



History of the Second World War

EUH4930

Course Syllabus

University of Florida: Spring 2021
Seminar: Wednesdays, 6-8 (Turlington 2328)

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This course offers a historical survey of the Second World War in Europe and Asia. Emphasis will be placed on its origins, its social, economic, political and military aspects as well as the overall impact it had across the globe during the conflict. The focus throughout will be on the global dimensions of the war, though special attention will be paid to key centers of wartime activity in Europe, the United States, and Asia (Japan, China, and Southeast Asia). Part I. examines the background of the war in Europe and Asia. Here we shall review the major economic, ideological and diplomatic developments in post-WWI Europe that undermined the stability of Europe and Asia as a whole and which ultimately contributed to the outbreak of hostilities, first in 1937 in China and then in Poland in 1939. In reviewing events which formed the backdrop to the war, we will also be concerned with reviewing the historical significance of pivotal 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, Asia, and the United States during the war. Various topics, including the organization of occupied/colonized territories in Europe and Asia during the war and gender relations in combat zones 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 Objectives:

- (1) To identify and explain the historical significance of ten major turning points in the Second World.**
- (2) Explain why the course and the outcome of the Second World was not determined by any one decisive event.**
- (3) To acquire a critical understanding of the complex features of a global conflict that required the total mobilization and deployment of resources on the battlefields, at sea, in the air, and behind-the-lines.**

Note on prerequisites: As this is an advanced course on Europe, it is assumed that the student has a formal background in history/politics and particularly in European history.

Course Methods:

The course will be comprised of weekly (three-hour) seminars.

In preparation for the class meetings students will be expected to complete all assigned readings listed in this syllabus.

Lectures from the instructor will be supplemented by (1) individual presentations from class participants, (2) discussion sessions that follow each lecture/presentation, and (3) supplemental reading materials found in select Modules in Canvas.

Required Texts: (Paperback/Hardback editions available UF Bookstore.)

- Ruth Henig, *The Origins of the Second World War, 1933-1941* (Routledge, 2005/Routledge: Lancaster Pamphlets.)
- Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, Penguin Press, 2008/2009.

- Evan Mawdsley, *World War II: A New History*. Cambridge University, 2009.

*Please note that the bibliography on the Second World War is enormous. The required books listed above are meant only to introduce you to some of the major themes associated with the origins, development of, and outcome of the war. Five highly informative scholarly studies that can be recommended in addition to the assigned readings are: P.

Calvocoressi/Guy Wint, *Total War* (1972); Norman Davies, *No Simple Victory: World War II in Europe, 1939-1945*, 2006 (Course Reserve Library West) G. Weinberg, *The World at Arms* (1994), and the *Oxford Companion to World War II* (1995), Edited by I.C.B. Dear and M.R.D. Foot. Military buffs can consult B.H. Liddell-Hart's, *History of the Second World War* (1970).

COURSE STRUCTURE/FORMAT:

This seminar course is designed to allow the student to play an "interactive" role in teaching the class. Each week there will be individual/group panel presentations that address the main themes identified in the course calendar. The presentation itself can be in the form of a brief lecture, visual presentation (between 25-35 minutes) and/or an outline of questions that can be used as the basis of focused class discussion. In the latter case you will be expected to lead the discussion and ask follow-up questions etc. for a 15-20 minute period. At least once during the term, each student will be required to give such a presentation on a topic of his/her own choosing as long as it relates directly to the assigned readings and lectures. (Please note that this presentation can be used as the foundation for your term essay.)

CANVAS ANNOUNCEMENTS/LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Modules have been created for each phase of the course. In these you will find pdf and other files that you will need to consult as part of your required Reading Assignments. Listed in the Readings for Parts I-III are the references to the various types of supplemental readings (pdf files etc.) you will find for the Modules that relate to that section of the course. From time to time I shall be adding additional files that you will also be required to read.

You should also keep up with all of the instructor's communications found on the "Announcements" portal of Canvas. These messages will alert you to any

revised due dates, unexpected changes in class meeting dates/times, and/or UF news that is relevant to students enrolled in face-to-face courses.

EXAMS AND GRADING:

Your final grade will be calculated using the following formula:

2 Exams = 40% (20% each)

Panel Presentation = 20%

Term essay (25 pp.) = 40%

1. There will be two in-class exams.
2. The term paper - required for 4930 courses -- should reflect an in-depth examination of the books and articles that go beyond the assigned/required readings.
3. ***Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences will automatically lower your grade by two letters. You can take one absence during the term without penalty.***
4. Student Code of Conduct: See Addendum at end of syllabus.

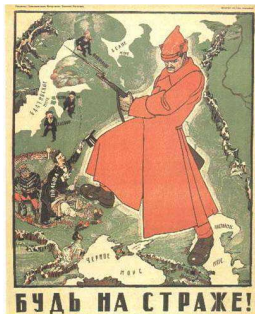
Course Calendar:

Part I. The Road to War

Week of:

5 January – Introduction to the course: Making sense of the Second World War; the SWW as an historical event. WWI and its impact on European society.

12 January – Inter-war Europe: the victors and the vanquished (Italy, Germany, Gt. Britain, France and Russia.)



19 January – Liberalism in crisis: the Bolshevik spectre and the rise of fascism in Europe (part I: the Russian Revolution and its impact; fascism in Italy.)

26 January – Liberalism in Crisis and Imperial conquests in Asia: the rise of Japan as a world power; Part II. Nazism in Germany and fascism in Europe.

2 February – Conflicts and crises in Spain (Spanish Civil War), Austria (Anschluss) and Czechoslovakia (Munich). Japanese aggression in Mainland China (The “Rape” of Nanjing); Appeasement on trial.



Readings for Part I.: *Origins of the Second World War, 1933-1941* (entire book); Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, Introduction, Chapters 1-3; E. Mawdsley, *World War II, Chapters 1-3*. All files contained in the Module: “Interwar period.”

Part II: War in Europe/Asia



9 February – Blitzkrieg in Poland; The Phony War; The Scandinavian connection; Aims and ambitions of the belligerents; The balance sheet on both sides.

16 February – **Turning Points 1-2:** Expanding the war in the West; France divided; Britain stands alone; the Balkans under siege.

23 February – **Turning Points 3-4:** The assault on Russia: Operation Barbarossa; The US enters the war; the Mediterranean, North Africa and Middle East.

2 March -- – **Turning Points 5-6:** Europe at war: Hitler's enemies and allies; Japan's colonial empire; The Allies prepare for total war: Wartime Summits (economic planning and military strategies.)

Outline for Term Paper Due (graded assignment)

16 March -- **Turning Point 7:** Inside Europe: "fighting" on the home-front; Women as warriors; resistance movements (Poland, Yugoslavia, Russia).

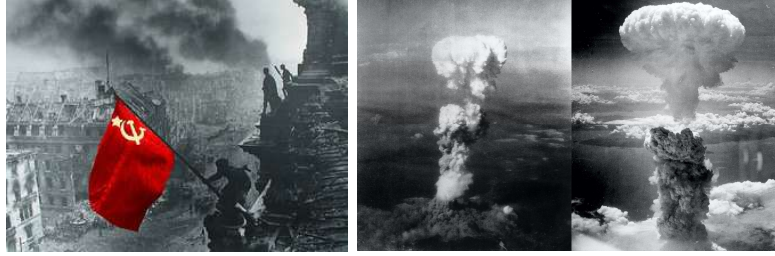
16-18 March/First Exam

23 March -- **Turning Point 8: Hitler's vision/**Inside Europe: the Holocaust, Resistance movements, the role of intelligence.

30 March -- **Turning Point 9:** Opening a Second Front: the invasion of Italy and the end of fascism; The tide turns: The Battle of the Seas; D-Day and Operation Bagration.

6 April – **Turning Point 10:** The End Comes: Victory in Europe (Berlin) and the Pacific (Tokyo).

Readings for Part II.: E. Mawdsley, <i>World War II, Chapters 4-13</i> ; Mazower, <i>Hitler's Empire</i> , Chapters 4-16. All files contained in Module: "War in Europe and Asia."
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Part III.: The Legacy of War

13 April – Defining post-war Europe: Allied conferences; Nazism on trial; Aftermath of war; Origins of Cold War.

20 April (last day of classes)– **Term Paper Due/ Second Exam.**

Readings for Part III.: E. Mawdsley, *World War II*, Chapter 14.; Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, Chapters 17-18. All files contained in Module: "End of War in Europe and Asia."

ADDENDUM TO SYLLABUS

Code of Conduct/Make-up exam policies for EUH4280

UF faculty are now being asked to provide written guidelines relating to (1) student conduct in the classroom and (2) make-up examinations. Most of these can be deduced by exercising common sense. But to avoid any misunderstandings, students enrolled in the courses listed above should take note of the following:

Code of Conduct:

- (1) Cell phones must be turned off throughout the class period.
- (2) Students are asked not to talk, read papers, surf the internet, and otherwise distract the class from the lectures/class discussion.
- (3) Students coming in after the lecture has begun should not interrupt the professor and/or students by walking in front of classroom, re-arranging desks to gain access to seating, etc. Latecomers should therefore take a seat at the back or wherever it is possible without disturbing others.

(4) Anyone who arrives more than ten minutes after class has begun will be counted absent unless he/she has the prior approval of the instructor.

(5) Intellectual honesty: any student caught plagiarizing the written work of others and/or cheating on an exam will automatically fail the course.

Make-up exams/Late Papers:

(1) Apart from documented illness, family emergencies (immediate family only), and exceptional circumstances (to be determined by the instructor), exams will have to be taken on the assigned day. The scheduling of permitted make-up exams will be at the discretion of the instructor.

(2) All written assignments – term papers and the like – are due on the day assigned in the syllabus and/or as announced by the instructor during class. The course's term paper must be submitted per professor's instructions via Canvas. No late papers will be accepted for any reason(s).