demands a wider perspective, the global dimensions of the war will also be taken into account. Part I. examines the background of the war. Here we shall review the major economic, ideological and diplomatic developments in post-WWI Europe that undermined the stability of Europe as a whole and which ultimately contributed to the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. We shall also be concerned with the major events of the inter-war period – the Spanish Civil War, for example – which brought into sharper relief the forces that were leading towards a general conflict. Part II. will concentrate on the main features of the war itself. In addition to reviewing key military engagements and campaigns, we shall be examining the ways in which the war transformed the socio-economic (war industries, daily activities, etc.) and political life (zones of occupation, resistance movements, etc.) of Europe during the war. Various topics, including the origins and impact of the Holocaust during the war and gender relations in the trenches and on the Home-front, will be featured in this part of the course. The final part of the course will assess the extent to which this great conflict shaped post-war European development.

Course goal: -

To acquire the empirical grounding and theoretical orientation needed to achieve a critical understanding of the Second World War in Europe, 1939-1945.

Student Objectives: To achieve this goal the student will be introduced to a variety of primary and secondary texts, documentary videos, and lectures which emphasize the following:

- (1) Social, political, cultural, and economic conditions which formed the backdrop to the Second World War;
- (2) Controversies and misconceptions which have become associated with the origins, course, and consequences of the SWW;
- (3) Major cultural (ideological), economic, political, and military dimensions of the war;
- (4) Historical legacies of the SWW.

Course methods:-

This on-line course will be constructed around the following components:

- (1) Objectives: Stated instructional goals for each module.
- (2) “To Do List”: Required reading, writing, and viewing assignments.
- (3) 15 lecture modules (Individual lectures -- 10-25 minutes in length).
- (4) All reading and viewing assignments listed under the rubrics “Supplemental” and “Primary Source Activities” are required to complete each module. This material will be comprised of the following: (1) pdf articles, (2) internet links to primary and secondary documentary sources, and (3) video clips of lectures, exhibitions, and selected footage documenting historical events.
- (5) Discussion board sessions (“Discussions”) which require students to respond to questions about and raised by the material covered in the weekly video and reading assignments. These brief writing assignments – between 250 and 500 words in length -- should reflect not only one’s personal opinions but also one’s studied reflections on themes covered in each module. In order to fulfill all aspects of this required assignment, students will be expected to interact with other students submitting responses.
- (6) Class Notes: Students are expected to take notes while viewing videos and completing weekly reading assignments. Notes can be used to construct your responses to the Discussion Board questions listed in each module. In addition, they should be consulted when studying for exams and undertaking written assignments.

Course Required Texts:-

- P.M.H. Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, Third Edition, London, 2007
- Spencer Di Scala, *Twentieth Century Europe: Politics, Society, Culture*, 2004.
- *The Holocaust*/Donald L. Niewyk, Editor, 2003
- R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War*, Oxford, revised edition, 1997.*

Course grading rubric:-

Your course grade will be calculated in the following manner:

- 20% -- Two Reaction papers (3-4 double-space pages) based on information provided in lecture modules, required readings, and videos.
- 30% -- Mid-term exam – based on lectures and required readings (Date provided in module outlines)
- 30% -- Final exam – based on lectures and required readings. (Date provided in module outline.)
- 20% -- Participation in discussion boards. Based on level of engagement in discussion boards posted throughout the term.

Course Calendar:-

Part I.: Historical Background/Interwar Period

January 11-15 /Week I (module 1)– Introduction to the course: Making sense of the Second World War; the SWW as an historical event. WWI and its impact on European society.

January 18-22/Week 2 (module 2) – Inter-war Europe: the victors and the vanquished (Italy, Germany, Gt. Britain, France and Russia.)

January 25-29/Week 3 (module 3) – Liberalism in crisis: the Bolshevik spectre and the rise of fascism in Europe (part I: the Russian Revolution and its impact, fascism in Italy.)

February 1-5 /Week 4 (module 4) – Liberalism in crisis: the Bolshevik spectre and the rise of fascism in Europe (part II. Nazism in Germany and fascism in Europe.)

February 8-12/ Week 5 (module 5) – Conflicts and crises in Spain (Spanish Civil War), Austria (Anschluss) and Czechoslovakia (Munich). Appeasement on trial.

Readings for Part I.: P.M.H. Bell, The Origins of the Second World War in Europe, (entire book); Spencer Di Scala, Twentieth Century Europe;, Chapters 7-17; R.A.C. Parker, The Second World War, Chapter 1.

First Reaction Paper: Begins 12February/Due 15 February

Part II. War in Europe

February 15-19/Week 6 (module 6) – Blitzkrieg in Poland; The Phoney War (September-May, 1940); The Scandinavian interlude; Aims and ambitions of the belligerents; The balance sheet on both sides.

February 22-26/Week 7 (module 7) – Expanding the war in the West; France invaded and divided (May-June, 1940); Britain stands alone (July-October, 1940); the Balkans under siege (April, 1941).

March 1-5/ Week 8 (module 8) – The assault on Russia: Operation Barbarossa (June, 1941); The US enters the war (December, 1941).

Mid-term Exam: Begins 5 March/Due 8 March.

March 8-12/Week 9 (module 9) -- **Hitler's vision:** the Holocaust.

March 15-19/Week 10 – Inside Europe: Resistance movements, the role of intelligence.

March 22-26/Week 11(module 11); The tide turns: Stalingrad; the Mediterranean, North Africa and Middle East (1941-1943).

Second Reaction Paper: Begins 26 March/Due 29 March

March 29- 2 April/Week 12 (module 12)– War on the Home-front: Women at War, Impact of bombing.

April 5-9/Week 13(module 13) -- Opening a Second Front: the invasion of Italy and the end of fascism; D-Day and Operation Bagration.

April 12-16/Week 14(module 14) – The End Comes: Operation Market-Garden, “Battle of the Bulge” (Ardennes) ; Victory in Europe (Berlin) and the Pacific (Tokyo). Defining post-war Europe: Allied conferences;

Readings for Part II.: R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War*, Chapters 2-13, 15-17. *The Holocaust*, 2003 (entire book); Spencer Di Scala, *Twentieth Century Europe*, Chapters 18-20.

Part III. Legacy of Second World War in Europe

April 19-21/Week 15 (module 15) -- Aftermath of war; Origins of Cold War.

Final Exam: Begins 21 April/Due 23 April.

Readings for Part III.: R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War*, Chapter 18.; Spencer Di Scala, *Twentieth Century Europe*, Chapter 21.

