

HIST 470: History of World War II – Spring 2016

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203 East Hall -- 677-5569

Course Time and Place:

This course meets in Akeley-Lawrence 125 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-10:45 a.m.

Office Hours:

Mondays & Wednesdays from 10-11 am, and Tuesdays from 1-2:30 pm in East Hall 203, although you can arrange to see me any time. Give me a call or send an email. If I'm in, chances are we can meet.

Required Readings:

- Allan Millett and Williamson Murray, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Harvard University Press.
- Nikolai Litvin, *800 Days on the Eastern Front: A Russian Soldier Remembers World War II*. University Press of Kansas, 2007.
- George MacDonald Fraser, *Quartered Safe Out Here: A Harrowing Tale of World War II*. Skyhorse Publishing, 2014.
- Kurt Gabel, *The Making of a Paratrooper: Airborne Training and Combat in World War II*. University Press of Kansas, 2015.

Catalog Description:

Study of the war from a political, military, social and economic point of view. American or European emphasis dependent upon instructor.

Course Description:

This course surveys the history of World War II, the most destructive conflict of the 20th century. Although this class will be taught primarily from an operational perspective, we will discuss a wide range of issues about which you will be expected to think and form your own opinions. Military history is about more than generals and battles (what some historians like to call "Guns and Drums History"). We will cover all major military operations but will also spend much of our time discussing things like technology, doctrine, diplomacy and politics, and the social impact of the war on those affected by it. Rote memorization will do you little good in this class; be prepared to think for yourselves. You are strongly encouraged to make use of the instructor's office hours throughout the semester.

Course Requirements

The instructor expects each student to keep up with the schedule of readings that appears on this syllabus. You will have a much better idea of what's going on if you have done the reading. These assignments, along with the monographs you are reading, the cartoons and documentaries you are watching, and information from the lectures and discussions, will provide the material for the exams. There are 400 possible points to be earned in this class. There will be two (2) essay exams, one at midterm and one during finals week. Your midterm exam will be worth 100 points and your final exam will be worth 150 points. Bring a big bluebook and pen(s) to each exam. You will also write three short papers worth 50 points each, which are explained in more detail below. Your course grade is determined by your average and is based on a standard 10-point scale.

THERE WILL BE NO CURVE.

Critical Essay Assignment

This course is organized to introduce you to a variety of primary sources, whether it be the cartoons we watch

before class, the documentaries we watch in class, or the memoirs we read in conjunction with class. Individually, primary sources can be tricky things; they reflect the biases of those who created them and often do not tell the whole story. This is particularly true of memoirs, which can be a bit self-serving at times. For these assignments, your task is to write a critical essay evaluating each memoir as an historical source. While you should discuss events from each memoir, this is NOT a book report. In your essay, consider the following questions:

- What is the author's point of view, and what biases are introduced into the narrative as a result?
- What relevant issues (social, political, military, or other) are addressed, and what does their inclusion add to your understanding of WWII beyond what you are learning in class and knew before you took this class?
- What relevant issues (social, political, military, or other) are not addressed, and why do you think the author left them out?
- What value does this memoir have as an historical document?

Each critical essay (worth 50 points each) will be 5 pages long. It must be double spaced, typed in a standard 12-point font with appropriate margins, and have page numbers in the upper right hand corner of the page. You will turn in a hard copy and also submit your essay via D2L. Your due dates are:

- Litvin, *800 Days on the Eastern Front*, due February 9th.
- Fraser, *Quartered Safe Out Here*, due March 17th.
- Gabel, *The Making of a Paratrooper*, due April 19th.

You will also write an essay on your final exam that asks you to consider issues and questions raised by all three autobiographies.

Makeups

Makeups must be taken within one week of a missed exam and will only be given if the student has a university-approved absence. **It is your responsibility to arrange the makeup.** Unless there are extenuating circumstances, makeups not completed within one week will have a score of zero entered on the grade sheet. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to take a makeup. The university's excused absence policy can be found at <http://www.usd.edu/~media/files/policies/1004-excused-absence-policy>.

Writing Essay Exam Questions

When writing essays, it is important that you build your answer around some kind of thesis statement. Be blunt and put your thesis in the opening paragraph. The remaining paragraphs should strengthen your thesis while answering the question. I often write essay questions that ask you to explain different aspects of a basic question. You may find it easiest to make each of these aspects the subject of its own paragraph. Be sure to support your essay throughout with details from lectures and your readings. Make it **crystal clear** to me that you understand the material. Finally, include a strong conclusion where you tell me what you just told me in the rest of the essay.

Semester Schedule

Topics and dates are subject to change

12 January - Introduction to the Course

14 January - Drift to War, Part I

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 1.

19 January - Drift to War, Part II

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 7.

21 January - Interwar Seapower

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 2.

26 January - Interwar Airpower

28 January - Origins of Blitzkrieg

2 February - Blitzkrieg Against Poland and France

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 3-4.

4 February - Battle of Britain

9 February - Documentary: Excerpt from "Triumph of the Will"

Turn in critical essay on Litvin, *800 Days on the Eastern Front*. Submit via D2L and bring a hard copy to class.

11 February - The Holocaust

16 February - US Moves Towards War

18 February - US Grand Strategy

23 February - Sept. 1940 - Dec. 1941

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 5-6, 8.

25 February - Allied Strategy in 1942

01 March - MIDTERM

Readings Covered: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 1-8

03 March - War in the Pacific, 1942

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 9.

SPRING BREAK

15 March – Battle of the Atlantic

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 10.

17 March - Eastern Front, 1942-43

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 11.

Turn in critical essay on Fraser, *Quartered Safe Out Here*. Submit via D2L and bring a hard copy to class.

22 March - Allied Strategy from Torch to D-Day

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 14.

24 March - German War Mobilization

29 March - Allied Bombing Offensive

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 12.

31 March - Documentary: "Memphis Belle"

05 April - Command Technology

07 April - Women at War

12 April - Victory in Europe: D-Day to VE Day

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 15-16.

14 April - Documentary: "The Fighting Lady"

19 April - Victory in the Pacific: Midway to 1945

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 13, 17-18.

Turn in critical essay on Gabel, *The Making of a Paratrooper*. Submit via D2L and bring a hard copy to class.

21 April - NO CLASS - PLEASE ATTEND STUDENT HISTORY CONFERENCE

26 April - The Home Front

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 19.

28 April - Defeat of Japan and the War's Aftermath

Readings: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 20.

5 May - FINAL EXAM – 3-5 pm in our regular classroom

Readings Covered: *A War To Be Won*, ch. 9-20; *800 Days on the Eastern Front*; *Quartered Safe Out Here*; *The Making of a Paratrooper*.

Diversity and Inclusive Excellence:

The University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected.

Freedom in Learning:

Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college or school that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

Disability Accommodations:

Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class or as soon as possible after the diagnosis of a disability. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester. Please note: if your home institution is not the University of South Dakota but one of the other South Dakota Board of Regents institutions (e.g., SDSU, SDSMT, BHSU, NSU, DSU), you should work with the disability services coordinator at your home institution.

Ernetta L. Fox, Director
Disability Services, Room 119 Service Center
(605) 677-6389

Web Site: www.usd.edu/ds
E-mail: disabilityservices@usd.edu

College of Arts & Sciences Academic Integrity Policy:

The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the "Conduct" section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook. No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. A student found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty may, at the discretion of the instructor, be:

- Given a zero for that assignment.
- Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
- Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
- Dropped from the course.
- Failed in the course.

One Final Tip:

Bad things happen to good people. If you have a horrible test, if something traumatic happens in your personal life, or if the world just seems to be collapsing around you, you need to talk to me as soon as possible. Often, there are things that can be done and allowances that can be made to help you get back on track in this class. However, I can't help you if you don't talk to me.

KEEP THIS SYLLABUS AND REFER TO IT OVER THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER.
WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK QUESTIONS.