

HISTORY 217 WORLD IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, 1900-1945 FALL 2012

INSTRUCTOR: Paul Mazgaj
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OFFICE HOURS:

Monday & Wednesday: 3:15-3:45

And by appointment (see me after class or email me to make an appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The period between 1900 and 1945 marked one of the most catastrophic in world history. It encompassed not only the First and Second World Wars, but also the Great Depression, the rise of brutal dictatorships, and the apex of Western imperial domination in of the non-Western world. An effort will be made to look at the period as a whole, with special focus on the two world wars that dominated the first half of the twentieth century.

LEARNING GOALS

At the successful completion of this course, a student should expect:

- to acquire general knowledge of the major developments in world history between 1900 and 1945;
- to learn how to interpret primary source material and integrate such interpretations into a larger understanding of history;
- to learn how to analyze and synthesize historical material by writing essay examinations.

REQUIRED READINGS

Howard, Michael. *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford UP, 2002)

Lyons, Michael. *World War II: A Short History* (Prentice Hall, 2010, 5th edition)

Most of the required readings are on electronic reserve (and can be downloaded from Blackboard) or are in e-book format (and can be found on Jackson Library's website).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance is required, not optional. Only officially certified absences will be accepted. All unexcused absences will affect your grade; beyond three, your grade will be seriously affected. Also, as a courtesy to both the instructor and your fellow students, please be on time and turn off all cell phones before class starts.

Examinations. There will be two examinations: a mid-term and a final. See below for dates. Both exams will have the same format: one part short essay, one part long essay.

Informal Writing Exercises. On a regular basis throughout the semester there will be unannounced writing exercises at the beginning of class. They will be short commentaries on a particular aspect of the day's reading assignment.

These writing exercises are designed to serve three purposes: first, to give you some measure of how well you are dealing with the reading; second, to get you mentally pump-primed for the class that will follow; finally, and not least, to keep you on track with your reading. Given the fact that these exercises will be unannounced, you need to have completed the day's reading assignment *before every class*. These short, informal writing exercises will not be "graded" in the ordinary sense. Instead, they will receive one of the following marks: a check (indicating satisfactory performance); a check plus (indicating a performance which is especially thoughtful, complete, or well-conceived); a check minus (indicating unsatisfactory performance). *A check minus cannot be redone.* It will signal to me that either you have not done the reading or you have not done it carefully enough. Better than average performance on these informal writing exercises will be counted positively in your "discussion grade." More than a few check minuses will begin to affect your grade; *a number of check minuses will, like absences, have serious consequences for your grade.* If you are not in class on a particular day (or if you miss the exercise by coming late), you will receive a check minus.

Grading. Your final grade will be composed of the following elements:

midterm exam: 40%
final exam: 40%
writing exercise grade: 20%

Plagiarism and the Academic Honor Code. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that occurs when someone uses the words or ideas of someone else without giving that person credit in a formal citation. The Honor Code also prohibits cheating on exams (e.g, copying answers from another student or bringing a crib sheet to an exam). Punishment for violations are outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy. For an explanation see the UNCG website under "Academic <http://student> Integrity Policy."

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

ER=Electronic Reserve (download from Blackboard)

EB=E-Book (Library Website)

Howard=Michael Howard, *The First World War* (to be purchased)

Lyons=Michael Lyons, *World War II* (to be purchased)

Week 1

8/20: Introduction

8/22: The World in 1900, Part I

Reading: Perry, "Imperialism" **ER**

Week 2

8/27: The World in 1900, Part II

Reading: Howard, chs. 1-2

8/29: Origins of the First World War

Reading: Storey, "Environment, Technology, and the Origins of the War" **ER**

Week 3

9/3: Labor Day (no class)

9/5: From War of Movement to Stalemate

Reading: Howard, ch. 3

Brittain, "Testament of Youth" in James Hannah, ed., *Great War Reader*, pp. 239-257 **EB**

Week 4

9/10: 1915: The Widening War: New Belligerents, New Fronts

Reading: Howard, ch. 4

Ernest Jünger, "Storm of Steel" in James Hannah, ed., *Great War Reader*, pp. 287-298 **EB**

9/12: 1916: The Great Bloodlettings: Verdun and the Somme

Reading: Howard, ch. 5

Alistair Horne, "Fort Vaux" in James Hannah, *Great War Reader*, pp. 31-43 **EB**

Week 5

9/17: Total War, Global War

Reading: Howard, ch. 6

9/19: 1917-1918: The Allies Persevere, Germany Gambles

Reading: Howard, chs. 7 and 8

Week 6

9/24: The Specter of Revolution

Reading: Paxton, "Revolution, 1917-1920" **ER**

9/26: The Peace of Paris: Europe

Reading: Paxton, "Paris Peace Settlement" **ER**

Week 7

10/1: The Peace of Paris: The Wider World

Reading: Brose, "Problematic Legacy of the Great War in the Wider World" **ER**

10/3: The Age of Dictators I: The Rise of Hitler

Reading: Eatwell, "Germany: The Rise of Nazism" **ER**

Week 8

10/8: The Age of Dictators II: National Socialism in Power

Reading: Eatwell, "Germany: The Consolidation of the Nazi Dictatorship" **ER**

10/10: **MID-TERM EXAM** (bring blue book)

Week 9

10/15: Fall Break

10/17: The Age of Dictators III: The Collapse of Japanese Democracy

Reading: Overy and Wheatcroft, "Japan" **ER**

Week 10

10/22: The Age of Dictators IV: Stalin and the "Second Revolution" **ER**

Reading: Wilkinson and Hughes, "The Stalinist System" **ER**

10/24: The Road to War

Reading: Lyons, ch. 4

Cotetsee, ed., "Appeasement" and "France Goes to War" **ER**

Week 11

10/29: From the Fall of Poland to the Fall of France

Reading: Lyons, chs. 5, 6, and 7

10/31: From the Battle of Britain to Operation Barbarossa

Reading: Lyons, chs. 8 and 10

Week 12

11/5: The Japanese Offensive in East Asia and the Western Pacific

Reading: Lyons, chs. 12 and 13

11/7: Hitler's "New Order" and the Holocaust

Reading: Lyons, ch. 11

Browning, "Ordinary Men" **ER**

Week 13

11/12: The Allies Respond: Strategy and the "Big Three"

Reading: Parker, "Anglo-American Strategies" **ER**

Coetzee, ed., "Plan Dog" and "Forging European Strategy" **ER**

11/14: The Tide Turns

Reading: Lyons, chs. 16 and 17

Week 14

11/19: Total War, Total Mobilization, and "Strategic" Bombing

Reading: Lyons, chs. 20 and 21

11/21: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15

11/26: Victory in Europe

Reading: Lyons, chs. 22 and 23

11/28: Victory in the East Asia and the Pacific

Reading: Lyons, chs. 24-25

Week 16

12/3: The Legacy of War

Reading: Weinberg, "The Cost and Impact of the War"

Final Examination (bring blue book): **Monday, Dec. 10, 2012**