

## **World War II: Propaganda, POWs, and Practices of Violence**

Prof. Ruth Ben-Ghiat

[rb68@nyu.edu](mailto:rb68@nyu.edu)

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### **Course Description**

This course will examine the Second World War in a global framework. We will look at the social, cultural, military, and political contexts of the war from many national perspectives, from its pre-history in Asia, to Fascist aggressions in Europe that caused mass mobilizations, to the U.S. atomic bombing of Japan that led to its end. Three main themes unite the course: propaganda, Prisoners of War and captives, and practices of violence.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

Students will write 2 short (5 pp.) papers (20% each), a 10-12 page final paper (45%) and an in-class presentation (5%). Papers may be written from any disciplinary perspective, but topics must be discussed first with me. Course participation (10%) includes attendance and intervention in class discussions. Academic resources available to you include the Writing Center and the Learning Center. [http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing\\_center.html](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html)  
<http://learning.cas.nyu.edu/page/home>

### **Learning Outcomes**

How to critically read primary and secondary texts; how to critically view visual propaganda.

How to produce a research paper (a paper with a defined argument, interpretative thrust, and supporting evidence). How to assess the viability of a research topic for the exact assignment at hand.

Knowledge of critical debates regarding war aims, violence, propaganda, empire, captives, humanitarianism, genocide.

### **Course materials**

All course materials are available on the dedicated NYU Classes site, under Resources. All films are available in Bobst Library (Avery Fisher). Group screenings will be arranged to view the films. All materials have English subtitles.

### **Schedule of Course Meetings and Readings**

**Jan 23**      **Introduction**

**Jan 30:**      **World War One's Legacies**

Students will split \* readings

\*Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding the Great War*, 15-36

Kramer, "Prisoners in the First World War" 75-81, 84-86

Traverso, *Fire and Blood*, 23-30, 53-63

\*Kershaw, "War and Political Violence in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe"  
109-119

Ben-Ghiat, "After War's Trauma, Words Don't Work" (optional/ref)

Sheehan, "Renoir's La grande illusion" (optional for background)

Film: *La grande illusion* (Renoir, 1937)

**Feb 6:**      **Wars before the War**

Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 53-77

Ben-Ghiat, "Fascist Italy & Nazi Germany" 257, 262-270

Strang, *Collision of Empires*, 11-20

Ben-Ghiat, "Making Italy Great Again"

Young, "Ideologies of Difference"

Ripsman and Levy, "Wishful Thinking or Buying Time?"  
148-152, 180-181

**Feb 13:**      **Fascisms' Western European Occupations: The Fall of France**

Davies, *France and the Second World War*, 8-26

Calvino, *Into the War*, 25-29, 34-38, 46-60

\*Sica, *Mussolini's Army in the French Riviera*, 15-24

\*Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*, 1-12

Welch, "German Newsreel Propaganda," (under Short), 201-202,  
206-16

German Newsreel of Hitler in Paris, 1940

Skim German Newsreel from 1944 (ref by Welch p.216)

Moore, "Prisoners of War in the W. European Theater"  
(scan under Kramer, ref/optional)

**Feb 20:**      **No Class**

**Feb 27**      **The Occupation of Greece: War's Many Violences**

Santarelli, "Muted Violence" 280-282, 285-293 top

Sadkovich, "The Italo-Greek War" 439-442, 445-448, 454-456  
United Nations War Crimes Commission Archive Notes  
Mazower, *Hitler's Greece*, 15-20, 23-32, 155-161 (top), 173-179  
(top), 185-189

Film: *Angelo's Film* (Forgacs, 2001) Clips will be shown in class

**Paper 1 Due**

**March 6 The Eastern Front**

Kitchen, 62-73, 238-249

Snyder, *Bloodlands*, preface

Edele and Geyer, *States of Exception*, 345-356, 372-375, 388-395

Overmans, "Prisoners of War in the Eastern European Theater,"  
(w Kramer)

Costigliola, "'Like Animals or Worse'" (optional/reference)

Blavatnik Archive Testimonies

Merridale, "Masculinity at War"

**March 13 Spring Break**

**March 20 The United States Mobilizes**

Kitchen, 165-182 (background, optional)

Terkel, *The Good War*, 17-22, 348-351, 135-140, 176-182

Bess, *Choices Under Fire*, 1-13

Iriye, *Pearl Harbor*, 6-11, 158-169

Culbert, "Why We Fight"

Film: *Why We Fight: Prelude to War* (Capra, 1942)

Film: *The Negro Soldier* (1944) Clips will be shown in Class

**March 27 War in the Pacific**

Iriye, *Pearl Harbor*, 95-98

Kitchen, 140-164

Morris-Susuki, "Comfort Women," 1-16

Murphy, "Filipinos, Americans, and the Bataan Death March,"  
295-304, 308-310, 315-319

Turkel, *The Good War*, 56-62, 66-76, 82-94

**April 3 Home Fronts/Who Counts as a Combatant?**

Absalom, "Allied Escapers and Peasants in Occupied Italy"

Bravo, "Armed and Unarmed"

Killingray, *Fighting for Britain*, 1-8  
Turler, *The Good War*, 105-110  
Hediger, *Animals and War*, 1-5, 10-15, 77-84

**April 10**      **Aerial Warfare and Bombing**

Kitchen, 118-139 (background)  
Turler, *The Good War*, 213-220  
Nezzo, "The Defence of Works of Art" (optional/ref)  
Perry, "The Legend of Pippo (Pippo flew at night)"  
Field, "Nights Underground in Darkest London," bottom 12-20  
Nolan, "Air Wars, Memory Wars" 7-9, bottom 18-21, bottom 31-40

**April 17:**      **The Holocaust**

Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 1-26 (optional, background on all targeted groups);  
Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 179-203 (not optional)  
Rodogno, "Fascist Italy's Policy Towards Jews in the Balkans"  
Debenedetti, *16 October 1943*, 36-55  
Blavatnik Archive: Vilensky, Dayal, Litvin, Shulova testimonies  
Fortunoff Archive: Rachel G.

**Paper 2 due**

**April 24**      **Resistance Movements**

Schwartz, "Partisaness and Gender Politics in Vichy France"  
126-139, 148-151  
Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 203-214  
Pavone, *Civil War*, 29-38  
Forgacs, "Space, Rhetoric and The Divided City in Rome Open City," 106-109, 112-122.  
Ben-Ghiat "The Italian Resistance: Lessons and Legacies"  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruthbenghiat/post\\_9362\\_b\\_7148902.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruthbenghiat/post_9362_b_7148902.html)  
Film: *Rome Open City* (Rossellini, 1945)

**May 1**      **Endings**

Kitchen, 317-336  
Bauer & Huber, "Sexual Encounters," 69-87  
Asada, "The Shock of the Atomic Bomb," 477-479, 485-89,  
496-99, 503-12

Lifton, "Psychological Effects of the Atomic Bomb in Hiroshima"  
DoD, "Your Job in Germany" (1945)

**May 8 Class Presentations and Roundup**

**May 15 Papers Due by 11:59pm. Email to [rb68@nyu.edu](mailto:rb68@nyu.edu)**