HIST 417: World War Two in Europe

Instructor: Dr. Joshua Arthurs
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Course Description:
This course examines the impact of the most devastating war in human history on the political, social, and cultural fabric of European societies. Although we will cover the basic political and military history of the war in Europe, the emphasis will be on such themes as occupation, collaboration, resistance and retribution. Each of these broad themes, moreover, will be connected to the Holocaust and the many wars within the European war. We will also explore the interplay of myth and memory of the war from a variety of national perspectives.

Undergraduate Assignments:

Papers (50%): A midterm and a final paper, worth 20% and 30% of your grade respectively. Each paper should be approximately 6-8 pages double-spaced. Assignment prompts will be distributed in class, and will assess your ability to understand and respond to the arguments made in the readings, lectures and class discussion. Papers must use the Chicago style of citation; see eCampus for the style guide. On eCampus you can also find a paper grading rubric and an explanation of grading criteria. Students have the option of rewriting the midterm paper. When submitting a rewrite, you must also submit the original version of the paper, with my comments included. I strongly encourage you to consult with me in revising papers. Rewrites will be accepted up to one week after graded papers are returned. Plagiarized papers are not eligible for rewrites.

eCampus Discussion (20%): As indicated on the syllabus, some weeks will be devoted to discussion workshops. Students will write responses to recent readings, which must be posted on the eCampus Discussion Board by 12:00 PM on the Tuesday of workshop.
week. Each response will be graded, with the results posted online. Students will be divided into discussion groups to facilitate conversation. Please check your group’s page regularly, as you can earn additional points by commenting on your peers’ posts. While you are encouraged to engage with each other, please ensure that your first post contains your original thoughts regarding the prompts.

**Reflection Assignment (5%)**: At the beginning of the semester, you will write a brief (approximately two pages double-spaced) reflection on the broad themes of the course; you will then revisit this paper at the end of term and write a further two pages reflecting on how your ideas have changed over the semester. The two pieces will then be turned in and graded together.

**European Resistance Archive Website Assignment (5%)**: Students will analyze a series of recorded testimonies from members of European resistance movements.

**Participation and Attendance (20%)**: As you will notice on the syllabus, some weeks will be focused on lectures while others are devoted to discussion workshops. During workshop weeks, the class will be divided into groups to facilitate conversation. Your contributions for each discussion week are graded and form the core of your participation grade. You must attend the discussion group to which you are assigned.

Attendance counts towards your participation grade. You are expected to attend all class meetings, with a notebook and the readings in hand. Be prepared to discuss the texts and ask questions. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences; however, I understand that illness and problems can arise, so you will be allowed TWO “free” misses over the course of the semester. Be judicious about how you use these absences. If you use up your absences early in the semester, I will not be sympathetic when you need to miss class later in the term. Perfect attendance will raise your participation grade, while multiple absences will lower it. **You must have an attendance rate of at least 60% in order to pass the course.**

**Extra Credit**: Students may earn up to 3% extra credit by writing an analysis of a film that is relevant to the themes of the course; see eCampus for approved films. The paper should be 3-4 pages double-spaced. Students are encouraged to consult with me ahead of time. You may only hand in one extra credit assignment per semester.

**Graduate Assignments:**

**Term Paper (50%)**: Graduate students will write a 15-20 page historiography paper on a subject of their choice, chosen in consultation with me and relevant to the themes of the course. In addition to assigned readings, they must choose 4-6 works of scholarly literature (books, journal articles, etc.) on their topic. As indicated on the schedule, students must submit a 2-3 page proposal and preliminary bibliography and meet with me individually to discuss their project.

**Reflection Assignment (5%)**: Same as undergraduates.

**European Resistance Archive Website Assignment (5%)**: Same as undergraduates.
**Online Discussion (20%)**: Same as undergraduates.

**Participation and Attendance (20%)**: See above for attendance policies. I expect graduate students to be active participants in class, especially given the importance of intellectual debate to your program of study. At the same time, please be inclusive and respectful of undergraduates in your contributions. Graduate students may also be asked to provide course assistance.

**Learning Outcomes:**
At the end of this History course, students will be able to:
- demonstrate general knowledge of the facts, concepts, and approaches of history;
- critically analyze and assess primary sources;
- critically analyze and assess secondary sources;
- produce historical essays that are coherent, grammatically correct, and use proper historical documentation.

**Readings:**
The following books are available for purchase at the campus bookstore. Other readings, indicated by an asterisk (*), are available on eCampus.

- Richard Bessel, *Nazism and War*
- Catherine Merridale, *Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945*
- Richard Overy, *1939: Countdown to War*
- Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out*
- Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands*

**eCampus:**
Important materials – including this syllabus, readings, PowerPoint slides from past lectures, discussion questions and useful links – will be posted on the course website, which can be accessed by logging on to *ecampus.wvu.edu*.

**Course Expectations:**
**Assignments**: Unless otherwise specified, papers must be submitted in **HARD COPY** and stapled, not sent via email. They should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and in 12-point font. Late papers will be deducted half a grade level (e.g. A to A-, B+ to B) for every day that they are late, beginning at the time at which they are due. No extensions will be given.

**Communication**: I will often communicate with the class via your WVU email account (MIX). Please be sure to check it regularly. Email is also the best way to contact me. When emailing, please ensure that you are polite and professional; an unpunctuated
Blackberry message with no salutation will not be answered. I will work hard to get back to you in a timely manner.

**Courtes during Class:** It is disruptive to others to arrive late to class or leave early. Please don’t do it. If you know that you will have to leave class early, explain the situation to me beforehand and sit near the door so that you can exit as quietly as possible. Please turn off all cell phones, beepers, or any other wireless device that may make noise during class. I will confiscate your device if it rings in class. You may use a laptop in class for taking notes, but if you are using it for email, Facebook, instant messaging, or any other activity I will ask you to stop using your computer.

**Writing Center:** Writing is one of the most important skills in this course. You are encouraged to use the WVU Writing Center to help you revise papers. More information on the Writing Center’s resources can be found via a link on the course eCampus page.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with severely. At a minimum, **offenders will fail the course.** Plagiarism means “submitting, without appropriate acknowledgement, a report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual’s academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper” (WVU Undergraduate Catalog, 2003-2005, p. 47). Plagiarism includes not only lifting passages word for word without using quotation marks (even if you cite the author!), but also the substantial use of anyone else’s ideas without citing them. **Using material from the World Wide Web without citing it is plagiarism.** Your work is made stronger, not weaker, by showing that you are able to refer to the work of others and comment upon it critically. Whenever you use material word for word, you must use quotation marks and cite the proper author.

**WVU Social Justice Statement:** West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).
Schedule

**Week I**

8/18  Course Overview
8/20  What Was WW2?
     **REFLECTION PAPER #1 DUE**
8/22  Discussion of Reflection Papers

**Week II**

8/25  First World War and its Legacies
8/27  Interwar politics – Bolshevism, Fascism, Nazism
8/29  Understanding National Socialism

**Readings:**

**Documents:**
- *Woodrow Wilson, “The Idealistic View”*
- *German Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, “A Peace of Might”*
- *Adolf Hitler, “Speech of 10 April 1923”*
- “Mussolini and the Masses” (Sourcebook)

**Recommended:**

**Week III**

9/1   NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
9/3   Hitler on the March
9/5   Democracy in Retreat

**Readings:**
- Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 35-89.

**Documents:**
- “Abyssinia’s Plight” (Sourcebook)
- “Spain’s Anguish” (Sourcebook)
- “Hossbach Memorandum” (Sourcebook)

**Recommended:**
• Keegan, *The Second World War*, 31-44

**Week IV – Workshop 1**

**ONLINE RESPONSES DUE BY NOON ON TUESDAY**

9/8    Peace in Our Time? The Appeasement Debate
9/10   Discussion Group 1
9/12   Discussion Group 2

**Readings:**

• Overy, *1939: Countdown to War.*

**Documents:**

• “Appeasement” (Sourcebook)
• “France Goes to War” (Sourcebook)

**Week V**

9/15   The War Begins: Poland Partitioned and Conquered
9/17   Occupied Poland and the Jewish Question
9/19   From the Phony War to the Fall of France

**Readings:**

• Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 93-109.

**Documents:**

• “Rethinking Armored Warfare” (Sourcebook)
• “Occupied Poland” (Sourcebook)
• “France’s Collapse” (Sourcebook)
• “Strange Defeat” (Sourcebook)

**Recommended:**


**Week VI**

9/22   Collaboration East and West
9/24   Daily Life in Hitler’s Europe
9/26   The Last Stronghold? Britain and the Blitz

**MIDTERM PAPER PROMPT HANDED OUT**

**Readings:**
• *Jose Harris, “War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War.” Contemporary European History 1.1 (1992), 17-35.

Documents:
  • “The Nazi New Order” (Sourcebook)
  • “French Collaboration” (Sourcebook)
  • “London is Burning” (Sourcebook)
Recommended:

**Week VII – Workshop 2**
ONLINE RESPONSES DUE BY NOON ON TUESDAY

9/29  Writing Workshop
10/1  Discussion Group 2
10/3  Discussion Group 1

**Week VIII**

10/6  Turning to the East
10/8  Barbarossa
10/10  NO CLASS – MIDTERM PAPERS AND GRAD PAPER PROPOSALS DUE IN HISTORY DEPARTMENT MAILBOX (WOODBURN 220) BY 4 PM

Readings:
  • Merridale, Ivan’s Army, 82-171.
  • Snyder, Bloodlands, 155-186.
  • Bessel, Nazism and War, 109-133.

Documents:
  • “Germany Strikes East” (Sourcebook)
  • “The Criminal Orders” (Sourcebook)
  • “Saving Moscow” (Sourcebook)
  • “Combat on the Russian Front” (Sourcebook)
Recommended:
Week IX
10/13  NO CLASS – FALL BREAK
10/15  Holocaust: Outside the Camps
10/17  Holocaust: Inside the Camps

Readings:

Documents:
- “Atrocities in Kamenets-Podolsky” (Sourcebook)
- “The Warsaw Ghetto” (Sourcebook)
- “Wannsee Conference” (Sourcebook)

Week X – Workshop 3
ONLINE RESPONSES DUE BY NOON ON TUESDAY
10/20  Night and Fog
10/22  Discussion Group 1
10/24  Discussion Group 2

Week XI
10/27  Stalingrad
10/29  The Allies Arrive: North Africa and Italy
10/31  Resistance and Civil War

Readings:
- Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 133-150.

Documents:
- “Stalingrad: the Rats’ War” (Sourcebook)
- “The Polish Resistance” (Sourcebook)
- “Yugoslavia’s Partisans” (Sourcebook)

Recommended:

Week XII – Workshop 4
ONLINE RESPONSES DUE BY NOON ON TUESDAY
11/3  European Resistance Archive

WEBSITE ASSIGNMENT DUE

11/5  Discussion Group 2
11/7  Discussion Group 1

Readings:
- Portelli, *The Order*, 71-199.

Documents:

Recommended:

**Week XIII**

11/10  Liberation
11/12  Downfall
11/14  Aftermath

Readings:

Documents:
- “Nazis to the Bitter End?” (Sourcebook)
- *A Woman in Berlin* (selections)

Recommended:

**Week XIV**

11/17  The New World Order
11/19  Prosecution and Retribution
11/21  Recovery and Rebuilding

FINAL PAPER PROMPT HANDED OUT

Readings:
- Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 185-203.

*Documents:*
• “The Nuremberg Trials” (Sourcebook)
• “The Iron Curtain” (Sourcebook)

**THANKSGIVING BREAK NOV. 24-28**

**Week XV**

12/1  *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*
12/3  Remembering and Forgetting in Postwar Europe
12/5  Final Discussion
**REFLECTION PAPER #2 DUE**
**LAST DAY TO SUBMIT EXTRA CREDIT PAPERS**
12/8  NO CLASS – WRITE FINAL PAPERS

**Readings:***
• Bessel, *Nazism and War*, 203-220.
• Merridale, *Ivan’s Army*, 372-388.

**FINAL PAPERS DUE IN HISTORY DEPARTMENT MAILBOX (WOODBURN 220) BY NOON ON FRIDAY, DEC. 12TH**