

WOH 3244 U01 / EUH 4033 U01

# **WORLD WAR II**

## **A GLOBAL HISTORY, 1933-1945**



Spring 2024

Mon/Weds 10:00am-11:15pm DM 100

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Office Hours: Wed. 11:30am-1pm  
(or by appointment)

### **Why study the Second World War?**

The Second World War was a cataclysm of global proportions that transformed the world. It unleashed untold violence, destroyed entire societies, and ended millions of lives – many through systematic extermination. It mobilized entire nations, fractured empires, and propelled the United States and the Soviet Union to the rank of superpowers. In the process, it profoundly transformed ideas about political rights, gender roles, and national belonging. For better or worse, the Second World War laid the foundations for our contemporary world.

This course will examine the origins, experiences, and legacies of the Second World War. We will examine the war as a *global phenomenon*: one that crossed national boundaries and whose effects reverberated around the world. We will also examine the war as a *site of memory*. Because the war had such a profound impact, it remains an important cultural reference point today. Throughout the semester we will compare popular representations of the war (in film, literature, etc.) with the historical record in order to critically evaluate how personal and societal memories of historical events can differ from their reality.

As part of our effort to understand World War Two as a site of memory, we will dive into historical archives related to the war. Over the course of the semester, we will work with archival

documents, photographs, and artefacts to design an archive or museum exhibit. You'll learn how to interpret the documents you find and how to use them to construct a story that can teach something to the broader public.

### **What does this course aim to help you learn?**

Studying the history of the Second World helps us understand the foundations of our global society today. More importantly, however, it also helps us learn to critically evaluate how the same events were experienced, narrated, and remembered differently across societies. This course will help you acquire a conceptual and practical framework for understanding the global impact of the war. It will also teach you the basic methodological, and technical skills necessary for archival fieldwork. Finally, this class will help you sharpen your ability to analyze and critically engage sources and refine your abilities to communicate complex ideas in writing and in person.

*Course Objectives.* By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- ✓ Understand and explain key themes, concepts, and events related to the Second World War, its impact, and its memory.
- ✓ Critically analyze and assess oral and written primary and secondary sources.
- ✓ Construct original, coherent, and well-organized historical arguments, both in writing and orally in class discussions.
- ✓ Use what you have learned in class to collect, evaluate, and utilize archival documents created during the Second World War.

The WOH section of this course is a discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your Global Learning graduation requirement.

*Global Learning Objectives.* By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- ✓ Construct evidence-based arguments demonstrating **both** how local, national, and transnational processes contributed to shaping a major global conflict **and** how global events impacted different regions of the world. (Global Awareness).
- ✓ Construct an evidence-based argument that integrates multiple perspectives related to the Second World War (Global Perspective).
- ✓ Engage in debates about the local and global importance of the Second World War and its memory today (Global Engagement).

### **How will you succeed in this course?**

*Attend and Participate.*

Before class each week, we will read and discuss historical documents using a platform called Perusall. These readings are the raw materials for your written exams, and your discussions will help you to better understand them.

In class each week, we will learn important concepts in the form of lectures, breakout activities, and discussions.

Outside of class you will collaborate with a small group of fellow students on a semester-long archive exhibit project.

*Communicate.* Being a student is tough. If you run into problems, don't disappear—reach out to Dr. Peterson or your fellow students for help. I have student hours every week and I'm always available by email.

*Take Risks.* I don't expect you to know a 'right answer' or to know all the ins and outs of the topics we cover right away. Those are, after all, the big tasks we will tackle together this semester. The more you put into the process, the more you'll get out of it – and the better prepared you'll be for your assignments.

### **How will I evaluate your progress?**

*Essays (30%).* Writing is a powerful tool for reflecting, organizing ideas, and staking out your own positions. Over the course of the semester, students will write **two of three** 3-page essays on the texts we read in class. These papers will give you the opportunity to connect the readings with one another and with the larger themes discussed in the course.

*Participation (30% total).* The best learning takes place in dialogue with me and your fellow students. Because of that, this course places an emphasis on participation. Weekly online activities are mandatory but low stakes, meaning that you will be graded less on the basis of how 'right' your answers are than on the effort you put into them. Participation consists of two activities: a) discussing the weekly readings through Perusall, and b) working actively with your small group exhibit project throughout the semester.

*Archive Exhibit Project (40%).* A major goal of this course is to teach you how to interpret archival documents and use them to engage in public discussions about the past. Students will use local and online archives to design a museum exhibit as part of a multi-part group project.

#### Grading Scale

A = 100-94	B+ = 89-87	B- = 82-80	C = 76-70	F = 59-0
A- = 93-90	B = 86-83	C+ = 79-77	D = 69-60	

#### Grade Breakdown

Attendance and active participation online and in class	30%
Two out of the three 3-page analytic essays (15% each)	30%
Digital Archive Exhibit Project	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Late Work**

Extensions **may** be granted on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out to Dr. Peterson **before** the assignment is due. Any late work must be submitted within two weeks of the original due date – **no exceptions.**

## Extra Credit

Students may attend **one** outside event directly related to the course (i.e. Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week events or others approved by Dr. Peterson) to earn a 2% extra credit bonus toward their final grade.

## Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct is a serious matter which can result in the failure of this course or even expulsion. All the work that you submit **must be your own and must be properly cited**. If you haven't already, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the FIU's Code of Academic Integrity. You can find it online at: <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/>.

## AI Writing Tools

Written assignments that are generated using AI, in whole or in part, are considered automated plagiarism in this class. AI-generated text is derived from previously created texts from other sources that the models were trained on, and for which no citations are provided. Moreover, it does not constitute original thinking from the student and is not representative of their work. Any violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action. I reserve the right to question students about assignment submissions that are suspected of being generated by AI tools. An AI detector may be used to detect AI-created work. Assignment submissions that are suspected of being AI-generated will be reported to the university. Assignments found to have been generated by AI tools, in whole or in part, will receive an automatic grade of **zero** for the assignment, and no resubmissions will be allowed. Second offenses will result in a final grade of F for the course.

## Academic Freedom

Freedom of speech and critical inquiry are the keys to learning. Likewise, the rigorous, critical interrogation of ideas, images, concepts, and opinions sits at the heart of the historical methods employed in our academic field. In this class, you may encounter ideas and opinions you find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive. Our instructional discussions of this material are intended to be objective and further our understanding of the past. Discussion of these concepts does not imply or require that students endorse any particular viewpoint.

## Resources

I highly encourage you to take advantage of academic services that FIU offers to undergraduates. They are a valuable resource for students at all levels.

The **Writing in History Program** provides assistance with papers and other written assignments, offering online and in-person tutoring appointments. Tutors have specialized knowledge of writing for History classes. For more info, please visit: <http://history.fiu.edu/tutoring>.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** offers limited, short-term mental health support to any FIU student: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/health-and-fitness/counseling-and-psychological-services/index.php>.

## **Inclusivity and Accessibility**

I am committed to making this class as inclusive and accessible as possible. If you have concerns, preferred pronouns, or need accommodation of any type in this course, please reach out to me. Students with disabilities may also wish to contact the Disability Resources Center: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/disability-resource-center/>.

## **Required Texts**

This course does not require you to purchase any books. **All** required readings for this course are available on the course Canvas page through Perusall.

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1 – History, Memory, and World War II**

- 1/8 Course Introduction
- 1/10 History, Memory, and the War.

#### Readings:

John Bodnar, “Saving Private Ryan and Postwar Memory in America,” *The American Historical Review* vol. 106, No. 3 (June 2001): 805-817.

Adam Tooze, “We Remember World War II Wrong,” *Foreign Policy*, 7 May 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/07/world-war-2-victory-day-russia-75th-anniversary/>

### **Week 2 – The Legacies of World War One**

- 1/15 NO CLASS: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/17 The Great War and the Paris Peace

#### Readings:

George L Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pages 159-181.

Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016), pages 1-15.

### **Week 3 – Clashing Empires**

- 1/22 The Rise of National Socialism
- 1/24 Imperial Japan

#### Readings:

Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), pages 581-590.

Louise Young, "When Fascism Met Empire in Japanese-Occupied Manchuria," *Journal of Global History* 12:2 (2017): 274-96.

#### **Week 4 – Understanding the Dynamics of Violence**

- 1/29 Guest Lecture: Dr. Chad Gibbs, College of Charleston: "The "Key" To Resistance at Treblinka: Interpreting Primary Sources."  
1/31 Central European Democracies between Hitler and Stalin

##### Readings:

Seven recollections of the armory key, provided by Dr. Chad Gibbs. Please read these several times and reflect on how the accounts diverge from one another.

Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2015), pages 11-33.

#### **Week 5 – War Comes to Europe**

- 2/5 From Munich to Poland  
2/7 Blitzkrieg and the Blitz  
2/9 **First analytic essay due at midnight.**

##### Readings:

Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat: A Statement of Evidence Written in 1940*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), pages 25-37, 68-71, and 105-108.

#### **Week 6 – Race War**

- 2/12 Race and the War in the Pacific  
2/14 The New Order in Europe

##### Readings:

John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1986), pages 3-14 and 77-93. [Excerpted from an E-book available through FIU Libraries]

#### **Week 7 – The War Widens**

- 2/19 Operation Barbarossa  
2/21 Japan and America Enter the War  
2/23 **Archive Exhibit Source List due at midnight.**

Readings:

Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: The New Press, 1992), pages 47-55, 86-89, 121-127, 177-181, and 231-240.

**Week 8 – No class: Spring Break**

**Week 9 – Occupation, Collaboration, and Resistance**

- 3/4 Occupation and Resistance in Europe  
3/6 NO CLASS – Begin working on your exhibit project design.

Readings:

Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France during the German Occupation* (New York: Picador, 2002). Chapter 2: “Cohabitation,” pages 42-69.

Smithsonian Exhibits, *A Guide to Exhibit Development*, <https://exhibits.si.edu/resources/>

**Week 10 – The Holocaust**

- 3/11 From the ‘Holocaust by Bullets’ to the ‘Final Solution’  
3/13 The Camps  
3/15 **Archive Exhibit Project Design due at midnight.**

Readings:

Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), pages 3-22, 41-71, 79-89, 138-142. [Excerpted from an E-book available through FIU Libraries]

**Week 11 – Turning Points**

- 3/18 The Battle of Stalingrad  
3/20 Midway and Guadalcanal  
3/22 **Second analytic essay due at midnight.**

Readings:

Mary Louise Roberts, “The Wound,” in *Sheer Misery: Soldiers in Battle in WWII* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2020), pages 95-121.

**Week 12 – War and the Overseas Empires**

- 3/25 War in the Mediterranean and the Italian Campaign  
3/27 Overseas Empires at War

Readings:

Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* (New York: Henry Holt, 1944), pages 78-82, 123-135, 199-214.  
[Excerpted from an open-access copy on Project Gutenberg]

Mouloud Feraoun, *The Poor Man's Son: Menrad, Kabyle Schoolteacher*, trans. Lucy R. McNair (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), pages 133-145.

### **Week 13 – The March Toward Victory**

- 4/1 D-Day and the Allied Invasion of France
- 4/3 The Race to Berlin

#### Readings:

Vassily Grossman, *A Writer at War: A Soviet Journalist with the Red Army, 1941-1945*, trans. Anthony Bevor and Luba Vinogradova (New York: Vintage Books), pages 309-343.

### **Week 14 – Defeat**

- 4/8 Japan, the Bomb, and the End of the Pacific War
- 4/10 Occupation, Nation-building, and the Cold War
- 4/12 **Second draft of Archive Exhibit texts due at midnight**

#### Readings:

Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, “Germans into Allies: Writing a Diary in 1945,” in Hoffmann, Kott, Romijn, and Wieviorka, eds. *Seeking Peace in the Wake of War: Europe, 1943-1947* (Amsterdam University Press, 2015), pages 63-90.

### **Week 15 – Legacies**

- 4/15 Nuremburg and the Slow Birth of Human Rights
- 4/17 The Meaning of the War
- 4/19 **Third analytic essay due at midnight.**

#### Readings:

Masha Gessen, “In the Shadow of the Holocaust: How the politics of memory in Europe obscures what we see in Israel and Gaza today,” *The New Yorker*, December 9, 2023.  
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-weekend-essay/in-the-shadow-of-the-holocaust>

### **Finals Week**

**All late work (by permission only) due Monday 4/22 at Midnight.**

**Final Archive Exhibit Mock-up due Wednesday 4/24 at Midnight.**