

History 4317
Seminar in American History:
American People in World War II
Spring 2015

Instructor: Ms. Judith Parsons
Class Hour: 6:00 - 8:50 p.m. Mondays
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Office Hours:
9:00-10:00, 11:00-11:30 MWF,
2:00-3:00 TTH
5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Monday
Other hours by appointment

Texts (required): David M. Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*

At the end of The Great War (later known as World War I), Americans were surprised when the war ended suddenly. The United States was the only nation involved in the war to come out of the war in better shape than it had been when it entered the war. The war had not been fought on American territory and Americans had been involved in combat for about a year. American casualties in the war had been relatively light. The influenza epidemic killed more American soldiers than the war. Americans grew cynical about the war as the peace negotiations went on in Paris. After the peace conference, the United States Senate failed to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, the U.S. never joined the League of Nations, and Americans embraced once more the traditional American position of isolationism regarding the Old World and especially Europe. As events in Europe and the Far East moved towards war in the 1930s, Americans desperately wanted to remain neutral. Over the course of the semester, we will study the causes of American involvement in World War II, the events leading to the war, the alliances which won the war, the various theaters of operations, the homefront activities which involved millions of Americans and the aftermath of the war.

Program Learning Outcomes/Primary Learning Objectives

The graduating student with a BA in history will:

1. Develop an informed, critical, and articulate approach to the study of history.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of historical events, movements, major turning points and personalities of the past.
3. Demonstrate an ability to identify and relate the role that historical interpretation plays in assessments of the past.
4. Write effectively, logically and persuasively about topics in history.

Course assessments for the PLOs are as follows:

PLO #1 will be assessed through class discussions, the written book review, and the final examination.

PLO #2 will be assessed through class discussions and the final examination.

PLO #3 will be assessed through class discussions, the written book review, video analyses, and the final examination.

PLO #4 will be assessed through the written book review, video analyses, and the final examination.

GOALS OF THE COURSE:

Students who have successfully completed History 4317 The American People in World War II should have the following competencies:

1. Compare and contrast multiple points of view and recognize the concept of multi-causality in the history of the United States leading up to and during World War II.
2. Understand the emergence of the United Nations alliance (U.S., Britain, U.S.S.R., and China) and how it affected the progress and outcome of the war, including the progress of the war in many parts of the world..
3. Comprehend the changes in the political, social and economic aspects of life in the United States between 1939 and 1945 and analyze these changes.
4. Compare and contrast the emergence of rights' consciousness among various groups with little power during World War II and the attempts by those people who traditionally exercised power to prevent changes in the power structure.
5. Analyze videos on a variety of topics and place them in the context of the times being studied. Write coherent and thoughtful reviews of these videos.
6. Be able to read a book and write a critical book review.

Course requirements:

Class participation	150 points
Film Reviews	150 points
Attendance	100 points
Book Review	150 points
Final Examination	150 points

Grades:

In order to receive an A for the course, you must have 90% of the possible points, a B, 80%, a C, 70%, a D 60% and below 60% an F.

Attendance: It is important that you attend class regularly and you will have 10 points deducted from your attendance grade for each class period missed. In case of an emergency or University sponsored trip, this may be adjusted at the discretion of the instructor.

CLASS PARTICIPATION. The course involves a good deal of class discussion and class participation, and it is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** that every member of the class do the reading and other assignments for the class in which they will be discussed. The better the quality of the discussions, the greater the success of the class. This class also requires some flexibility in timing; therefore, while the attached outline is detailed, it may be adjusted from time to time. Class participation counts for 150 points in determining your course grade.

BOOK REVIEW:

Undergraduate students will each read an additional book which will be selected from the approved list by the instructor. The student will write a book review of 4 to 7 pages. (150 points.)

CLASSROOM COURTESIES:

You are expected to observe the following classroom courtesies:

1. No hats or caps will be worn in the classroom.
2. No tobacco in any form will be used in the classroom.
3. You may bring soft drinks, water, or coffee into the classroom, but please be sure to remove empty containers.
4. No recorders may be used without prior consent of the instructor in cases of certified disability.
5. You are expected to give your attention to this class.
6. In discussions, be willing to listen to others' ideas and be polite in disagreements.
7. Turn off and **put away** all cell phones, laptops, MP3 players, tablets and other electronic devices.

About the Course. This course emphasizes reading. You will be given reading assignments in the text. Because of the nature of the course, **it is extremely important that everyone in the class have the assigned material read and be ready to discuss it at the designated time.**

There will be several films and videos shown. You will complete a film/video review for each one. There will be approximately 12 video reviews at 15 points each for a total of 150 points – if you complete them all you will get up to 30 points of extra credit. The video reviews will be turned in on Safe Assign in Blackboard and each one will have a deadline by which it must be completed.

Blackboard. This course has a companion on-line component on Blackboard. You access it from any computer by going to the Sul Ross home page (www.sulross.edu) and finding Blackboard. Click on that and then log-in. Select History 5310 and it will take you to this course. On Blackboard the 4317 and the 5310 have been combined. Announcements, e-mails to the instructor, the grade book, the syllabus, and SafeAssign all will be found on this site.

Course Outline
(Approximate. May be changed by instructor)

- January 26** Introduction
Video: *Mrs. Miniver*
- February 2** Causes of World War II in Europe and Asia; Early Days of the War and American Neutrality
Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Preface, Editor's Introduction and Chapter 1 "The Agony of Neutrality"
Video: TBA
- February 9** The U.S. Moves Closer to War to December 6, 1941
Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 2, "To the Brink"
Video: TBA
- February 16** The War in the Pacific from Pearl Harbor to the Solomons 1941-1943
Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 3 "The War in the Pacific"
Video: TBA
- February 23** The Alliance with Great Britain and the Soviet Union; the Battle of the Atlantic, the Second Front issue; North Africa, Sicily and Italy
Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 4 "Unready Ally, Uneasy Alliance"
Video: TBA
- March 2** Mobilization of American Economic and Human Resources
Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 5 "The War of Machines"
Video: TBA
- March 9** Conferences, the Second Front and the Progress in 1943 and early 1944
Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 6 "The Struggle for a Second Front"
Video: TBA
- March 16** **Spring Break – No Class**
- March 23** The European War from D-Day to the Elbe
Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 7 "The Battle for Northwest Europe"
Video: TBA
- March 30** Last Days of the War in Europe

Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 7 “The Battle for Northwest Europe”

Video: TBA

April 6

The Homefront: Japanese-American Internment, Rights Consciousness, Women Workers, Election of 1944

Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 8 “The Cauldron of the Homefront”

April 13

The Homefront: Social Issues

Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 8, “The Cauldron of the Homefront”

Video: TBA

April 20

Yalta, V-E Day, Final Campaign in the Pacific, FDR’s Death, Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Chapter 9 “Endgame”

April 27

Final Days of the War; the Effects of the War

Kennedy, *The American People in World War II*, Epilogue “The World the War Made”

May 4

Graduate Student Oral Presentation of Book Review

May 11

Final Examination