The World at War, 1939-1945
AHIS 356/356Z (2205/2206), Spring 2012
Mo/We 2:45-4:05 (HU-24)

Instructor:
Dr. H. Peter Krosby, Professor of History (SS-145G)
Office hours: Mo/We 9:00-10:00 & 1:30-2:30
E-mail: hkrosby@albany.edu

This course examines the history of the Second World War from a global perspective, emphasizing the European, Pacific and Mediterranean theaters of operations, racism and the Holocaust, propaganda, inter-Allied relations, and the immediate and long-term impact of the deadliest and most destructive war in human history. Documentary and other films are used to illustrate many of these aspects, and you should take careful notes on the films’ commentaries as well as your impressions of their footage; these films are for instruction, entertaining though some of them may be.

One of your textbooks (Zeiler) offers a comprehensive global survey of the nature, course, and costs of World War II. A second (Kennedy), a Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece, provides an in-depth look at America’s war at home and abroad. A third (Stackelberg) affords you a powerful look inside the Third Reich, the circumstances and influences that produced it, and its lingering impact on postwar Germany. The last book (Overy) covers the horrifying and awe-inspiring war experiences of the people of the Soviet Union. Specified readings found on the Internet are also required; just Google the titles listed below in the “Schedule of Topics.”

As a “General Education” course, this one does not fit snugly into its “learning objectives” category; few history courses do. Specific (rather than general) learning objectives developed for one discipline rarely fit any other, and objectives developed for several disciplines fit none well. Straddling the social sciences and humanities, history presents more problems in this regard than most. It tells the story of the human experience in sweeping panorama as well as minute detail. It tries to determine what the past was really like, recognizing that history, while it may hold lessons for the present, is not a hard science generating natural laws that make reliable prediction possible; no “social science” is. Historians deal with “facts” and seek new information that may confirm, refute, revise or expand what is known about the past. In drawing conclusions, they must let the chips fall where they may, not force them into theoretical frameworks, for factual accuracy is as essential to history as are formulae to chemistry and numbers to mathematics. Historians seek to uncover, define and understand the past, not use it as “a source for generalizations about human behavior that transcend time and place” (Gordon S. Wood). Hence their approach must be primarily empirical: they must view the past through its own eyes and judge it by its own values, not those of the present. To falsify the past in order to satisfy present-day agendas defeats all efforts to understand it; hence those who insist on making the past “politically correct” in line with current mores are destructive mythmakers, not historians.
In spite of its global sweep, there is sufficient European content in this course to fit it into the GenEd “Europe” category -- especially if you pay attention as we go along to the specific learning objectives for that category. To the extent pertinent to this course, the goal is to enable you to demonstrate:

(1) an understanding of the variety of cultures, regions, and countries that make up Europe;
(2) knowledge of the distinctiveness of Europe as manifested in the development of diverse histories, institutions, economies, societies, and cultures;
(3) knowledge of the relationship between Europe and other regions of the world as expressed through political, economic, and cultural contact;
(4) an understanding of how the knowledge that becomes the basis of historical inquiry is constructed.

**Required Readings**


**DOC**  Documentary sources available on the Internet.


**Suggestion**: If you have the time and the interest, you may want to read the massive (920 pages of text) *A World At War: A Global History of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) by Gerhard L. Weinberg. It remains the finest one-volume WW II history available.

**Tests**

Ignore the official final exams schedule! The only exams in this course are four 30-minute essay tests, each worth 20% of your grade and taken during the final half hour of class. You will receive a list of questions before each test, three will be on the test, and you answer one. A makeup test will be given if you miss a scheduled one for unavoidable reasons (promptly reported), but not after the test following the one you missed. You may turn in a signed blank bluebook on the fourth test if you have nothing to gain by taking it. If you take all four tests, the lowest grade is dropped -- unless you duplicate it. The combined tests are worth 80% regardless of whether you take three or four. Grades reflect knowledge, comprehension of issues, and ability to express them. Grading is A-E. An “I” may be given, but only if you have completed at least three of the five assignments. Extra work for improved grades is prohibited by University regulations. Students with learning or performance disabilities should register at CC-137.
as quickly as possible and bring me the certification letters provided by that office. Then we can discuss how you should take the exams.

**Book Review**

A substantial review of David Kennedy’s book, *The American People in World War II*, worth 20% of your final grade and due on **April 11**, is required. It should be c. 2,000 words in length, typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins all around. Submit carefully proof-read copy without any visible corrections. Page references to the book should go in parentheses at the appropriate places in your text, *e.g.* (p. 35). Other sources used must be cited in footnotes. Use a title page, no cover, and staple the review in the top left corner. You may submit it at any time before the deadline, but **no review will be accepted or given credit if submitted after April 11**. Suspected plagiarism will be investigated (see “Cheating,” below).

**NOTE:** These deadlines do not apply to Writing Intensive students (see below).

In writing a book review, the point is not to summarize the book, chapter by chapter, but to evaluate it, on the author’s terms, and – in this particular case -- with GenEd learning Objective 4 in mind (see p. 2). That means you should:

1) take note of the author’s purpose with the book, as stated in the Preface;
2) evaluate the contents in terms of whether the author achieved his stated purpose, in whole or in part, and what you regard as particularly valuable -- or not;
3) describe the nature of the author’s sources and how he used them; and
4) add any additional comments of praise or criticism you may wish to make.

**Writing Intensive (HIS 356Z)**

Submit 2 pages of weekly reports on Kennedy’s book (its coverage, ideas, arguments) as per the schedule given to you, all cleanly produced, typed, double-spaced, in your best English. Failure to submit reports will affect your grade and may get you transferred to the 3-credit HIS 356 section. If you do the work in proper and timely fashion, only the final review of c. 3,000 words will be graded. A draft review of the entire book is due on **April 23**, the final review on **April 30**. Your “learning objectives” are to “produce coherent texts within common college level written forms,” “demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts,” and “research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details.” As for the ground rules for producing the draft and the final review, read “Book Review,” above.

**General Regulations**

**ATTENDANCE** is expected, and a roster is circulated for your signature most of the time. Signing it for others is cheating. Excessive absenteeism (20% or more) will affect your grade. Arrive on time and stay till the end. The University’s Code of Student Conduct states: “repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom without authorization [constitutes] classroom disruption [and is] a disciplinary offense.”
CHEATING on an assignment will result in failure in this course and must be reported to the Office for Undergraduate Education, which can lead to judicial action resulting in probation, suspension, or expulsion. Read carefully the section on “Standards of Academic Integrity” in the Undergraduate Bulletin, and note this History Department warning:

*Plagiarism is taking (which includes purchasing) the words and ideas of another and passing them off as one’s own work. If in a formal paper a student quotes someone, that student must use quotation marks and give citation. Paraphrased or borrowed ideas are to be identified by proper citations. Plagiarism will result, at the minimum, in the student failing the assignment.*

**Schedule of Topics**


23: Radical Fascism Transforms Germany, 1933-39.

FILM: *A New Germany, 1933-1939* (“World at War” #1, Thames Television, 1980).

25: The Road to Hitler’s War, 1937-1939.


READ: RS pp. 188-200; TWZ pp. 27-34.
NOTE: 1/31 is last day to drop a course without receiving a “W”.

Feb 1: Triumphant Germany, Bewildered Britain, 1939-40.

FILM: *Distant War, 1939-40* (“World at War” #2, Thames Television, 1980).

6: Interlude: The Baltic, the Blitz, the Balkans, 1940-41.

NOTE: Writing Intensive [356Z] submissions begin. Check your schedule!

**TEST #1:** Readings and classroom coverage for Jan. 18 through Feb. 6.

8: Hitler Goes for Broke: The Invasion of the Soviet Union, 1941.
FILM: *Barbarossa: June-December 1941* (“World at War” #5, Thames Television, 1980).

13: **Slowly Backing Into War: The United States, 1939-41.**


15: **The Road to War in East Asia and the Pacific, 1931-42.**

NOTE: Classes suspended 10/28 at 2:35; resume 10/3.

20: **The Tide Turns: Moscow, Stalingrad, and the Brutal Eastern Front 1942-44.**


22: **The Tide Turns: El Alamein, and the African Campaigns, 1940-43.**

FILM: *Desert Victory* (British Army/Royal Air Force Film, 1943; Questar 1989).

27: **The Tide Turns: Midway, Guadalcanal and the Solomons, 1942-43.**

FILM: *Guadalcanal* (“Victory at Sea” #6, NBC 1952; Embassy Home Entertainment 1986).

29: **The War at Sea and in the Air: Doctrines, Equipment, Campaigns, 1939-45.**


**TEST #2:** Readings and classroom coverage from Feb. 8 through 29.

Mar 5: **The Holocaust: Origins.**


7: **The Holocaust: Preparations.**


NOTE: Classes suspended 3/12-18.

19: The Holocaust: Implementation I.

21: The Holocaust: Implementation II.
FILM: Genocide (“World at War” #20, Thames Television, 1982).

26: The Holocaust: America’s Response
READ: DMK pp. 369-72.

FILM: Blacks and Whites: Mood Indigo (“America Goes to War,” Questar, 1998); The Spirit of ’43 (1943); The Ducktators (1942); Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs (1943); Any Bonds Today? (1941). (“Cartoons at War,” EMG Video, 1944).

READ: TWZ pp. 43-50, 151-52, 267-73; DMK: use the index (under “China”).
FILM: Battle of China (“Why We Fight,” 1944).
NOTE: 11/7 is last day to drop a semester-length course and receive a “W”.

FILM: Snippets from Battle of Russia (“Why We Fight,” 1943); The North Star (Samuel Goldwyn, 1943); Casablanca (Warner Brothers, 1943); Mrs. Miniver (Loew’s, 1942).

TEST #3: Readings and classroom coverage from March 5 through April 4.

11: The Second Front at Last: Normandy, 1944.
NOTE: 356 Book Review Due. None accepted or credited after today!
NOTE: Classes suspended 4/6-9.
NOTE: Last day to drop a course with a “W”.

16: Goetterdaemmerung 1945: The Fall of the “Thousand-Year Reich.”


18: Twilight: The Decline of Imperial Japan, 1943-45.

READ: TWZ pp. 242-73, 315-26, 361-77; DMK pp. 184-85, 244-49, 384-412;

23: Sunset: The Atomic Bombs and the Fall of Imperial Japan.

NOTE: 356Z complete book review draft due.


READ: DMK, pp. 105-06, 387.

30: Lest We Forget: Lessons and Ghosts of World War II, 1945-2011.

NOTE: 356Z book review due

May 2: The Trichotomous Grand Alliance


7: Triumph and Tragedy: Wartime Roots of the Cold War

TEST #4: Readings and classroom coverage for April 11 through May 7.
Krosby’s office: SS-145G

Office hours: Mon/Wed 09:00-10:00 & 4:15-5:15

E-mail address: hkrosby@albany.edu