

History 2177B
The Two World Wars
Winter 2025

Instructor: **Dr. Andrew Iarocci**

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Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2237**

Office Hours: **By Appointment**

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

History 2177B, an online asynchronous course, offers a comparative study of the First and Second World Wars, including their causes and consequences. The course revolves around a series of key themes such as military operations and strategy, the social and cultural impact of modern warfare, imperialism and colonialism, leadership and command, technology and logistics, and the evolution of collective/public memory during and after the World Wars.

Antirequisite(s): History 2179

Course Syllabus

The First World War incorporated modern machine technologies to an unprecedented degree, on the battlefields, and in supporting roles on the home fronts. Nations participated in the effort at great cost in lives and material wealth. The war destroyed four empires and fostered several new nation states.

The Second World War remains unparalleled in modern history for its intensity of violence and geographical scope. Combat on land, at sea, and in the air ranged from every corner of Europe to the heart of the Soviet Union, and from the jungles of Burma to the Aleutian Island chain in Alaska. Tens of millions of people served in uniform – many millions more supported their efforts on the home fronts. By the summer of 1945, military and civilian fatalities were counted in the tens of millions. Centuries of cultural heritage lay in ruins. The stage was set for a new Cold War that was to dominate geo-politics throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- identify and explain the significance of key personalities, campaigns, and technologies from the First and Second World Wars
- analyze and compare national and military strategic decisions of various belligerent nations in both World Wars
- identify and assess salient controversies and debates in the scholarship on the World Wars
- explain the 'total' and global character of the World Wars, as well as their legacies

Course Structure

This course operates in a distance learning online (asynchronous) format. There are no scheduled classes. It will be taught through the OWL course platform, which contains all course materials (except for the required textbooks), including: weekly recorded voice-over slide lecture presentations; any additional assigned readings or reference materials; the complete syllabus; announcements and calendar entries; the mid-term and final exams, and the gradebook.

Students may reach the instructor at any time via e-mail, and where helpful, we may also communicate over Zoom at mutually convenient times.

This course runs for thirteen weeks, with one unit (two lecture topics) per week. It is imperative to keep up with the weekly recorded lectures and course reading material. Doing so will reduce the workload when preparing for the exams. Effective time management is crucial.

Students who truly wish to succeed in this course must be prepared to invest sufficient time in reading and analyzing the course textbooks and other weekly materials – three to four hours per lecture topic, per week, on average, would be a reasonable amount of time to budget.

The textbooks are designed as surveys; they offer a wide range of information, but only in limited depth. As such, they must be used in conjunction with the lecture content.

Methods of Evaluation

There are two examinations in this course. Students must complete both examinations in order to pass the course.

Mid-term = 40% (take-home format/date TBA)

****Note: Any accommodations for the mid-term will require supporting documentation.**

Final Exam = 60% (take-home format/to be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar)

On each examination, students will choose from a selection of essay-style questions. The essay questions test analytical skills, and the ability to contextualize key persons, concepts, and events.

Responses must cite specific evidence from course lectures and required reading materials. Sample examination questions will be provided before each exam.

There are no multiple choice, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank examination questions in this course. The exams are not designed simply to test mastery of factual details or trivia, but rather to encourage students to engage analytically with controversial historical questions that do not have simple answers. Success demands initiative and intellectual effort.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Students must complete both examinations in order to pass the course.

Course Materials

The required course texts are:

Michael S. Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

These are optional reference texts:

David Stevenson, *Cataclysm: The First World War as Political Tragedy* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (Pimlico: London, 2006).

Course Schedule and Readings

TBA

Additional Statements

Because this is an online course, there are no fixed office hours. Students may contact the instructor at any time by email, and we can arrange to meet as required.

All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may not make use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT for any assignments in this course.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.