

**History 295: Ivan and Fritz Go to War**  
**The Nazi-Soviet Conflict on World War II's Eastern Front**  
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10:00-10:50  
Fall 2009

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Office hours: Wed 4:15-5:00,  
Thurs 2:15-4:05,  
Fri 11:00-11:50 (or by  
appointment)

### **Course description**

To many Americans, the most familiar images from World War II concern military exploits on the Western front, from D-Day to the Battle of the Bulge. In this course, however, we will focus on events from a less familiar but arguably more important side of the conflict: the struggle between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's USSR. This lecture/discussion course will include an overview of the main military events of the war, but it will focus on the conflict's larger political and social significance. How did Russian and German soldiers experience the war, and to what extent did they believe in the cause of the totalitarian state they were fighting for? What accounted for the unusual savagery of fighting in the east? What role did fighting on the Eastern front play in the development of the Holocaust? And how have memories and myths of the war shaped European history since 1945? We will examine questions like these by looking at primary and secondary texts on the bloody struggle for mastery of the Eastern front.

### **Course readings**

The following books are all available for purchase at the college bookstore and are on course reserve at Burling Library:

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*  
Richard Evans, *The Third Reich at War*  
Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War*  
Ben Shepherd, *War in the Wild East*

Other readings will be available electronically on the class's Pioneerweb site.

### **Assignments and Grading**

This course will have five main requirements, outlined below:

**A 3-page paper** (5% of your total grade), due on Monday, September 14. This paper will require you to synthesize material we've read for class; I will hand out an assignment sheet about 7 days before the paper is due.

**A 5-page paper** (10% of your grade), due on Saturday, October 3, at 5:00 PM by email. This paper will also be based on our course readings.

**A 10-page research paper** (25%), due on Sunday, December 6, at 7:00 PM (at our showing of the film *Downfall*). This paper can either be a historiographical paper (centering on an issue in the secondary literature) or an analysis of a primary source (say, a memoir); in either case, you are free to choose a topic of interest to you (although you need to clear the topic with me).

**A series of short assignments connected to the research paper** (10%). As preparation for your 10-page paper, you will need to hand in a paper proposal, an annotated bibliography, and a 3-page statement of your argument. Your grade on these assignments will be based on the extent to which you are making progress toward your final paper, and on the quality of writing and research shown by each assignment.

**A take-home final exam** (30%), which will be handed out on the last day of class and will be due at 2:00 PM on Friday, December 18. This exam will require you to write two 4-5 page essays; one of those essays will be an analysis of one of the books we've read this semester, and you will have some choice about which essay questions you answer.

**Class participation** (20%). The final requirement for this course is active and informed participation in classroom discussions. In brief, I'll be looking for evidence that you've done the reading, that you're thinking about the themes and issues covered by the class, and that you're prepared to discuss your ideas with your classmates; attendance, the frequency of your participation in class, and the insightfulness of your comments will all help decide your grade.

Feel free to contact me at any time if you want to talk about your class participation. I understand that some people will always be more talkative than others and that different people have different styles of processing information and speaking in class, and I'm happy to discuss strategies to help you become a more active part of the discussion. Bear in mind that it will help you more to make a couple sensible, intelligent comments per class than it will to talk more frequently for the sake of talking.

**NOTE:** In addition to the requirements listed above, I reserve the right to fail any student with more than 6 unexcused absences and to lower the grade of students with more than 2 unexcused absences. If your grade seems likely to suffer significantly from your absences or your lack of participation, I will let you know early enough that you have time to correct the problem.

### **Extension policy**

Each student in the class can have one (and only one) 48-hour extension on a writing assignment over the course of the semester, on any assignment except the final. To claim this extension, send me a brief email asking for extra time before the assignment's deadline; I will grant this extension automatically, so there is no need for you to explain why you need extra time. (Keep in mind, however, that once you've received an extension on one assignment, I will not give you an extension on another except in the case of a documented emergency.) In the absence of an extension, late assignments will be penalized one third of a grade per day.

## Important notes

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation identifying any special needs to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, whose office is located on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center. Students should then notify me within the first few days of class.

Students should also be aware of Grinnell's policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism, it goes without saying, will not be tolerated in this course.

## Schedule of Readings

Friday, August 28: Introduction to the course

Reading: Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War*, pp. 1-22

Monday, August 31: The Dawn of a New Age of Warfare?

Reading: Omer Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst*, pp. 15-50 [Pioneerweb]  
Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, "World War II and the Theory of Total War"  
[Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, September 2: The October Revolution and the Lead-up to War

Reading: Merridale, pp. 23-48  
Richard Overy, *Russia's War*, pp. 1-33 [Pioneerweb]

Friday, September 4: Nazi Germany and the Road to War

Reading: Richard Bessel, "The Aftermath of the First World War and the Rise of Nazism,"  
pp. 1-31 [Pioneerweb]  
Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht*, pp. 1-24 [Pioneerweb]

Monday, September 7: Soviet Planning for War

Reading: Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars*, pp. 30-60 [Pioneerweb]  
Overy, *Russia's War*, pp. 34-72 [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, September 9: The Road to Barbarossa

Reading: Richard Bessel, "The Nazi Regime and the Path to War" [Pioneerweb]

Friday, September 11: Phase One: Poland

Reading: Richard Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, pp. 3-105

Monday, September 14: Was Stalin Surprised?

Readings: Overy, *Russia's War*, pp. 73-98 [Pioneerweb]  
Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars*, pp. 61-80 [Pioneerweb]

Assignment: **3-PAGE PAPER DUE AT MIDNIGHT (THE END OF THE DAY)**

Wednesday, September 16: The Results of German Planning

Reading: Evans, pp. 166-214 (skim pp. 109-165 if you have time)

Friday, September 18: Why so Chaotic?

Reading: Merridale, pp. 49-115  
Vasilii Grossman, *A Writer at War*, pp. 18-26 [Pioneerweb]

Monday, September 21: World War II in context

Reading: Benjamin Shepherd, *War in the Wild East*, pp. 1-107

Wednesday, September 23: The Escalation of Violence in 1941

Reading: Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Friday, September 25: Evacuation from the Front

Reading: Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Monday, September 28: The Siege of Leningrad

Reading: Richard Bidlack, "Survival Strategies in Leningrad in the First Months of the German Invasion" [Pioneerweb]  
Aileen Rambow, "The Siege of Leningrad: Wartime Literature and Ideological Change" [Pioneerweb]  
John Barber, "Leningrad's Place in the History of Famine" [Pioneerweb]  
"Memoirs of the Soviet-German War: Part One, Leningrad 1941-1942," by Evgenii Moniushko [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, September 30: The Agonies of War

Reading: Merridale, pp. 116-171  
Order No. 227 [Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 2: 1942: The Crucial Year

Reading: Mark Harrison, "The USSR and Total War: Why Didn't the Soviet Economy Collapse in 1942?" [Pioneerweb]

Saturday, October 3: **5-PAGE PAPER DUE AT 5:00 PM**

Monday, October 5: The Origins of the Holocaust

Reading: Evans, pp. 217-259

Wednesday, October 7: The Final Solution

Reading: Evans, 260-318  
Christopher Browning, "Euphoria of Victory and Decision-Making" [Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 9: The Order Police and the Holocaust

Reading: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*, up to p. 78

Monday, October 12: The Massacres Continue

Reading: Browning, pp. 79-158

Wednesday, October 14: Ordinary Men?

Reading: Browning, pp. 159-223  
Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]  
Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, "The Evil of Banality" [Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 16: The Nazi Economy

Reading: Evans, pp. 321-372

Assignment: a 1-page paper proposal is due in class, with a preliminary bibliography

**FALL BREAK: October 19-23**

Monday, October 26: Life under Nazi Rule

Readings: Karel Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair*, pp. 6-58 [Pioneerweb]  
Wendy Lower, "Nazi Colonialism and Ukraine" [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, October 28: Stalingrad

Reading: Evans, pp. 403-432  
Merridale, pp. 171-186

Friday, October 30: Stalingrad, continued

Screening: *Stalingrad* (film showing, time TBA)

Monday, November 2: The Beginning of Partisan Warfare

Readings: Kenneth Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerillas*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]  
Post-war documents on partisans

Wednesday, November 4: Why did the Violence Escalate?

Readings: Shepherd, 108-166

**Assignment: SEND ME AN EXTENDED RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Friday, November 6: Guerillas!

Reading: Shepherd, pp. 166-234

Monday, November 9: Kursk and Beyond

Readings: Merridale, pp. 187-225  
Evans, pp. 483-538

Wednesday, November 11: Ethnicity and Loyalty

Readings: Norman Naimark, *The Fires of Hatred*, pp. 85-107 [Pioneerweb]  
documents on ethnic deportations [Pioneerweb]

Friday, November 13: **NO CLASS: WORK ON PAPERS**

**Saturday, November 14: 3-PAGE ABSTRACT OF YOUR PAPER IS DUE,**

Monday, November 16: Popular Culture under the Nazis

Readings: Evans, pp. 540-613

Wednesday, November 18: Women in the Red Army

Reading: Susanne Conze and Beate Fieseler, "Soviet Women as Comrades-in-Arms: A Blind Spot in the History of the War" [Pioneerweb]

Friday, November 20: The March on Berlin

Readings: Merridale, pp. 226-262

Monday, November 23: The Warsaw Uprising

Readings: Irina Mukhina, "New Revelations from the Former Soviet Archives: The Kremlin, the Warsaw Uprising, and the Coming of the Cold War" [Pioneerweb]  
Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars* (excerpts) [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, November 25: Soviet Popular Culture

Readings: Harlow Robinson, "Composing for Victory: Classical Music" [Pioneerweb]  
Robert Rothstein, "Homeland, Home Town, and Battlefield: The Popular Song"  
[Pioneerweb]

### **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Monday, November 30: The Fall of Berlin

Readings: Merridale, pp. 263-335

Wednesday, December 2: War's End

Readings: Evans, pp. 649-737

Friday, December 4: The Problem of Rape in the Fall of Germany

Readings: Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Sunday, December 6: Screening of *Downfall (Der Untergang)*, 7:00 PM  
Assignment: **10-PAGE PAPER IS DUE AT THE FILM**

Monday, December 7: The End of Nazi Germany

Screening: *Downfall (Der Untergang)*

Wednesday, December 9: German Memories of the Eastern Front

Readings: Robert Moeller, "Remembering the War in a Nation of Victims: West German  
Pasts in the 1950s" [Pioneerweb]  
Evans, pp. 738-764

Friday, December 11: The Soviet Myth of World War II

Readings: Merridale, pp. 336-388