

**Oberlin College
Department of History**

**History 226: World War II: Shaping the Twentieth Century
Spring 2013**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:15 PM

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317 Rice Hall, x58950

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:00 AM-1:00 PM; Wednesdays, 2:00-5:00 PM;

Thursdays 11:00 AM-1:00 PM; other times by appointment

This course is designed to reevaluate how the bloodiest conflict in the history of the world shaped the history of the 20th century and beyond. It takes a broad approach, both geographically and methodologically. As much as possible, we will consider World War II as global history, and the war in Asia on equal terms with the war in Europe. For it was the war in Asia, and the critical role of the United States and the Soviet Union in it, that made World War II truly a "world war" in ways that World War I was not. We will cover traditional subjects like diplomatic, political, and military history, but also social, cultural, and gender history. We will also explore how methodologies can intersect, such as in the cultural history of military experience.

Books for purchase:

Williamson Murray and Allan B. Millett, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (2000)

Note: This book is also available as an electronic book through OBIS.

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1993)

John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1986)

Maria Rosa Henson, *Comfort Woman: A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery under the Japanese Military* (1999)

Note: This book is also available as a pdf. on Blackboard, as it was unclear for a time whether the book was still in print.

All of these books are also available on reserve.

Requirements:

I. Advance Preparation and Attendance

There is no formal prerequisite for this course. But it assumes a certain familiarity with how to study history at the college level. Consequently, some background in the history of Europe, the United States, or Asia would certainly be of benefit. As you will shortly observe, the readings for this course are diverse in methodology and content.

It is critical that students attend the lectures, the more so the less experienced they are in the study of college-level history. This responsibility must be internalized, however, since there is nothing to be achieved by taking attendance in a class of this size.

II. Readings

While the lectures for the course are organized mostly chronologically, the readings are organized mostly thematically. Therefore, for some of the books, it is difficult to pair the readings with individual lectures. General guidelines are provided below. Students are counseled to read carefully about 100-150 pages per week.

A number of additional readings are original documents available on Blackboard. Some of the assignments from the web at the end of the course are simply for general background.

There are numberless other web sites that deal with World War II. These, like sites on most other topics, vary widely in quality. The best advice is simply to exercise caution and common sense. Students are advised not to spend much time perusing the web for additional readings. There is plenty of work to do simply completing the formal assignments.

III. Written Work

There will be three short (five-page) papers. Each piece of written work will account for one-third of the final grade.

Each paper will have a specific topic, to be explained in handouts distributed one week in advance of the due dates. Alternative topics are possible, but must be approved in advance by the instructor. Due dates are indicated on the syllabus. The third paper will be due at the time set for the final exam in this class by the college exam schedule. It will involve a "think piece" assessing the overall historical significance of World War II.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments:

I. THE PROTAGONISTS

February 5: Introduction: World War II and the Ever-Present Past

Readings:

Holocaust Remembrance Day Speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 12 April 2012 (Blackboard)

Video of Netanyahu speech, Los Angeles, 14 November 2006: "Its 1938 and Iran is Germany" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFTzYQoFgt8>

Editorial: Banyan, "Grandfather's Footsteps: Inherited grudges may complicate brittle international relations in North-East Asia," *The Economist*, 12 January 2013

Begin Murray and Millett, *War to be Won*, Ch.1-2

February 7: Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan

Readings: Dower, *War Without Mercy*, Ch.8-9

Excerpts from two speeches by Adolph Hitler:

1) Proclamation to the German Nation, 1 February 1933 (Blackboard)

2) Speech at Nuremburg, 6 September 1938, (Blackboard)

February 12: The West Between the Wars

Readings: Dower, *War Without Mercy*, Ch.7

Two inaugural addresses by Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933 and 1941, both on Blackboard)

Finish Murray and Millett, Ch.1-2

February 14: West Meets East: Colonized Asia

Readings: Henson, *Comfort Woman*, Ch. 1-2

II. THE TRIUMPH OF THE AXIS POWERS

February 19: The Victory of Germany in the West

Readings: Murray and Millett, *War to be Won*, Ch.3-5

February 21: The War in Asia before Pearl Harbor

Readings: Murray and Millett, *War to be Won*, Ch.7; Dower, *War Without Mercy*, Ch. 9

February 26: Collaboration and Resistance in Nazi Europe

Readings: Begin Browning, *Ordinary Men*

February 28: Collaboration and Resistance in Asia

Readings: Henson, *Comfort Woman*, Ch. 3

III. GLOBAL WAR AND TOTAL WAR

March 5: 1941: The War Circles the Globe

Readings: Murray and Millett, *War to be Won*, Ch.6-13 (Note: This covers material for the next several weeks.)

Roosevelt, "Four Freedoms" (January 1941, Blackboard)

Joint Declaration by Roosevelt and Churchill, 14 August 1941 (The Atlantic Charter, Blackboard)

FIRST PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT

March 7: The "Total" *Volksgemeinschaft*: The War against the Jews, Part I

Readings: Continue Browning, *Ordinary Men*;

Wannsee Protocol, 20 January 1942 (Blackboard)

March 12: The War against the Jews, Part II: The Holocaust

Readings: Continue Browning, *Ordinary Men*

FIRST PAPER DUE

March 14: The Japanese Empire at War

Readings: Continue Henson, *Comfort Women*; Dower, *War Without Mercy*, Ch.10; Murray and Millet, *War to be Won*, Ch. 19

Joint Declaration of the Assembly of Greater East Asiatic Nations, Tokyo, 5 November 1943 (Blackboard)

March 19: Fighting Total War on the Eastern Front

Readings: Murray and Millett, *War to Be Won*, Ch. 14; Finish Browning, *Ordinary Men*

March 21: Fighting Total War in the Pacific

Readings: Dower, *War Without Mercy*, Ch. 1-6

Spring Break!!!

April 2: Total War from the Air: Strategic Bombing

Readings: Look again at Murray and Millett, *War to Be Won*, Ch.12

April 4: American Democracy and Total War, Part I: Mobilizing Gender

Readings: Continue Henson, *Comfort Women*

Review Joint Declaration by Roosevelt and Churchill, 24 September 1941 (The Atlantic Charter, Blackboard)

April 9: American Democracy and Total War, Part II: Mobilizing Race

III. ENDING AND REMEMBERING WORLD WAR II

April 16: Allied Victory in Europe

Readings: Murray and Millet: *War to Be Won*, Ch. 15-16

SECOND PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT

April 18: The Defeat of Japan in the Pacific

Readings: Murray and Millet, *War to Be Won*, Ch. 17-18; finish Dower; *War Without Mercy*

April 23: The Atomic Bomb

Readings: Look at the web site below:

Manhattan Engineer District, "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," 29 June 1946

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/mpmenu.asp

SECOND PAPERS DUE

April 25: No class

Mandatory Lecture by Professor William Hitchcock, University of Virginia

(Details to Follow)

April 30: World War II and the Origins of the Cold War

Readings:

- 1) Protocol of the Yalta Conference (February 1945, Blackboard)
- 2) Protocol of the Potsdam Conference (August 1945, Blackboard)

May 2: Reinventing The Enemy: Occupied Germany and Japan

Readings: Murray and Millet, *War to Be Won*, Ch.20; Dower, *War Without Mercy*, Ch. 11

Following Documents:

- 1) Declaration by Admiral Doenitz of the death of Hitler (1 May 1945, Blackboard)
- 2) Declaration by Admiral Doenitz of German Surrender (8 May 1945, Blackboard)
- 3) Broadcast by Emperor Hirohito (14 August 1945, Blackboard)

Audio version:

http://cgi2.nhk.or.jp/shogenarchives/sp/movie.cgi?das_id=D000141038700000

May 7: Remembering the European War

Readings:

D-Day speech by President Barack Obama (5 June 2009, Blackboard)

May 9: Remembering the Asian War

Readings:

Finish Henson, *Comfort Woman*

FINAL PAPERS DUE AT THE TIME DETERMINED
BY THE COLLEGE FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE
(Saturday, May 18, 9 PM)

Additional Ground Rules:

1. No electronic devices, such as laptops, tablet (iPads or the like), or mobile phones may be used in class. An exception will require documentation from the Office of Disability Services.
2. Due dates and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.
3. Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including performances and political activities; 3) work in other classes. Two possible exceptions exist for unacceptable excuse #3. I am prepared to exercise some indulgence concerning students completing Seniors Honors projects or, in the case of Conservatory students, students playing Senior recitals. This is because of the "once in a lifetime" character of these projects.
4. Papers must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. I reserve the right to return unread any illegible paper.
5. All written work at Oberlin College is covered by the Honor Code. No paper will be read before the Honor Code is signed: "I have adhered to the Honor Code in the writing of this exercise."
6. All written work for the course must be completed in order to pass it. That is to say, a student who receives an A on the first two papers and does not complete the third will fail the entire course.