

History 387 Section 005, The History of World War II--The Pacific Campaigns

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History 387 Section 005
Innovation Hall 105

George Mason University
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Monday 7:20 PM-10:00 PM

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Course Title: The History of World War II--The Pacific Campaigns

Course Description:

The war between Japan and the United States was in many ways a unique and unprecedented conflict waged on a scale never seen before in history. It began with a stunning display of Japanese carrier air power at Pearl Harbor and the assault by the Japanese military against all of the other nations and peoples of the Pacific. The war ended, almost four years later, with the dropping of the atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. In between these two events, millions of people would die and millions more would fight in a conflict marked by unprecedented violence. The war altered the course of history for both Japan and the United States as well as the history of countries all around the Pacific basin. It is the purpose of this course to examine the history of World War II in the Pacific to determine the significance and meaning of the war for this generation of Americans.

Grading System:

All students in this course are required to take both the mid-term and final examinations. Each examination will count for 50% of your final grade.

PowerPoint Presentations:

I will offer all students the opportunity to do a PowerPoint presentation for credit. Students interested in this option must talk to me and submit a research proposal, from the attached list by September 19, 2011. All power point presentations are due by October 17, 2011. After I review these presentations I will ask a select number of students to present their work in class. If you select this option, your PowerPoint presentation will count for 50% of your final grade and each of your examinations will count for 25% of your final grade.

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Presentation Topics:

- Women in World War II
- Internment of Japanese Americans in World War II
- Fall of Hong Kong and Singapore
- Battle of Wake Island
- Battle of the Coral Sea
- Battle of Midway
- Battle of Tarawa
- Battle of Saipan
- Battle of Guam
- American/Japanese Aircraft in World War II
- The role of Air Power in the war
- Battle of Iwo Jima
- Battle of Okinawa
- Japanese/American Propaganda in World War II
- The Homefront/America/Japan
- Submarine Warfare against Japan
- Role of the Aircraft Carrier in World War II
- Battle of Savo Island
- Hiroshima and the aftermath of the Bomb

Additional Information:

Lectures at the beginning of each class will provide background information and put the reading 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 will ask questions so be sure to complete all required reading before coming to class. Classroom discussion will be considered in determining your final grade.

Required Books:

1. Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*
2. Mitsuo Fuchida, *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan: The Japanese Navy's Story*
3. Richard H. O'Kane, *Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous WWII Submarine*
4. Ralph L. Minker, *An American Family in World War II*
5. E. B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*
6. John Hersey, *Hiroshima*

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Lectures:

1. Introduction to the course. Discussion of the sites, locations, and events associated with the History of World War II in the Pacific. The role of geography in World War II in the Pacific.

2. The Roots of War: China, Japan and the United States

Readings: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

3. From Versailles to Pearl Harbor: Development of the American Armed Forces -- War Plan Orange

Readings: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

4. Japan Strikes -- Pearl Harbor

Readings: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

5. Japan Victorious-Wake Island, Malaya, Guam, Philippines, Singapore, Destruction of the ABDA Fleet, Internment of Japanese Americans

Readings: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

6. The Carrier War-Phase I, Coral Sea, Midway, Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal

Movie Assignment: Midway

Readings: Mitsuo Fuchida, *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan*

7. The Jungle War -- Guadalcanal, Buna and Port Moresby, Operation Cartwheel

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: *Eagle Against the Sun*

8. The Island War: The Gilbert, Marshall, Caroline and Marianas

Readings: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

9. The Submarine War

Readings: O'Kane, *Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous WWII Submarine*

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10. The Carrier War Part II: Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf and return to the Philippines

Readings: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

11. Air Power in World War II. The Home Front 1941-1945, Industry, Labor and Families during the war

Readings: Ralph L. Minker, *An American Family in World War II*

12. China-Burma-India: The War in the Far East

Readings: Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

13. The War in the Pacific Continued: Japan's Defeat in the South, Iwo Jima and Okinawa

E. B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*

14. Japan in 1945 -- Harry Truman and the decision to drop the Atomic Bomb, Summary Reflections: The Post War World

Readings: John Hersey, *Hiroshima*