

Texts: Keith Eubank, *World War II: Roots and Causes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1992)  
Michael J. Lyons, *World War I: A Short History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2000)  
Gerhard L. Weinberg *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (1994)  
Documents on the July Crisis (handout)

As we gain historical perspective on the twentieth century it is increasingly clear that the period 1914-45 was its defining moment. Taken together the two wars and the unstable interval between them transformed everything they touched; politics, economics, social structure, values, and ideologies. In 1914 a handful of great powers in Europe controlled most of the world. The next thirty-one years saw Europe devastated and its influence and power sharply reduced. By 1945 it was shattered economically and politically. Many of its ancient cities lay in ruins and were occupied by foreign armies. Much of great value had been destroyed and many millions of people had died. At the same time it should be observed that many others were liberated and that various forms of oppression and exploitation had been beaten down and repudiated. As a great historian has concluded, speaking of the modern age as a whole, "...even a cataclysm is not a time of downfall only. Mountains crumble, but others are thrust up. Lands vanish, but others rise from the sea. So it is with the political and social cataclysm of our times. Old landmarks are worn down. The colonial empires and the gold standard passes away. The ascendancy of Europe, the West, and the white races closes; all these have learned to negotiate with others not to rule them."

This course exams the period 1914-45 with these themes in mind. It is largely focused on the military history of the wars themselves because it was the dynamics of the wars, the unexpected nature of the fighting, especially the movement toward total war and total mobilization of the combatant nations, which drove most of the changes which made the wars so important in the larger historical perspective. But we shall also consider the geopolitics which led each of the wars and the geopolitical reorganizations which resulted from them. Along the way we shall note the tendency of the wars to undermine early twentieth century views and patterns of control, from patriarchy and white supremacy to colonialism.

We will have two kinds of examinations in this course; take-home exams devoted to specific topics and materials and in-class exams consisting of essay and objective questions. Further details regarding the structure, nature, and scope of these exams will be provided when relevant. There will be no research papers for undergraduates. The schedule for the course and these exams follows.

<u>Week of...</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments (chapters)</u>
1/15-17	Introduction; deep causes of the war: the old diplomacy, the alliance system, imperialism.	MJL, 1-2

1/22-24	Escalating tensions, 1905-14	MJL, 3
1/29-31	The July Crisis and the outbreak of war	MJL, 4; July Crisis Documents
2/5-7	The war in 1914-15	MJL, 5-7
<b>Tuesday February 12      First Examination</b>		
2/12-14	1916, Verdun and the Somme	MJL, 8-11
2/19-21	1917, Allies in crisis; the Russians out, the US in	MJL, 12-17
2/26-28	1918, collapse of the Central Powers; 1919, Peacemaking	MJL, 18-21
3/5-7	The Twenties, political, social, spiritual impact of the war	MJL, 22; GLW, Intro, 1
3/12-14	<i>Spring Break</i>	
<b>Thursday March 21 MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>		
3/19-21	Communism, fascism and the threats to stability	KE, I-III
3/26-28	Hitler and the coming of the war in Europe	KE, IV-IX
4/2-4	Blitzkrieg: Poland and France	GLW, 2-3
4/9-11	Africa and the Med; Stalingrad; the home fronts	GLW, 8-9
<b>Tuesday April 16—Take-Home Exam on Appeasement Due</b>		
4/16-18	Weapons development; strategic bombing; the campaigns of 1943 and early 1944	GLW, 10-11
4/23-25	Normandy to the Rhine; the Bulge and the end of the war in Europe.	GLW, 12-15
4/30-5/2	End of war in Asia; consequences of WWII; the wars in historical perspective.	GLW, 16 and Conclusions
<b>Tuesday May 14 (12:00-3:00) – FINAL EXAMINATION</b>		

Regular attendance is important to your successful participation in this course. If for any reason your need to miss more than a class now and then, please consult with me.

**Excessive absences, that is more than five, will provide grounds for dropping you from the course.**

My office is 209 McIver. My office hours this semester will be TR 10:00-11:00 a.m. and by appointment. Phones: 334-5209 (O) and 273-2611 (H).