World War II: A Global Perspective

Instructor: Paul Wanke

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Required texts:
Michael Lyons, World War II: A Short History, 5th ed
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/wwii.asp

Textbook Information:
NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website (http://www.osubeaverstore.com/). Sample syllabi may not have the most up to date textbook information!

Course Description
Students will examine World War II from a global perspective, its origins, the course of the conflict and its aftermath, looking especially at the US, USSR, Britain, Germany and Japan. Topics will include the concept of total war and the home fronts of a number of nations.

Evaluation of Student Performance

Grades: There will be a total of 1000 points to be earned in this class divided in the following manner:
1) Final exam 200
2) 2 Book reviews 300
3) 2 documents analysis 200
4) Comparative paper 300

A: 1000-930 B-: 829-800 D+: 699-670
A-: 929-900 C+: 799-770 D: 669-630
B+: 899-870 C: 769-730 D-: 629-600
B: 869-830 C-: 729-700 F: 599 or below

Class exam: exam is an essay exam in which student will choose two questions from a list provided. A study guide of potential topics will be given.

Book Review: you are required to do 2 book reviews from the list attached. These should be 5-7 pgs and are due Friday 5pm on weeks 5 and 9. See the attached on guides to writing book reviews. The first must be a book from groups 1-4, the second from groups
5-8. So for example if you choose Kershaw’s *Hitler* for your first choice, it is due on Friday, 5 pm week 5 (see reading list and schedule).

**How to Approach a Book Review**

A book review at the university level in no way resembles the type of report done in grade school in which the student reads a book, describes the events covered in the first 90 pages and leaves the ending untold so the suspense will not be broken for the reader. On the contrary, the object of writing a book review on a historical text is to point out the conclusions that the author presents in the book, and to assess the validity of the conclusions.

In order to do a competent review, it is best to read quickly through the book for general content, noting anything that seems significant and/or controversial. Then go back and consider more thoroughly the basic structure and thesis of the book. As you are reading, keep several questions in mind:

1. What is the subject and purpose of the book (general text, new interpretation, propaganda, etc)?
2. How qualified is the author to deal with the topic? Find out about the author's education and past experience in order to judge whether he/she is especially qualified as an expert in the field.
3. What is the author's point of view on the subject? Try to discern if there are any reasons why the author may be presenting a biased approach; for example, an Irish nationalist writing about Britain's policies toward Ireland in the 20th century may view the topic from a biased perspective.
4. How does the author's point of view compare with that of other historians who have written on the same topic? Here, obviously it is useful to flip through other texts to see what has been said about the subject. To be a useful reviewer, you must know something about the topic you are reviewing.
5. How valid is the author's point of view and how competently is the argument presented? Here you must consider the sources used (primary sources, secondary sources and other aids as listed in the bibliography), as well as the organization and style of the book in relation to the topic.
6. Finally, assess how important the book is in relation to the material already available on the subject and whether the author has fulfilled the purpose for which the book was intended.

Remember, you are posing as an expert and it is your job to be critical. However, do not expect the author to have written the book you have in mind. Pay particular attention to what the author says is the focus of the book in the Introduction and judge how well the stated goals are carried out.
Style and Organization of a Book Review

A book review should be presented in the same way as any other essay with a title page giving title (e.g., Review of Louis Hartz’ Founding of New Societies), your name, course and date.

When quoting from or referring to a particular section of the book you are reviewing, give the page number in a formal footnote. If you draw upon other books for comparison, be sure you supply sufficient information to enable the reader to locate the book. A formal footnote is the simplest way of doing this.*

You are not held to any specific order in presenting your book review. However, you will find that it is helpful to check that you have discussed the following in some logical sequence:

1. Statement of the purpose and general content of the book.
2. Discussion in detail of the author's main conclusions and an assessment of their validity, including a comment on sources and a comparison with other authors.
3. Overall assessment of the value of the book to historical literature and of the merits and shortcomings of the work as you see them.

Aids to Writing Book Reviews

There are available in the Library several valuable aids which can be most useful to the student who is attempting to assess a book. These include a host of periodicals and journals which contain reviews of books by professional historians. In order to locate published reviews it is helpful to consult either the Book Review Digest or the Book Review Index, both of which are located in the reference section of the Library and which list publications that review any given book. If you have difficulty using these reference materials, ask the Librarian to help you. No student should escape university without a thorough knowledge of these research aids.

It is useful to check on what other professional historians have to say about a new book, keeping always in mind, of course, that reviewers are human and may have their own biases. Of necessity, your formal review will be more detailed than many of the journalistic efforts which should serve only as a jumping off point for your own views and organization. (Be careful not to copy directly from published book reviews as your professor probably relies very heavily upon such reports and usually can spot plagiarism).

*Just as for a research paper, the student writing a book review should have a guide to method and mechanics. The most comprehensive guide is The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th Ed. (1993)

The following are also useful:
• Jacques Barzum and Henry E. Graff, The Modern Researcher
• Joseph Gibaldi, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers
• K. L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers

Document guidelines: from the Avalon Project website you are to choose any 2 document sets. They are due on the Friday 5pm of the corresponding week based on the year covered. For example, if you chose the ‘Franco-German Armistice’ it would be due Friday week 4 covering 1940 (see schedule). If your second choice was the Potsdam Conference, it would be due Friday, week 9. If the document set you are interested in covers more than one year, say ‘Nazi-Soviet relations 1939-41’, then it is due on the last year covered, thus 1941, week 5. Your job is to read the primary documents from the chosen set. Then in 3-5 pg essay, summarize the major theme covered, the participants, the context and how issues were resolved and why.

Comparative paper: this is a 12-15 page paper (exclusive of bibliography) on a topic mutually agreed upon by the student and instructor. The purpose of the essay is to compare/contrast a specific topic, from the point of view of at least two different nations. For example, the strategic bombing campaign through the prism of US and British policy or economic mobilization compared between Germany and Japan, or the role of art and propaganda among the various countries. The essay will be worth 200 points and based on focus, clarity, thorough presentation and a discussion comparing and contrasting the two views. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources needs to demonstrate that the student has become familiar with the pertinent literature. Use standard historical citations. This is due Friday 5pm week 10.

Course Content

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I. Prewar military perceptions
1) Clausewitz, *Vom Krieg* (On War), Peter Paret, ed.
2) V.K. Triandifillov, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*
3) Charles De Gaulle, *The Army of the Future*
4) J.F.C. Fuller, *Tanks in the Great War*
5) E. Douhet, *Command of the Air*
6) Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

II. Leaders:
1) Dmitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*
2) Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: Hubris 1889-1936*
3) Manning, Paul, *Hirohito: the War Years*
4) Goodwin, Doris Kearns: *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt*
5) Smith, Denis Mack, *Mussolini*
6) Gilbert, Martin, *Churchill: A Life*

III. Personal Accounts
1) Sajer, Guy, *Soldat Oublie (The Forgotten Soldier-German eastern front memoir)*
2) Cook and Cook, *Japan at War: an Oral History*
3) Townsend, Peter, *The Odds Against Us*
4) Lawrence, Hal, *Victory at Sea* (Canadian navy)
5) Moniushko, Evgenii, *From Leningrad to Hungary*
6) Sledge, E.B. *With the Old Breed*

IV. Occupation/Resistance
1) Bennett, Rab, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika*
2) Shepherd, Ben, *War in the Wild East*
3) Laska, Vera, *Women in the Resistance and the Holocaust*

* need only do two documents from 1939-45
** only one book from reading sections 1-4 due
5) Hehn, Paul, *The German Struggle Against Yugoslav Guerillas in World War II*
6) Eisner, Peter, *The Freedom Line* (Spanish support for Allied airmen)

V. Horrors of War
1) Chang, Iris, *The Rape of Nanking*
2) Hersey, John, *Hiroshima*
3) Christopher R. I. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*
4) Allen Paul, *Katyn: the Untold Story of Stalin’s Polish Massacre*
5) Fred Taylor, *Dresden, Tuesday February 13, 1945*
6) Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews, 1985*

VI. Turning Points
1) Prange, Gordon, *Miracle at Midway*
2) Hastings, Max, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy*
3) Swinson, Arthur, *The Battle of Kohima*
4) Syrett, David, *The Defeat of the German U-boats*
5) Belorussia 1944: The Soviet General Staff Study
6) Hough, Richard, *The Battle of Britain*
7) Braithwaite, Rodric, *Moscow 1941: A City and its People at War*

VII. Home Front
1) Stites, Richard, ed. *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*
2) Jeffries, John, *Wartime America*
3) Briggs, Susan, *The Home Front: War Years in Britain*
4) Havens, Thomas, *Valley of Darkness: the Japanese People and World War II*
5) Lang, Daniel, *A Backward Look: Germans Remember*
6) Leonard, Thomas, ed. *Latin America during World War II*
7) Ellwood, David, *Italy, 1943-1945*

VIII. Post –war
1) Jean Paul Sartre, *The Plague*
2) Elyena Zubkova, *Russia After the War*
3) John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of WWII*
5) Telford Taylor, *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials*
6) Moeller, Robert, ed, *West Germany under Construction*

**Graduate students:** In addition to the work as listed, an additional 15-20 pg paper (not including notes/bibliography) is required. This paper will be a hypothetical intelligence summary of any one of the nations involved in WWII as of Dec. 31, 1939-1945. It will explore political, military, civilian, economic and other factors as of the date chosen. It will require meeting w/me outside of class at least 3 times during the quarter.
Course Schedule/Content

Week 1: The intellectual background to mass killing and industrialized warfare. The nature and aftermath of World War One provided a rich background for the rise of extremism.
Readings: Lyons 1-2, Power points ‘Introduction’ and ‘The Legacy of World War One’

Week 2: The Inter war years seemed to provide only fear for the winners and the desire for revenge by the losers. Extreme nationalism took off in Germany, Japan and Italy while the former Allies, the US, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union (formerly Russia) are trapped by the fear of another great war. The aggressive powers will exploit this fear finally producing war in Asia by 1937 and in Europe by 1939.
Readings: Lyons 3-4, PPT ‘Road to war Asia and Europe’

Week 3: 1939 the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact sets the stage for the German invasion of Poland, previewing ‘blitzkrieg’, starting WWII in Europe. Poland is divided between Germany and the Soviets. The Soviets follow this with an embarrassing war with Finland, demonstrating a variety of Red Army weaknesses. Japan meanwhile continues its brutal war against China but is unable to deliver a final blow. Japanese probes into Soviet far eastern territory are driven back at Khalkin-Gol, prompting Japan to rethink its war strategy.

Week 4: 1940 the relative calm on the Western Front is shattered with the rapid German victories over Denmark and Norway. Then in May the Germans attack France and within six weeks France sues for peace and Great Britain is alone in the West. Meanwhile the Soviet Union is stunned by France’s rapid defeat and begins to prepare for war with military reform and further expansion into the Baltic states. By fall and winter the German air offensive over Britain fails, and Hitler’s eyes turn towards the Soviet Union. Italy meanwhile attempts to expand in North Africa and the Balkans but their attempts are stalled, bringing their German ally into an unexpected front. Japan takes advantage of French and Dutch collapse and moves into Indochina. In the US, FDR wins an unprecedented 3rd term and the US has its first peacetime draft.
Readings: Lyons, 6-9/, PPT ‘1940’, documents 1940

Week 5: 1941 “And the world shall hold its breath” – after conquering the Balkans in the spring, Hitler’s forces invade the Soviet Union in June. A brutal war of extermination begins. North Africa becomes an issue as Axis forces threaten the Suez Canal. Despite crushing defeats the Red Army rallies at drives the Germans back from the outskirts of Moscow. Almost simultaneously, the war becomes a true world conflict as Japanese forces attack the US base at Pearl Harbor.
Week 6: 1942 The Axis powers are driven to the strategic defensive following dramatic defeats in North Africa and Stalingrad while the Japanese are defeated at Midway and stalled at Guadalcanal. The war becomes truly total as nations mobilize all their resources. In Germany the plans for the ‘Final Solution’ become real.
Readings: Lyons, 10-13, PPT ‘1941’ and ‘Combat’, documents 1941

Week 7: 1943 The Allies go on the offensive during debates on the timing of the 2nd Front in France. Instead, the Allies invade through Sicily and up through Italy. The Soviet victory at Kursk in the summer starts a massive Soviet offensive pushing the Germans back almost to their 1941 frontier. Great Britain is relieved as the Battle of the Atlantic swings in the Allied favor, curtailing fears of German U-boats strangling Great Britain. The controversial Allied strategic bombing program grows steadily with questions arising over the efficacy and morality of such bombing. In the Pacific the US begins a controversial dual assault, one towards the Philippines and the other through the Central Pacific. The first meeting of the ‘Big Three’ at Tehran plots out future Allied strategy and FDR announces policy of unconditional surrender.
Readings: Lyons, 14-17, 21, PPT ‘1942’ and ‘Coalition’, documents 1942

Week 8: 1944 With the successful June D-Day invasion, closely followed by the massive Soviet offensive Bagration’ the success of the Allies is no longer in doubt. Now political questions arise among the Allies regarding the post-war world. The battle for Warsaw raises concerns of Stalin’s plans for Eastern Europe. The US begins to supplant Britain’s efforts in the West and FDR wins a 4th term despite illness. The German last gasp, its ‘Bulge’ offensive is stopped and Germany begins to die. In the Pacific, the US grinds forward and its ally China finds itself falling deeper into civil war between Chiang and Mao.
Readings: Lyons, 17-21, PPT ‘1943’, documents 1943

Week 9: 1945 By spring Hitler is dead and Germany is overrun by the Allies. In the Pacific fierce fighting still continues including Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The strategic bombing of Japan is relentless culminating in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
Readings: Lyons, 22-24, PPT ‘1944’, documents 1944

Week 10 Aftermath: While the fighting ends almost immediately significant new issues arise threatening world peace. A ‘cold war’ between the US and Soviets begins that will last until 1991. Also, unlike World War One, all the colonial empires gradually collapse creating new areas of conflict such as the Middle East and India/Pakistan. Fundamental moral issues return regarding total war, the role of civilians in war, do the ends of stopping genocide justify the means of strategic bombing?
Readings: Lyons, ‘Aftermath’, PPT ‘Lesson Learned’
Plagiarism
You are expected to submit your own work in all your assignments, postings to the discussion board, and other communications, and to clearly give credit to the work of others when you use it. Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F.” Link to Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct: http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm.

Students with Disabilities
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability and Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

Course Evaluation
We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term – online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions through ONID. You will login to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.