

Humanities Seminars Program

The Second World War: Media, Technology, Remembrance

Dr. Richard L. Poss

rposs@email.arizona.edu

Spring 2019

This course will be an interdisciplinary examination of the central conflict of the twentieth century. The organization will be roughly chronological, and will attempt to treat each of the major theaters and battles, themes, and ideas of the conflict. We will trace its origins in the aftermath of WWI, see the growth of fascism, the expansion of the Japanese Empire, and the rise of Hitler. In an effort to cover all the theaters of the war, both in Europe and in the Pacific, we will first examine the campaigns and battles in a conventional “military history” sense. In addition to this, we will consider the accelerated pace of technological advances, from sonar and radar to the proximity fuse and the atom bomb. Further, we will follow innovations in media techniques used in the propaganda war on each side, and the creation of national mythologies through film and television. Class sessions will be a combination of lecture and class discussion. **The course meets from 9 – 12 Friday mornings in the Poetry Center.**

1. Jan. 18 Prologue: Backgrounds and Causes. The emergence of nationalisms. Growth of the Japanese Empire. The rise of Hitler. (K. 10-54)
2. Jan. 25 Blitzkrieg. Poland. France. The Battle of Britain. The Battle of the Atlantic. (K. 54-123)
3. Feb. 1 Crete. Barbarossa: the invasion of Russia. Leningrad. Stalingrad. (K. 127-237)
4. Feb. 8 Pearl Harbor and the Pacific Theater. Midway. Guadalcanal. (K. 240-278)
5. Feb. 15 The war for the Islands. Tarawa. Saipan. Leyte Gulf. The Japanese home front. (K. 279-307)
6. Feb. 22 North Africa. Italy. The Balkans. D-Day: Operation overlord. The Falaise. (K. 310-368)
7. Mar. 15 Strategic bombing. Market Garden. The Bulge: the Ardennes and the Rhine. (K. 369-447)
8. Mar. 22 Kursk and western Russia. The Holocaust. Battle of Berlin. (K. 450-533)
9. Mar. 29 Japanese retreat in the south Pacific. Iwo Jima. Okinawa. The search for super weapons. The Manhattan project and the atom bomb. (K. 536-585)
10. Apr. 5 The legacy of the second world war. Military technology. America’s victory. The Berlin Wall and the Cold War. (K. 588-596)

Required Text:

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Penguin Books, 1989. ISBN 978-0-14-303573-2.

Recommended Texts:

Jeremy Isaacs, *The World at War*. 1973. (British TV series with Lawrence Olivier, Anthony Eden, Averell Harriman, Albert Speer, and Siegfried Westphal, and many others). DVD set released in 2004. 26 episodes, with additional materials. (Cost varies with packaging). ASIN: B00MEXA90C

Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941*. Modern Library Paperbacks, Vol. 1. ISBN-13: 978-0375753787.

Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness 1942-45: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. Modern Library Paperbacks. Vol. 2. ISBN-13: 978-0375756979.