

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

HIST-GA 2707-001

ITAL-GA 1981-002

Prof. Ruth Ben-Ghiat

T 9:30-12

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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 Asia to Europe to the U.S. and back to Asia – for the atomic bombing of Japan that led to its end. Three main themes run through the course: propaganda, prisoners of war and captives, and practices of violence.

### Course Requirements and Grading

Students will write 1 historiographical review on a week of their choosing (5-7 pp., 20%), one final paper (20pp, 55%) and do one in-class presentation (10%). Papers may be written from any disciplinary perspective, but topics must be discussed first with me. Course participation (15%) includes attendance, intervention in class discussions, and informal presentations on newsreels or other primary sources.

### Course materials

All course materials are available on the NYU Classes site, under Resources. All films are available in Bobst Library (Avery Fisher) or may be viewed on Kanopy (through Bobst). They should be viewed before coming to class. I will show clips during the discussion. All films have English subtitles.

### Schedule of Course Meetings and Readings

#### Jan 23 Introduction

Bourke, "Remembering War"

Ben-Ghiat, "After War's Trauma, Words Don't Work"

#### Jan 30 World War One's Legacies

Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding the Great War*, 15-44

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

Sheehan, "Renoir's *La grande illusion*"

Film: *La grande illusion* (Renoir, 1937) DVD 2128

#### Feb 6 Wars before the War



- March 13**    **Spring Break**
- March 20**    **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
- March 27**    **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  
 Turkel, *The Good War*, 105-110  
 Hediger, *Animals and War*, 1-5, 10-15, 77-84  
 Film: US DoD, "Japanese Relocation"
- April 3**    **Aerial Warfare and Bombing**  
 Kitchen, 118-139  
 Turkel, *The Good War*, 213-220  
 Nezzo, "The Defence of Works of Art"  
 Perry, "The Legend of Pippo"  
 Field, "Nights Underground in Darkest London," bottom 12-20  
 Nolan, "Air Wars, Memory Wars" 7-9, bottom 18-21, bottom 31-40
- April 10**    **The Holocaust**  
 Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 1-26, 179-203  
 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.
- April 17**    **Resistance Movements**  
 Schwartz, "Partisanes 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.

Film: *Rome Open City* (Rossellini, 1945) DVD 28262

**April 24: 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"

Films: US DoD, "Your Job in Germany" & "Know Your Enemy: Japan (1945)

**May 1: Class Presentations**

**May 7: Papers Due by 11:59pm. Email to [rb68@nyu.edu](mailto:rb68@nyu.edu)**