This course is designed to reevaluate how the bloodiest conflict in the history of the world shaped the history of the 20th century. 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 newer fields such as social and cultural history. We will also explore how methodologies can intersect, such as in the cultural history of military experience.

Books for purchase:


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
In addition to the books available for purchase, some of the readings are original documents available on the World Wide Web. Some of the assignments from the Web are very general in nature. Some of the assignments at the end of the course are simply for general perusal, and students are encouraged to read as much as they like from them on whatever interests them.

There are numberless other sites on the Web that deal with World War II. These, like sites on most other topics, vary widely in quality. The best advice is: "Let the Surfer Beware." For the purposes of this course, my inclination is to discourage students from spending much time surfing the Web for additional readings. There’s plenty of work to do if you simply complete the 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 well in advance of the due dates. Alternative topics are possible, but must be approved in advance by the instructor. The topics for the first paper will be handed out on March 7, and the paper will be due on March 14. The topics for the second paper will be handed out on April 18, with the paper due on April 25. 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 7: Introduction: World War II: Past, Present, Future

Readings:

Speech by President George W. Bush to Congress, 20 September 2001, available at:


John W. Dower, "Triumphant and Tragic Narratives of the War in Asia" (pdf, e-mailed)

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

February 9: 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

http://www.hitler.org/speeches/02-01-33.html

2) Speech at Nuremburg, 6 September 1938, available at:

http://www.hitler.org/speeches/09-06-38.html

February 14: The West Between the Wars

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

Two inaugural addresses by Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933 and 1941):

1) (1933)

http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/froos1.htm

2) (1941)

http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/froos3.htm

Finish Murray and Millett, Ch.1-2

February 16: West Meets East: Colonized Asia

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

II. THE TRIUMPH OF THE AXIS POWERS

February 21: The Victory of Germany in the West

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

February 23: The War in Asia before Pearl Harbor

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

February 28: Collaboration and Resistance in Nazi Europe

Readings: Begin Browning, *Ordinary Men*

March 2: Collaboration and Resistance in Asia

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

III. GLOBAL WAR AND TOTAL WAR

March 7: 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.)

FIRST PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT

March 9: "Total" Democracy: Allied Ideology/Review for the first paper

Readings: Joint Declaration by Roosevelt and Churchill, 24 September 1941 (The Atlantic Charter): [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/atlantic.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/atlantic.htm)

March 14: The "Total" Volksgemeinschaft: The War against the Jews, Part I


FIRST PAPER DUE

March 16: The War against the Jews, Part II: The Holocaust

Readings: Continue Browning, *Ordinary Men*

March 21: 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

March 23: Fighting Total War on the Eastern Front

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

Spring Break!!!

April 4: Fighting Total War in the Pacific

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

April 6: Total War from the Air: Strategic Bombing

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

Note: Tonight there will be a showing of *Casablanca* (1942), exact time and place TBA. We will be discussing this film in class next week. For those unable to make this time, a copy of the film is available at the Reserve Room in Mudd.

April 11: American Democracy and Total War, Part I: Mobilizing Gender

Readings:
1) Continue Henson, *Comfort Women*


3) For the next two classes, look at the U.S. propaganda posters located at: http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govpub/collections/wwii-posters/

April 13: American Democracy and Total War, Part II: Mobilizing Race

**III. ENDING AND REMEMBERING WORLD WAR II**

April 18: The Defeat of Germany and Italy

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

SECOND PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT

April 20: Day off for Good Behavior

April 25: The Defeat of Japan in the Pacific

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

April 27: The Atomic Bomb

Readings: look at the site below on the atomic bomb

www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/abomb/mpmenu.htm

SECOND PAPERS DUE

May 2: World War II and the Origins of the Cold War

Readings: peruse the site below on wartime conferences and the origins of the Cold War

www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/wwiiconf.htm

May 4: 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


2) Declaration by Admiral Doenitz of German Surrender, 8 May 1945

3) Broadcast by Emperor Hirohito, 14 August 1945

http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/hirohito.htm

May 9: Remembering the European War

Readings:

1) Review Davies, "Misunderstood Victory in Europe"

2) Review speech by President George W. Bush to Congress, 20 September 2001, available at:


3) Look at the web site for the World War II memorial in Washington, DC

http://www.wwiimemorial.com/

May 11: Remembering the Asian War

Readings: Finish Henson, Comfort Woman; review Dower, "Triumphal and Tragic Narratives of the War in Asia"

FINAL PAPERS DUE AT THE TIME DETERMINED
BY THE COLLEGE FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE

Additional Ground Rules:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Papers must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. They must be word-processed with near letter quality resolution. I will return unread any illegible paper.

4. 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."

5. 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.