

Date: Spring 2007

Course Name: War and Society in the 20th Century

Prefix and Number: HIS 261

Credit Hours and Contact Hours: 3 credit hours – 3 contact hours

Course Description:

Focusing on the period 1890-1950 - from the First World War, through the Second World War and emergence of the Cold War - this course will examine the crucial interaction between war and society in the conflict-ridden twentieth century: how war has sparked dramatic social change and how society has given both form and substance to modern war. Prior completion of HIS 101, HIS 111 or HIS 122 is strongly recommended, but not required.

II. Course Outcomes and Objectives:

- 1) To study the manifold ways that society (class, gender and other demographics, political ethos, economic conditions and cultural and religious values) have helped to determine the nature, form and outcome of the major conflicts of the twentieth century: WW1, WW2, the Cold War and the post-Cold War.
- 2) To understand how the total and limited wars of the 20th have impacted on society: altering class and gender roles and transforming cultural mores.
- 3) To understand the myriad causes of modern war: unrealized national objectives, economic advantage, national suspicions or rivalries, imperialism, competing ideologies etc.
- 4) To reveal different national strategies in waging war to accomplish limited and unlimited objectives.
- 5) To familiarize students with the ways in which rapidly changing technologies have conditioned wartime objectives and modes of conflict.
- 6) Utilizing a range of primary sources: contemporary films and broadcasts, original texts, memoirs and speeches, to illuminate the war-society relationship through contemporary eyes, to familiarize students with the basic research methods of the historian's trade.

Learning Outcomes:

- 1) To demonstrate, on essay exams, an appreciation of the decisive role of war in shaping modern western and global history.

- 2) To demonstrate, on essay exams, an understanding of the complex interaction between the characteristics of western societies and their experiences of war in the twentieth century.
- 3) To use a variety of primary sources (such as contemporary films and broadcasts, original texts, memoirs and speeches) to analyze historical events and situations.

Student Activities:

- 1) Reading and analysis of both secondary works and primary sources in history.
- 2) Classroom discussion
- 3) Note-taking
- 4) Periodic quizzes and essay exams
- 5) Historical research

III. Methods of Instruction:

- 1) Lecture presentations
- 2) Group discussion
- 3) Audio-visual presentations
- 4) Exams and quizzes

Methods of Evaluation:

- 1) Essay exams treating major course concepts and themes
- 2) Attendance
- 3) Participation in class discussions
- 4) Quarterly multiple choice quizzes

IV. General Outline or Topics Covered

- 1) Pre-20th Century Patterns of Warfare
- 2) Origins and Causes of the First World War
- 2) The First World War
- 4) The Flawed Paris Peace Conference, 1919
- 5) Cooperation and Conflict in the Interwar Era
- 6) The Troubled Thirties: The Great Depression and the Road to WW2
- 7) The Second World War
- 8) The Cold War
- 9) Wars of decolonization
- 10) Warfare in the Post-Cold War Era