World War II

Professor Michael Neiberg

Summer 2022 Term II

Course Description

This course aims to put context and nuance into the traditional views with which Americans have seen the Second World War. Although keeping the American experience at the center, it will always view that experience through a global lens. We will challenge some of the myths and half-truths that Hollywood has bequeathed to Americans about the war, while introducing students to some arguments that have emerged from the latest scholarship on themes like the home front, the actual fighting of the war, and the processes of peacemaking. This is not the course to learn more about George Patton and his tanks; it is intended to be a serious, scholarly, and objective analysis of the interplay between American, world, and military history during the most destructive war ever.

Course Readings


Course Requirements

- Contribute to five discussion boards
- Participate in at least three Q&As
- Complete one book review (1,000 words)
- Complete a 15-page research paper or project of appropriate rigor
Learning Objectives

1. Analyze and debate the place of World War II in American history.
2. Examine the role of the American war effort in an international context.
3. Challenge and rethink the ways America remembers and teaches the war and its place in American history.

Group Work

This course requires students to work in groups assigned at the beginning of the semester. Groups will complete readings together and interact on discussion boards focused on final papers/projects.

Peer Review (discussion boards four and five)

This two-part assignment requires that you a) post an abstract and the first five pages of your final paper/project to your group discussion board and b) review and add track changes to the first five pages of the other members’ final papers/projects.

Book Review

Write a 1,000-word book review of one of the books from your final paper/project bibliography. (See assignment descriptions in Classes for an example.)

Class Schedule

Week 1 Module A: July 14–17

US and Asia, 1919–1939

Readings

- Wagner, pp. 1–34 and 413–421

US and Europe, 1919–1939

Readings

- Kennedy, pp. 381–364

Assignments

- Discussion Board One: Introduce yourself to your group and list three potential topics for your final paper/project. Comment on one potential topic for each member of your group.
  - First post due Friday, July 15
  - Second post due Sunday, July 17
Q&A Session One: Thursday, July 14 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET

Week 1 Module B: July 18–20

Assignments

- Final paper/project research question: due July 20
  - In roughly 1–2 pages, outline the question your final paper or project will attempt to answer. This should include a description of the paper or project you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic, a brief description of your research plan, and a justification for why your particular paper or project is worth pursuing.

Week 2 Module A: July 21–24

Crisis in Europe

Readings

- Wagner, pp. 422–468
- Kennedy, pp. 465–515

Crisis in Asia

Readings

- Kennedy, pp. 516–564

Assignments

- Discussion Board Two: Post three potential sources (a mixture of primary and secondary) for your final paper or project. Suggest an additional primary or secondary source for each of the members in your group and explain why you chose that source.
  - First post due Friday, July 22
  - Second post due Sunday, July 24

Q&A Session Two: Thursday, July 21 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET

Week 2 Module B: July 25–27

Assignments
• Revised question and annotated bibliography due Wednesday, July 27
  ○ Revise your initial proposal to incorporate your section professor’s feedback, AND
  ○ Create an annotated bibliography containing at least five sources. Each of these sources should be followed by a short paragraph describing the source and what it will contribute to your final paper/project.

---

Week 3 Module A: July 28–July 31

Mobilization for War

Readings

• Wagner, pp. 139–217
• Kennedy, pp. 615–668

Turning Points I

Readings

• Wagner, pp. 497–565
• Kennedy, pp. 669–708

Assignments

• Discussion Board Three: Post an outline of your final paper/project.
  ○ Post due Sunday, July 31
  ○ Q&A Session Three: Thursday, July 28 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET

Week 3 Module B: August 1–3

Assignments

• Paper/project preview due Wednesday, August 3
  ○ Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first five pages of your final paper.
  ○ Project: Submissions of the project preview will differ from project to project according to type. Determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in.
• Discussion Board Four: Post a 200–word abstract for your final paper/project. Submit the first five pages of your paper (or the portion of your final project submitted to your section professor) to your group members for peer review.
  ○ Due Wednesday, August 3
Week 4 Module A: August 4–7

Home Fronts

Readings

- Rose, Chapters 5 and 7
- Wagner, pp. 845–907
- Kennedy, pp. 746–797

Turning Points II

Readings

- Wagner, pp. 566–626
- Kennedy, pp. 709–745

Q&A Session Four: Thursday, August 4 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET

Week 4 Module B: August 8–10

Assignments

- Discussion Board Five: Return peer reviews to group members as attachments on the discussion board.
  - Due Wednesday, August 10

Week 5 Module A: August 11–14

Paths to Victory

Readings

- Kennedy, pp. 798–851
- Library of America, pp. 681–685 and 724–730

Case Studies: New York and Paris

Readings

- Jaffe, Chapter 8

Week 5 Module B: August 15–17
Assignments

● Book review due Wednesday, August 17
  ○ Write a 1,000-word review of one of the books in your final paper/project bibliography.

Week 6 Module A: August 18–21

Making Peace

Readings:

● Neiberg, Chapters 1–2 and 9–11

Remembrance and Teaching

Readings

● Wagner, pp. 919–942
● Rose, pp. 185–204

Week 6 Module B: August 22–24

Assignments

● Final Draft due Wednesday, August 24