Rethinking World War Two

Course Themes and Objectives
In this course, we will reconsider the history and legacy of World War Two. This war has been celebrated as the last “good war” in both the United States and the United Kingdom. The men and women who fought in it have been described as the United States’ “greatest generation.” In Britain, the war is often described as a “people’s war” in which millions of people came together in shared sacrifice. More than recent wars in the United States and United Kingdom, this was a “total war” which impacted almost every aspect of everyday life. In our studies, we will explore how World War Two was experienced by the people who lived through it and how it has been understood in our collective memory.

This is not a course in military history, but in social and cultural history. We will not debate the military strategy of various battles, the overarching strategy of “Germany-First” versus “Pacific-First” approaches, whether different U.S. military approaches could have limited deaths in the Holocaust or whether the United States should have used the Atomic Bomb. These are very important questions that relate to many of the topics that we will address, but they are beyond the scope of this course.

Instead, we will focus on the experiences of the people who were involved in the war in the United States and the United Kingdom: members of the Armed Forces who experienced trauma on the battlefield; women who adopted new roles on the home front and on the frontlines; children whose lives were deeply disrupted and given purpose by the war effort; African Americans who fought a “Double V” campaign against fascism abroad and racism at home; Afro-Caribbean and Asian troops who fought for Britain and against colonialism; Jews who experienced anti-Semitism within the United States and the United Kingdom even as they fought against it in Germany; gay and lesbian recruits who experienced both liberation and repression in the Armed Forces; Japanese Americans who wrestled with their wartime incarceration and fought for the United States; and Chinese Americans who found themselves recuperated as Allies, fighting for both the United States and China.

Some of the key questions we will address include: How did Americans and Britons experience and understand World War Two? Was it a “good war”? Indeed, is there such a thing as a “good war”? How were 1940s understandings about race, gender, and sexuality mobilized during wartime, both in the military and on the home front? How did the war change and even challenge these understandings? How was the Second World War represented in film and visual media? Did the war profoundly transform American and British society? Or did these countries remain basically the same throughout the 1940s and after the war?

As our understanding of the past is always shaped by the time in which we live, we will view these questions through the prism of historiography, the history of history. How has World War Two been remembered at different times? Who is included and who is left out of histories of the war? What role has collective memory played in our understanding of the war? In London, we will explore war memorials and visit major museums such as the Imperial War Museum, the Churchill War Rooms, and the HMS Belfast, to bring these questions to life.
The Madison Writing Sequence
MC 112 combines the study of a compelling theme or a specific historical era with opportunities to hone your written and oral communication and research skills. In this course, we will use writing as a mode of learning, specifically as a means of prompting and extending our thinking about the assigned readings and your research project. Your major work in this course will be an original research project on a topic related to our studies of World War Two. This is a significant undertaking and it will take a lot of work. Throughout the course, I will challenge you to do your best work and will support you to help you achieve this.

In terms of our research and writing skills, some of the questions we will explore include: What is a writing plan and how do you develop one? What is a research question and how does it differ from a factual question? How do we engage in existing debates about a topic? How can we locate and use sources in support of our own arguments (rather than just reporting the ideas of others)? What are the problems and benefits of various sources? What is a strong argument? What are some effective techniques of drafting, writing, and revising? How do you provide useful peer criticism? What is my presentation style? What is my writing style and what techniques help me to write my best work?

Course Materials
Required Texts
We will use two books and a coursepack for our studies in East Lansing. In London, we will read additional articles which will be posted online. The books are available from bookstores around East Lansing, including the Spartan bookstore (in the International Center on campus, 427 N. Shaw Lane, 517-355-3450), the Student Book Store (421 E. Grand River Ave, 517-351-4210) and the Collegeville Textbook Company (321 E. Grand River, 517-922-0013).

The required coursepack will be available for purchase only at the Collegeville Textbook Company and costs $27.17. If the coursepack is sold out, you can still purchase a copy by paying at the register. The coursepack will be delivered to the bookstore within two business days and I can assist you if you need an article before the coursepack arrives.

In addition to our books and coursepack, we will also be watching William Wyler's film, The Best Years of Our Lives. I will schedule a screening of this film and, if you cannot make the selected time, I have copies available for students to watch. The required texts are:


If you have financial difficulties and are not able to purchase the texts for yourself, please email me. I have copies of some of the books that I can share with you. In addition, James Madison College has support for students who need help in purchasing books. It can really help to have your own copy, so please don’t let finances stop you from getting these books!

Other Course-related Expenses
Students should budget about $20 to cover the expense of making copies of your drafts and informal papers for a small group of students. We will occasionally have short in-class readings which I will post on-line and ask you to print out and bring to class. If these expenses might be a problem, please let me know. There is also support available through the college for these expenses.
Course Requirements, Assignments and Expectations

1. Attendance, Preparation, and Participation (20%; 10% in the US and 10% in the UK)
2. Mini-exams (20%; 5 short qualitative essay quizzes worth 4% each; 3 in the US and 2 in the UK)
3. Annotated bibliography (10%)
4. Research proposal (10%)
5. Oral presentation/Research paper draft (10%)
6. Research paper (20%)
7. London paper (10%)

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation (20%; 10% in US and 10% in UK)
This course will be conducted as a seminar, with the expectation that students will be active, curious, and critical readers prepared to engage in lively class discussion. Students will work collaboratively on a number of class projects, including a film presentation and a formal peer review of another student’s draft paper. This collaborative work will involve sharing ideas and resources with a small group; designing effective oral presentations of the group’s research; and responding to each other’s research and writing.

Although your preparation for class will typically be clear from the quality of your comments in small group and whole class discussions, there will also be five short essay quizzes or mini-exams (as well as other exercises) to help me evaluate your preparation and understanding.

Each class session will be organized on the assumption that you have carefully read the assigned texts and that you are prepared to discuss them thoughtfully. The participation requirements for this course are structured to recognize the importance of discussion, but also to reflect the fact that not all students are comfortable with the same types of participation. I will provide additional guidance on participation in our separate syllabus for London.

The requirements are as follows:

- Attend all class sessions and arrive promptly for class. Repeated late attendance disrupts the class and will be reflected in your participation grade. Once we are in London, late arrival for certain activities (such as field trips) may mean that all students are inconvenienced as we wait for you. It may also mean that we have to leave without you.
- Read all required materials carefully and bring a copy of the readings to class. **Students who do not bring a copy of each reading to class will be penalized in their participation grade.**
- Some course materials, including readings and course assignments, will be available on D2L. If you have any problems accessing these while we are in East Lansing, you can call the library help line 24/7 at 800-500-1554 or 517-355-2345 so that they can troubleshoot any problems. This helpline is also very helpful with library research issues. Don’t be afraid to call them!
- All our readings in London will be available electronically on D2L. Although you will have access to WiFi and printing facilities, I suggest that you download these articles to your computer or print them out in advance of traveling to London.
- Make informed, thoughtful contributions to large and small group discussions consistently throughout the semester. I keep track of the quality, as well as the quantity, of your contributions to both types of discussion. Comments that make reference to specific passages from the readings are more highly valued than those that do not, as they allow us to dig deeply into the readings. Comments that demonstrate that you have not only read carefully but also listened attentively as other students are speaking are also highly valued as they allow us to develop a thoughtful, sustained conversation about the readings.
• If you do not participate as much as some other students, I encourage you to talk with me so that we can work on ways to help strengthen your participation. If you are having difficulties with the course material, feel that you are getting behind in your work or are not confident in your understanding of the course topics, please do not wait until it is too late. Come to see me as soon as you have concerns! I struggled at times in my undergraduate education. I know that problems in class are not a reflection of your intelligence or abilities.

• Meet with me at least twice during office hours: once with a small group to discuss your research paper draft and peer review; once at any other time that is convenient and helpful to you. You may choose to meet with me during office hours to discuss any issue related to the course. Ideally, you should attend office hours more frequently than twice per semester, especially if you are quieter during class or have concerns about the course. However, two meetings is the required minimum.

• Once we are in London, preparation also includes appropriate dress for our activities. Casual clothes may be worn to class and many activities. Walking tours require comfortable shoes. If you do not dress appropriately for certain activities, you may be uncomfortable or unable to participate fully. In these cases, your participation grade may be impacted. I will provide additional information about this prior to departing for London.

• In the case of a significant, unavoidable conflict (such as a religious holiday or team event) or an emergency (such as hospitalization), you will receive an excused absence for class. Religious observances do not require documentation, but other excused absences should be documented.

• In other cases, such as illnesses, etc., you will receive an unexcused absence. **Students with two or more unexcused class absences will not be eligible to receive a participation grade and may not be eligible to receive a course grade.**

• Please do not read email, search the web or use your phone during class. The congenial and collaborative environment of the classroom depends on your active attention and participation. Occasionally, we will do online research or discuss and review our assigned film during class. On these days, you should bring your laptop or let me know if you need access to a laptop computer.

• Please feel free to raise questions outside of or in class, during lecture or discussion. All questions are welcome, no matter how basic, complex, or confused!

**Mini-exams (20%)**
There will be five scheduled in-class mini-exams, each worth 4% of your grade. Three of these exams will happen during class on campus and two will be given in London. These will be designed to test your content knowledge and familiarity with the course themes, drawing on both readings and lectures. You must be in class on the scheduled days in order to take and receive credit for the mini-exams. If you have an excused absence, your average of the other mini-exams will be used for your excused mini-exam grade. If you have more than one excused mini-exam absence, please talk with me. If you have an unexcused absence, there is no make-up exam.

**Research project (50%)**
Although it is broken into smaller sections (annotated bibliography, research proposal, oral presentation and paper drafts, as well as your final research paper), the research project forms half of your grade in this course. Therefore, it is critical that you maintain your focus on this project at every step throughout the semester. I will provide detailed assignment sheets and we will spend time in class working through each of these steps. Throughout the course, I will also require you to submit regular drafts of your proposal and your research paper. **These assignments are ungraded; however, if you do not hand in a draft, the final grade for each assignment will drop by 0.5 points for each draft that is not handed in.** For example, if you do not hand in a first
draft of your paper and your final research paper earns you a 3.0 grade, you will only receive a 2.5 for this assignment. Similarly, if you do not attend your required paper conference, your participation grade will be lowered by 0.5 points.

Although we will work closely through the research process as a class, there is no substitute for the time and motivation only you can provide. Do not underestimate the amount of time you need to put in—consistently throughout the semester—to complete a successful research project. We will discuss time and project management skills during the course.

**London paper** (10%)

After we conclude our study abroad in London, you will complete a 5-6 page paper that incorporates our course readings with primary source materials that you experienced in London (e.g. oral histories, material culture, public memorials, urban space). As with all our formal assignments, you must complete this paper in order to receive a grade for the class. Additional written guidance on this paper will be provided closer to the due date.

**Academic Integrity**

There is strong evidence that academic dishonesty is increasing in U.S. colleges. Some commentators attribute this to the increased ease of plagiarism: internet access and word processing programs make it comparatively easy to cut and paste other people’s words into your work. Others claim that students are less familiar with the boundaries between honest and dishonest citation.

In his essay on “Plagiarism in Colleges in USA,” Ronald B. Standler asks the question: “What is plagiarism?” According to Standler, “In minor cases, it can be the quotation of a sentence or two, without quotation marks and without a citation (e.g., footnote) to the true author. In the most serious cases, a significant fraction of the entire work was written by someone else: the plagiarist removed the true author(s) name(s) and substituted the plagiarist’s name, perhaps did some re-formatting of the text, then submitted the work for credit in a class” (Standler, 2000). One very common form of plagiarism is paraphrasing an author’s words with a citation, but not making the paraphrase sufficiently different from the original source. However it is done, plagiarism is the misrepresentation of someone else’s words or ideas as your own.

Most often academic dishonesty refers to plagiarism, but it also includes other forms of misrepresentation. For example, I consider presenting work from another class as work produced in this class as one form of academic misrepresentation. Obviously, you should build on ideas, themes and readings from other classes, but you should not use substantial sections of written work produced for another class in papers produced for this class. Another form of academic dishonesty is subtly misrepresenting ideas or words to make your argument more forceful. An example would be claiming that a piece of primary evidence “clearly” supports your argument, when you are not sure if it is really clear.

As these examples suggest, academic honesty is a problem in part because it is not always clear where to draw the line between honest and dishonest representation. However, if you have any uncertainty, you should listen to your doubts and write only what you are certain is true. I would be very happy to discuss these borderline cases with you, as they can sometimes illuminate the complexity of the research process as well as the issues we address in this class.
Most importantly, academic honesty and proper attribution are fundamental to the collaborative creation of knowledge. The appropriate citation of other people’s words and ideas allows us to build on their work and to share our own ideas with the confidence that they will be acknowledged. Beyond the importance of intellectual integrity to the expansion of knowledge, the punishment of plagiarism is also a serious matter. Despite the fact that students learn about these issues, I regularly detect cases of plagiarism. This is a serious matter with serious consequences for students. We will follow the James Madison College and Michigan State University policy on academic dishonesty. The James Madison College Student Handbook contains the following statement as part of the Policy on Academic Dishonesty: “The Faculty Assembled recommend that in cases involving proven academic dishonesty, the student should receive, as a minimum, a 0.0 in the course and that a record of the circumstances, sanctions, and any appeal, be placed in the student’s confidential file. ... The individual faculty member or the Dean may recommend further action, including dismissal from the University, to the Student-Faculty Judiciary. If a second case of academic dishonesty should occur, the recommendation is that the faculty, through the Office of Director of Academic and Student Affairs, should seek the student's dismissal from the College and the University.”

The MSU policy on plagiarism and additional information about academic honesty is also available through the MSU Office of the Ombudsman: https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/index.html#integrity In cases in which students receive a penalty grade (such as a 0.0) for plagiarism, the reasons for this grade are reported on your permanent academic record and may be seen by graduate schools and employers. Plagiarism is relatively easily detected and not worth it!

In spring 2016, the Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU), approved an honor code pledge that “As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.”

In this course, we will learn about identifying and avoiding plagiarism as well as the importance of academic honesty. We will also be using Turnitin as part of your posting your work on D2L. If you have any questions about academic honesty after reviewing this information or if you are struggling in the class, please talk with me or Jeff Judge, Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

Grading policies
All written assignments must be typed and double-spaced in a standard font with 1-inch margins. Please make sure to review, revise and proof your work carefully. All written assignments should be given to me in hard copy or electronically as noted in the syllabus. It is your responsibility to make sure that your assignment has been submitted successfully. All assignments must be handed in by the time specified in the syllabus, unless you have made prior arrangements with me. Unexcused late assignments will be subject to a penalty of 1.0 grade point per day.

Grading criteria
Participation, written and other work will be graded according to the criteria listed below. As these criteria show, once the minimum requirements are met, it is the quality rather than the quantity of your contributions that will be considered in grading. That is, you will not get a better grade simply for speaking a lot during class or for handing in long papers. Rather, it is important that you think carefully and take the time to convey your thoughts effectively. In those cases where participation and written work shows a marked improvement during the course of the semester, later grades will carry more weight.
Grades
4.0 Exceptional work
   Offers exceptional insights during class discussions; outstanding, original written work
displays complex understanding of the assigned readings and develops a sophisticated,
original argument.
3.5 Excellent work
   Makes consistent contributions to large class discussions which demonstrate full and careful
reading of assigned materials; consistently on task during small-group discussions; written
work is original, clearly written, and carefully argued.
3.0 Good work
   Makes regular contributions to class discussions; however, these contributions are not always
consistent in terms of quality or quantity; written work makes a persuasive argument that is
clearly written and reasoned.
2.0 Sufficient work; meets minimum requirements
   Occasionally contributes to class discussion; written work reveals knowledge of course
themes and familiarity with the assigned materials; however, it is not always clearly written
and does not develop a consistent argument.
1.0 Below average work; does not meet minimum requirements
   Rarely speaks during class discussions, despite regular attendance; written work does not
always demonstrate an understanding of the course themes or familiarity with the assigned
readings; written work does not make an argument and is not clearly written.

Resources
The James Madison Writing Consultancy (located in room 230, South Case Hall) provides free
consultation at any stage of the writing process. I encourage you to take advantage of this
opportunity to receive additional feedback on your work. The Consultancy hours are typically
Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings from 7-10pm (although check for changes, including
expanded hours during busy periods).

Students with Disabilities
Students with documented disabilities are provided academic accommodations through the
Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities in 120 Bessey Hall, 353-9642, rcpd@msu.edu. If you
need academic accommodations, please let me know your specific needs by the second week of
classes so that I can work with you effectively. If you are unclear as to what constitutes a disability
or what help you may be entitled to, please talk with me or someone at the Resource Center.

Study Abroad
One of the most distinctive aspects of this course is the post-term study abroad. I will briefly
address in class key deadlines related to our study in London (such as passport or visa applications,
purchasing airline tickets, etc.) I will provide detailed written guides about topics such as budgeting
for your trip, packing, safety, medical concerns, transportation in London, traveling outside of
England, and having fun in London. Our educational partners in London—ACCENT—will also
provide related information on these topics both prior to our trip and on the Sunday that we arrive.
In addition, I will arrange a few optional extra-curricular sessions based on student interests to
discuss travel topics in more depth. In the past, students have been particularly interested in
sessions that focus on: locating inexpensive fares and budgeting for your trip; flying to and arriving
in London (for students who have not previously flown or traveled internationally); and advice
from former students. I will provide a draft syllabus for our London studies during the semester
and a final syllabus shortly before our departure.
## CALENDAR

This calendar provides details for our work on campus at MSU. An additional calendar will be provided to you later in the spring semester to cover our work in London.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>E = Electronic Resource</th>
<th>D2L = Available on D2L</th>
<th>C = Coursepack</th>
<th>T = Textbook</th>
<th>F = Film</th>
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### 1.9  1  Introduction and overview

#### 1.15  Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Use this opportunity to attend one of the [events organized this week](#) by the university and the community to honor Dr. King and to promote his legacy of social justice.

#### 1.16  2  Hand in (during class): possible topics for research paper


*We will decide on the date and time based on student interest and availability. Please note that this film is 172 minutes long, which is almost three hours. If you cannot make our optional film screening, make sure to set aside enough time to watch the film in its entirety prior to our next class!*

### 1.23  3  Bring computers to class (to work on photographs and film)

- **DISCUSS** William Wyler, Dir. *The Best Years of Our Lives* (Samuel Goldwyn Co., 1946)

### 1.30  4  Mini-exam (in class): on readings through 1.30, including *The Best Years of Our Lives*

| 2.6  | 5 | **MSU library visit, Beaumont West, 2nd floor, west wing, MSU Main Library**
|      |   | (we will meet across from the reference desk and then proceed to the Beaumont room; please go directly to the 2nd floor only if you arrive late)
|      |   | **Hand in (during class): narrowed topics for research paper** |

| 2.13 | 6 | **Hand in (during class): ungraded draft annotated bibliography**

| 2.20 | 7 | **Mini-exam (in class): on readings through 2.20**

| 2.27 | 8 | **Due midnight (via D2L): final annotated bibliography**
|      |   | **WATCH IN CLASS** Arthur Dong, Dir., *Coming Out Under Fire* (Fox Lorber Films: 1994) 71 minutes
|      |   | Please note: this documentary includes brief images of nudity. |

| 3.6  |   | **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES** |

| 3.13 | 9 | **Hand in (during class): ungraded draft research proposal**


<p>| 3.25 | Su | <strong>Due midnight (via D2L): research proposal</strong> |</p>
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| 3.27 | **Mini-exam (in class): on readings through 3.27** | Lewis Erenberg, “Swing Goes to War: Glenn Miller and the Popular Music of World War II,” in *The War in American Culture*, 144-162.  
| 4.10 | **Due midnight (via D2L): draft research papers** | Oral presentations (first group of students; will meet with peer reviewers and Prof. Pegler-Gordon this week) |
| 4.17 | **Oral presentations** | (second group of students; will meet with peer reviewers and Prof. Pegler-Gordon this week) |
| 4.24 | **Oral presentations** | (third group of students; will meet with peer reviewers and Prof. Pegler-Gordon this week) |
| 5.3  | **Due midnight (via D2L): final research papers** | Please note: due date is Wednesday. |
| 5.12 | Sa  | Leave the United States to fly to London |
| 5.13 | Su  | Arrive in London |
| 5.14 | M   | First class meeting in London  
• Please note that you must be available for classes from Monday 5.14 through Friday 5.18 and Monday 5.21 through Friday 5.25. We may also schedule evening activities on weekday evenings. Do not make any plans to travel outside London, meet with friends, etc. until you have the London syllabus with these details. |
| 5.25 | F   | Last class meeting in London |
| 5.27 | Su  | Fly home from London |
| 6.10 | Su  | **Due (via D2L): London paper** |