

Dr. Harry A. Butowsky
History 388 Section 5
Robinson B220

George Mason University
Spring 2015
Thursday 7:20-10:00 PM

E. Mail: hbutowsk@gmu.edu

Office Hours:

Course Title: The History of World War II: Europe

Course Description: World War II was the greatest cataclysm in history. Tens of millions of people died in battle. Millions were murdered simply because of ethnic or religious reasons. Millions of innocent civilians were caught up in a conflict of which they knew little and understood less. World War II changed the face of modern Europe and the world. It is the purpose of this course to examine the history of World War II to determine the significance and meaning of the conflict for this generation of Americans.

Required Books

Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, A War to be Won
Herbert A. Werner, Iron Coffins
Anthony Bevor, Stalingrad
Ralph L. Minker, An American Family in World War II
Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem

Recommended but not required

Alexander Swanston, The Historical Atlas of World War II

Grading

Students will take a midterm and final examination. The date of the midterm will be announced. The date of the final is May 7, 2015 at 7:30 PM in Robinson B 220

Power Point Presentation

I will offer all students the opportunity to do a power point assignment for credit. Students interested in this option must talk to me and submit a research proposal before February 12, 2015. Students who select this option may be asked to do a class presentation. A power point presentation will count for 50% of your final grade.

Additional Information: Lectures at the beginning of each class will provide background information and put the readings in context. General discussion will follow for the remainder of the time. Slides and other visual materials will be shown during class. Please note that I ask questions in class so be sure to complete all required readings before we start each section of the syllabus. Classroom discussion and participation will count toward your final grade. The lectures will be more meaningful to you when you come to class prepared.

Final Note

Regular Attendance is required of all students enrolled in this class. While I will not take attendance, I will call on students during the class and note all absences. Anyone missing three or more classes will have their final grade dropped by ten points.

Movie Assignments

You will see that some of my lectures indicate a suggested movie to complement the lecture. These movies are just suggested but are not required.

Lectures

1. Introduction to the course. Discussion of the sites, locations and events associated with history of World War II in Europe

Movie Assignment: Cabaret

- 2 Impact of World War I. Crisis and chaos in Europe after the Great War. The rise of Fascism and Hitler's accession to power in Germany, aggression and appeasement by the Axis Powers; Germany, Italy and Japan and the Allied Powers; United States, England, the Soviet Union and China.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapters 1, 2

Movie Assignment: All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)

3. The Triumph of the Blitzkrieg--Poland, Norway, Belgium, Holland and France.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapters 3 and 4

4. The Battle of Britain, Lend-Lease, the Atlantic Charter, The Battle of the Atlantic.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapter 10
Herbert A. Werner, Iron Coffins

Movie Assignment: Mrs. Miniver, The Cruel Sea or Das Boot

5. The War in the East--Hitler's Strategic Dilemma, Crete, Barbarossa, Stalingrad.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapters 5 and 6
Anthony Bevor, Stalingrad

Movie Assignment: Alexander Nevsky

6. The War in the East--Hitler's Strategic Dilemma (Continued)

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapter 11
Anthony Bevor, Stalingrad

7. The United States enters the War--Operation Torch, Sicily and Italy, the Home Front

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapter 14
An American Family in World War II

Movie Assignment: A Walk in the Sun

8. Strategic Bombing of Germany.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapter 12
An American Family in World War II

Movie Assignment: Twelve O'Clock High

9. The War in the East Continued--The battle of Kursk and the recapture of Russia, the Vistula and the Danube.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapter 14

Movie Assignment: The Iron Cross

10. The War in the West Continued--D-Day, June 6, 1944, and the Battle for France, the Ardennes and the Rhine.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapter 15

Movie Assignment: The Longest Day, Is Paris Burning? or Battleground

11. The Final Solution-Germany and the Jewish Question

Readings:

Hannah Arendt: Eichmann in Jerusalem

Movie Assignment: Schindler's List

12. The Collapse of Germany--Crossing the Rhine, the Battle for Berlin, the death of Adolph Hitler, Yalta and the end of the War in Europe.

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapter 16

13. Summary Reflections: The Post War World; the Nuremberg Trials and the beginnings of the Cold War; The United Nations-International Cooperation

Readings:

Williamson and Millett, A War to be Won
Chapters 19 and 20

Movie Assignment: Judgment at Nuremberg or The Best Years of our Lives

