

## HIS 250: THE SECOND WORLD WAR

### Nature of the Course

This survey examines the causes, course, and conclusion of the Second World War. Its framework is formed by the military confrontations that determined these causes, course, and conclusion. Its focus is on the political and policy decisions national leaders took, and the institutional setting in which they took those decisions, not on such trivial details as the effective penetration range of an 88mm shell against a Type B's frontal armor.

Those military confrontations themselves, moreover, constitute only the barest portion of the war. Germany occupied much of Europe for over three years. What Germany attempted to achieve, and how those in the occupied territories reacted to that attempt, form stories of critical importance to understanding the war. Not least of those stories was the Holocaust.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should have a much deeper understanding of why the Second World War began, how it took the course it did, and why it ended as it did.

Perhaps more importantly, you will have to read, think, and write about the war in ways that will sharpen and improve your ability to form and express your own thoughts and analyses of these questions. Put another way, this course aims to improve your critical thinking and writing.

### Course Work

Lectures will provide focused examinations of important topics, not surveys of broad themes. Students unfamiliar with the general course and story of the war may consult any of a number of survey texts, such as Thomas Zeiler, Annihilation; Gerhard Weinberg, A World at Arms; John Keegan, The Second World War or H.P. Willmott, World War II. These readings will provide background and context for the lecture material.

In addition, there will be four discussion meetings roughly every third week. Each of these discussions will focus on a particular book (or books), as indicated in the course schedule below. To prepare for each discussion, each student must read these books. These readings will average 80-100 pages per week.

Each student must select two of these four discussion meetings and, for those two, write an essay on those meetings' reading. Each essay must not be longer than five pages. Each should be typed. Each essay must be double-spaced and written on only one side of each sheet of paper. Essays not meeting these requirements will be returned ungraded and not counted toward course requirements. Questions for each discussion meeting will be handed out in advance by the instructor. Each essay should answer one of these questions. No late essays will be accepted without a valid excuse cleared in advance of the due time by the instructor. Essays are due--in class and in hardcopy--before each discussion meeting begins. Submission by e-mail is not acceptable.

### Evaluation

Each essay counts for one-sixth of your overall grade. The instructor evaluates each essay in terms of three questions: How cogent, compelling, and consistent is the argument of the essay? How well does the essay employ evidence drawn from the reading to support its argument? (NOTE: Direct quotes are not evidence. Do not use them.) And, how clear and correct is the prose of the essay?

The remaining two-thirds of each student's grade is determined by examination performance. The midterm exam counts for one-sixth of the course grade and the final exam one third. These will be primarily essay-type examinations. The remaining one-sixth will be calculated from two quizzes given at unannounced times during class. These will be quick-choice type and, as a result, will be strictly timed. Students who miss quizzes fail them.

### Make-ups, Incompletes, and other Course Rules

Quizzes cannot be made-up. Essays may be made-up only if the instructor grants permission in advance of the due date of the essay. Examinations may be made-up only if the student provides appropriate and timely evidence of her or his inability to attend the exam at the proper time.

As a result, the instructor grants Incompletes only in the rarest cases. They are not automatically given to students failing to submit the required course work. They must be requested by the student in writing no later than the last day of classes, and preferably much before that time, and they must be accompanied by an excuse the instructor finds valid and acceptable.

This is not an online course. Discussion will and should occur in every class session, not just those specifically devoted to it. Accordingly, lecture notes and other review helps are not available. Your attendance and participation is expected.

Read the attached statement on plagiarism. Note that the first offense of plagiarism, even if unintentional, will result in a failing grade for the course and submission of your offense to the appropriate university authorities. If you are in doubt, see the instructor before submitting any questionable work.

At the instructor's discretion, any student failing to submit on time any component of the course's requirements may be given a failing grade.

Etiquette in the classroom: The instructor will devote his full attention to you during class. In return, he expects your full attention in the classroom. If you need to take or make a phone call, text, surf the web, chat with a classmate, etc., **please leave the classroom to do so**. If you do not, the instructor will bring your discourtesy to the class's attention. Repeated discourtesies may result in **penalties to your course grade** or, in extreme cases, your being deregistered from the course.

Any students in this course with a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical or learning disability that may affect course performance should contact the Disabled Student Services office. That office will determine procedures appropriate for this course. All information in this regard is confidential.

### Office Hours

Office hours will be announced in class. The instructor's office is N-321 of the Melville (Social & Behavioral Sciences) Building. His e-address is [Michael.Barnhart@stonybrook.edu](mailto:Michael.Barnhart@stonybrook.edu). Please allow at least one business day for a response.

Course Schedule and Assignments

I. ORIGINS

1. Hitler's Program
2. Why the West Slept
3. Poland's Fate
4. Russia Determines; the West Dithers
5. DISCUSSION: A.J.P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War [D741.T238]; Gordon Martel, ed., The Origins of the Second World War Reconsidered (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) [D741.O7451999]

II. THE TRIUMPHANT AXIS

1. The Collapse of France
2. The Two Battles of Britain
3. The Vital Periphery
4. Barbarossa

III. THE PACIFIC AND THE PIVOT

1. America Astir
2. Japan's Agenda
3. The Way Out of China (Leads to Pearl)
4. Forging the Grand Alliance
5. DISCUSSION: Geoffrey Megargee, War of Annihilation [D764.M385 2006]; Rodric Braithwaite, Moscow 1941 [D764.3 .M6 B73 2006]

IV. TURNING POINTS AND TERROR

1. The Atlantic Cauldron
2. Mediterranean Stew
3. Russia's Road Back
4. Reaching the Final Solution
5. "This is what it was like . . ."
6. DISCUSSION: Tami Biddle, Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare [UG705.67 B54 2002]

V. FIGHTING TO A FINISH

1. OVERLORD: The French Connection
2. Poland's Agony
3. Testing the Grand Alliance: Yalta
4. The Death Rattles of Japan
5. DISCUSSION: Shohei Ooka, Fires on the Plain [PL835.O5 N63 2001] and George Neill, Infantry Soldier [D756.5 A7 N45 2000]

## Plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when the student submitting a paper for a course:

1. Does not properly attribute words or ideas to a source. That is, even if you're not quoting directly from a book you've read on "Macbeth"—a book that's helped you formulate ideas for your paper—you should nevertheless footnote that book at the point in the text where that other author's ideas helped shape your own essay. It is also important, if you've had a conversation with a peer or a professor who has helped you substantially in establishing your ideas on a given text, that you cite that conversation at the appropriate point in your essay. (e.g. "My ideas about Macbeth derive in part from a conversation with Professor Jones." The citation can be more specific than this, depending on the level of detailed assistance you received.)

2. Quotes from another author's writing without citing that author's work. This, of course, includes failing to cite material you take from the World Wide Web, as well as copying material from library books or your peer's papers.

3. Cites, with quotation marks, portions of another author's work, but uses more of that work without quotation marks and without attribution. Note that if you're taking material from a source and rehashing it slightly, but not giving a citation for that rephrased material, you're still plagiarizing the work you're representing as your own, since the ideas, the argument derive in fact from another's writing. If you cite and surround with quotation marks only some of the words you've taken from a source, you also commit plagiarism, since you're taking words from another without fully acknowledging the extent of your borrowing.

Turning to an electronic rather than a printed source does not change the rules of citation and acknowledgement when you are submitting an essay for a course.

4. Takes a paper, in whole or in part, from a site on the Web or a "library" of already-written papers.

5. Steals a paper from another student and then submits that paper as coursework.

6. Submits the same paper twice for two different assignments.

7. Takes the results of another's research and attempts to pass those results off as his or her own work. This includes "citing" material from sources that have been gathered by another author. You can, of course, cite materials that you have found in another published text, but you need to make it quite clear that you are availing yourself of another author's research: your citation should specify where you found the material, rather than simply giving that material's original source.

If you are caught plagiarizing:

a. You will fail the assignment and the course.

b. Your case will be forwarded, with an explanatory letter and all pertinent materials, to the Committee on Academic Dishonesty.