

HISTORY 144

THE WORLD AT WAR 1939-1945

Fall Semester 2010

Philip Jenkins
407 Weaver Building
phone: 863-8946

LECTURE SECTION: M W 03:35 - 04:25 102 THOMAS

DISCUSSION SECTIONS:

001	446947	F 3.35-4.25	273 WILLARD
002	446950	F 2.30-3.20	273 WILLARD

I check my e-mail regularly (obsessively?) and this is an excellent way to get in touch with me if you have a quick question or if you want to make an appointment for a more substantial discussion. I can be reached at ipj1@psu.edu.

The Course

This course offers a wide-ranging description and analysis of the Second World War, combining military history with political, social and cultural approaches. One major goal is to describe how large-scale war serves as a revolutionary social and cultural force in its own right, massively accelerating social change. In the case of the Second World War, the course will describe how the conflict did much to create what we think of as the modern world, not only in political terms (the roots of the cold war, the collapse of European imperialism) but also in radically changing attitudes towards such basic matters as gender relations and generational conflict. Also vital were the new scientific advances of the war years, in nuclear energy, radar, aviation, and perhaps most critical of all, the computer.

We will also explore the construction of historical memory. The course will assess and challenge many of the myths surrounding the war, and to show how subsequent accounts of the conflict were shaped by political and cultural needs. For example, the course will stress the critical importance of the Eastern Front throughout, a phenomenon understated in the West because of the patriotic Anglo-American emphasis on D-Day and the Western campaigns. It will also explore the "Resistance Myth", and explore the moral compromises necessary to survive in occupied societies of Europe and Asia. Throughout, the course will stress the impacts of war on the home front and civilian society.

The course will not address the history of the Holocaust in any detail, since this critical topic is already covered in a separate course offering.

Grading

There are three components to this course:

a. *two essay exams*. Both will be in take-home format, and will draw on both classroom materials and outside readings. Please note, there will NOT be a final exam.

b. *book review*. You will also be expected to write a substantial book review, which will constitute a discussion paper. This is a REVIEW, not a book report, and I will explain the difference, both in what follows, and in class. The paper should be about fifteen pages in length. You should choose a RECENT book, one published since 2005. You can find a list of some possible titles at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/p/jp1/ww2books.htm>: if you choose *any* of these titles, they are automatically approved. If you want to do some other title, you need to check with me first BEFORE SEPTEMBER 29. Whatever book you choose, you should then try to answer most or all of the following questions:

1. First, obviously, what is the book about, and what is its central theme or point?
2. Does the author make his/her case well and clearly? Is the book well-written and well-argued? (the two points are not necessarily the same!) If not, why not?
3. The fact that the book was published indicates that somebody thought it made an important and innovative point – there's no point in just rehashing old familiar arguments, or so we would think. What's new about this book? Is it a controversial study?
4. What did the book tell us that was not previously known? What can we learn about how the book fits into the existing literature, yet advances beyond previous knowledge? What earlier or established position is it arguing against?
5. Why are people studying this kind of topic right now? What does this tell us about the state of historical writing and scholarship?
6. Does the author push the evidence to make it fit into contemporary concerns and obsessions? How?
7. What major questions and issues about the history of the Second World War surface?
8. Is the book of any interest or significance beyond the immediate scope of the study addressed?
9. Are there questions that you would like to ask that the author does not deal with, or covers poorly?
10. What can we learn from the footnotes and acknowledgments about how the author went about his/her research?

Needless to say, grading will take account of issues such as grammar and punctuation.

Grading for the course will therefore be based on these components:

a. Two essay examinations, each 25% of the total grade	= 50%
b. Book review.	= 40%
d. Class participation	= 10%
	100%

Note About Class Participation

"Participation" carries a substantial 10 percent of the grade. What this means in practice is that I expect you to do the readings for every class, and I reserve the right to call on people individually through the term to comment or respond on particular texts, or issues arising from them. If you do the readings, and take a full and regular part in class discussions, then that will have a major positive impact on your grade. On the other hand, consistently not participating, not doing the readings - or repeatedly being absent from discussions - is equivalent to missing an exam or failing to do the term paper. I don't expect perfect, 100 percent, attendance, but consistent non-participation will have serious consequences. It does

NOT just mean that you will receive a slightly lower grade: just like refusing to do a paper or an exam, it means that you would simply have not completed the class, and would therefore receive a grade of F for the entire course. It's important to spell out that expectation from the outset. If you are not prepared to do the readings and participate fully, then please drop the class now.

Class Policies

Deadlines matter, and I intend to enforce them strictly. If you miss a deadline without getting an extension in advance, you get a non-negotiable grade of F on that particular exam, paper or project. Do not get in touch with me after the fact to explain why you missed an exam, unless you produce a proper medical note. Excuses must always be supported by documentation. Valid reasons include medical problems and the like.

It is your responsibility to give your TA an accurate and up to date email address, in an account you are likely to check regularly. Please supply this information asap so that you receive all handouts and notifications, apart from the exams.

TEXTS

(both are in paperback, both are required)

1. John Keegan, *The Second World War* (Penguin Books, 1989: now in a 2005 reprint edition). ISBN: 0143035738
2. Samuel Hynes et al, *Reporting World War II* (Library of America, 2001). ISBN: 1-931082-05-7

THREE DIMENSIONS

Let me explain my approach to using the various materials discussed here, and why we are studying this material in the form of a class as opposed to just having you read materials at home and doing everything online. Think of the class as having three dimensions, each of which serves different purposes, but each is essential in its own way: each appeals to different parts of the mind and memory, and all three must be integrated:

Lectures. If you come to class regularly, you will hear lectures that tell the story, try to explain issues, and raise questions for analysis and debate. I also tell stories and describe incidents that should help you remember the main points. I try to lecture well (I win awards), but even the best teacher in the world could only cover a limited amount within the fixed time. If you did *not* attend lectures, you would find the other material very tough to get through, and you would not be able to ask questions that would allow you to assess your comprehension of the material. Hence, lectures are necessary, BUT if you just attended lectures and did nothing else, you would only get a limited and shallow sketch of the subject matter. Therefore you also need:

The Keegan book. This is an excellent example of readable secondary scholarship, the considered judgment of a first class historian who describes the material in far, far, greater detail than a professor could possibly do in class. You don't have to agree with every word,

but his judgments are very well thought through, and always worth considering. Yet you couldn't just rely on this book alone to trace the story, since you probably don't have the background to assess which parts of the book are most important, or to discern the broad themes that will emerge from lectures and discussion. And when you've got everything you can from my lectures and the Keegan book, you also need:

The Hynes book. If the first two elements represent length and breadth, then the Hynes book provides depth. Even the best secondary accounts can only provide a filter from the real experience, and it is the original first-hand stories that give you the authentic flavor of events, the first drafts of history. This book offers a superb selection of the best memoirs and journalism from the World War II years.

In order to achieve the highest grades, your written work – your exam answers – must integrate all three dimensions, the length, breadth and depth. Ideally, you should take what I say in lectures as a framework, bulk it out with readings from Keegan, and then illustrate with relevant selections from Hynes. Of course you can disagree or debate with any of the arguments made, and present your own opinions and evaluations, but you need to take account of the various sources, and of other possible views.

Note On Reading Samuel Hynes et al, *Reporting World War II*.

We will be using this book to a greater or lesser degree in virtually every class. I think it is an enormously rewarding book, and I hope you agree – some of the selections are also enthralling. This is not a history book in the sense of later analysis, but rather a contemporary collection of journalistic observations, often by some leading writers. In using this book, then, I don't expect you to gather dates and facts, which you can find elsewhere, but rather think about this kind of questions:

What strikes you about these accounts?

What moments or observations are really memorable, or would grab the attention of contemporary readers?

What do we find here that we might miss in later grand histories?

How do the journalists portray themselves, knowingly or otherwise, as the heroes of their own lives?

Are they reliable? How can we tell? What are their obvious biases?

Some of these writers became very famous – which strike you as the best, the most effective, the best observers?

Why do you think these accounts were chosen for inclusion in a collection like this as opposed to others?

How far are their writings conditioned by censorship?

Are there things that they might be expected to talk about when describing war that are curiously absent? Why? What kinds of action or behavior might they be expected to over- or understate?

How far were these writers working for their own political agendas, eg for or against US intervention? Are accounts left or right wing? How do these assumptions affect their reporting, especially before the US entry into war?

How far do these journalists reflect some of the moral issues and dilemmas that might strike a modern reader as critical about what they are describing, eg about violence inflicted

on non-combatants? Do they strike you as sensitive about racial and gender concerns, or not?

What do these accounts tell you about changing tastes and interests in journalism? How might modern accounts of war in eg Iraq or Afghanistan differ from these world war II stories? Has the nature of war changed, or the nature of the military experience? Or the tastes and expectations of the reading public?

Incidentally, can I also alert you to the excellent reference materials at the end of this book, including some detailed maps, and a good chronology.

INTERNET RESOURCES

I could easily have used lots more collections of documents, readings etc, but that seems foolish given the unimaginably vast range of texts available for free on the Internet, which cover every conceivable topic you might be researching. Please use them. You can find an extensive listing of sites at

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/p/jpj1/144material.html>

SYLLABUS OF CLASSES

1. August 23

Issues and debates.

2. August 25

The rise of dictatorship and totalitarian ideology. Military theories and debates between the wars. Areas of crisis in the late 1930s.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 10-87.

3. August 27

Discussion sections

4. August 30

The outbreak of war and the fall of France.

DISCUSS: *Reporting World War II*, 1-39

5. September 1

Battle of Britain.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 88-102; *Reporting World War II*, 40-48

6. September 3

Discussion sections

SEPTEMBER 6 – LABOR DAY, NO CLASSES

7. September 8

1940-42 – Africa and the Balkans.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 127-72, 320-343; *Reporting World War II*, 48-62

8. September 10

Discussion sections

9. September 13

Operation Barbarossa.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 173-219; *Reporting World War II*, 69-93, 115-28

10. September 15

The US and the entry into war.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 240-67; *Reporting World War II*, 94-101

11. September 17

Discussion sections

12. September 20

The struggle for oil and resources

13. September 22

Air wars 1941-44.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 415-35; *Reporting World War II*, 306-18, 363-70, 513-28

14. September 24

Discussion sections

15. September 27

The first phase in the Pacific war.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 268-78; *Reporting World War II*, 63-68, 101-114, 129-45, 153-63

16. September 29

Battle of the Atlantic.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 103-26; *Reporting World War II*, 146-52

17. October 1

Discussion sections

18. October 4

The Mediterranean 1942-44.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 310-319, 344-368; *Reporting World War II*, 245-306, 319-33, 371-96, 407-20

19. October 6

Home fronts and the social impact of war.

DISCUSS: *Reporting World War II*, 168-73, 211-44, 421-51, 509-12

20. October 8

Discussion sections

EXAMS DISTRIBUTED TODAY TO BE RETURNED ON OCTOBER 11

21. October 11

EXAM ONE

22. October 13

Occupation, collaboration, and resistance.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 279-89, 483-502

23. October 15

Discussion sections

24. October 18

The war and the Jews.

DISCUSS: *Reporting World War II*, 164-67, 570-76

25. October 20

The Eastern front 1942-44.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 220-39, 450-482

26. October 22

Discussion sections

27. October 25

From D-Day to the fall of Paris.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 369-414; *Reporting World War II*, 452-86

28. October 27

Film and propaganda. The war, art and literature.

DISCUSS: *Reporting World War II*, 490-508

29. October 29

Discussion sections

30. November 1

The Western Front 1944-45: the Battle of the Bulge.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 436-47; *Reporting World War II*, 567-69, 577-90, 596-605, 608-30

31. November 3

The Russians and the East European campaigns 1944-45.

DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 503-535; *Reporting World War II*, 633-55

32. November 5

Discussion sections

33. November 8

The Pacific 1942-43

Keegan, *The Second World War*, 290-307; *Reporting World War II*, 174-210, 333-62

34. November 10
The Pacific 1943-45.
DISCUSS: *Reporting World War II*, 397-406, 529-66

35. November 12
Discussion sections

36. November 15
China/Burma/India
DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 536-73

37. November 17
Iwo Jima and Okinawa
DISCUSS: *Reporting World War II*, pp.591-95, 606-607, 656-62

38. November 19
Discussion sections

NOVEMBER 22-28 THANKSGIVING BREAK

39. November 29
Diplomacy: Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam.
EXAMS DISTRIBUTED TODAY TO BE RETURNED ON DECEMBER 1

40. December 1
EXAM TWO

41. December 3
Discussion sections

42. December 6
The atomic bombs.
DISCUSS: *Reporting World War II*, 663-756

43. December 8
After the Rain: the aftermaths of war in Europe and Asia.
DISCUSS: Keegan, *The Second World War*, 574-95

44. December 10
Discussion sections

BOOK REVIEW PAPERS ARE DUE IN THE FIRST MONDAY OF FINAL EXAM WEEK. Please be sure to keep copies of your papers, because I will not be returning the originals. I will of course be happy to go over them with you if you wish, either later that week, or early in the following semester.

SELECTED UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized prior possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, and tampering with the academic work of other students (see Policies and Rules for Students, Section 49-20). Academically dishonest students may be punished with a minor penalty, typically a zero on a quiz or test, or with a major penalty such as a grade of "F" in a course. Please note that a student may not be forced to withdraw from a course for an academic integrity violation by the teacher alone. Students who are punished with major penalties may appeal the decision. Cases that are sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary actions beyond academic sanctions may be referred by the faculty member to the Office of Judicial Affairs for further review.

Disability Access Statement

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in this programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible.