

## **HIST 408A World War II Goes to the Movies**

### Wintermester 2019

#### **Number of Credits**

3

#### **Instructor**

Doug A. Mishler

Doug A. Mishler has been teaching American cultural history and film history classes for many years with an emphasis on learning who we are as a people.

#### **Catalog Description**

Analysis of World War II movies from 1939 to present. Evolution of American, Asian, African, European films. Topics: combat, epics, comedies, Holocaust, anti-war, home-front, fantasy. (General Capstone)

Prereq(s): ENG 102; CH 202; CH 203; junior or senior standing.

#### **Required Textbooks/Materials**

The following text is required material in this course:

Michael C.C. Adams, *The Best War Ever* (2nd edition)

#### **First Week of Materials/Assignments**

The following schedule is subject to change:

*January 2:* Introduction, background, and overview

Assignments: Adams: Preface 1 and 2

*January 3:* Buildup to War

Assignments: Adams, pages 1–22; Film 1, early or pre war

January 4: Patterns I

Assignments: Adams, pages 22–45; Film 2, 1940s–1960, Europe

## Course Details

This class will use films to explore one of the most significant wars in American history. A war usually described as “the Good War,” and fought by “The Greatest Generation,” WWII was a watershed not just for the nation’s role in the world, but also for the construction of American society and culture. Much of what American society and culture are today, the great successes, as well as the lingering failures, were shaped by this war.

This class will explore how America has viewed that war, from the ugly carnage of combat, to how the war changed both the men at the front, and those behind the lines, who lived through it. While millions suffered through the horror of the front lines, many more faced shortages, rationing, black markets, and profound social and cultural changes.

We will also offer some historiography to understand how WWII has been viewed by filmmakers and our culture from the 1940s on through to today. We will see how the view of the war shifted (or not) and what that tells us about our culture and society. We will also examine the myths of “The Good War,” and “The Greatest Generation” label. Perhaps these myths have improved America, perhaps they have not.

This course will be very heavily weighted towards class participation, so active, well-prepared attendance is essential.

## Grade Breakdown

The percentage distribution for the course is:

Assignment	Percentage
Discussion	40
Responses (on readings and films)	40
Final Paper	20
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

The percentage distribution for the course is:

Letter	Percentage
A	94–100
A-	90–93
B+	87–89
B	84–86
B-	80–83
C+	77–79
C	74–76

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	below 60