

CH 343: Christianity and War
Spring 2008 Mondays 6:30-9:20 P.M.
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Gault 238: office hours by appointment
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This course is an exploration of Christian responses and contributions to war. We will be exploring many aspects of war by using World War II as a semester-long case study. The course will be taught using a seminar format, and its success relies on each student's preparation and participation.

TEXTS

Some of you may know very little about the Second World War. There are many, many general histories of the war, including the eminently accessible Mitchell Bard, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to World War II* (Indianapolis: Alpha Books, 2004) and Keith Dickson, *World War II for Dummies* (New York: Wiley Publishing, 2001). To my way of thinking, the most readable and brief narrative history of the war is Joanna Bourke, *The Second World War: A People's History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Bourke offers a description and analysis of the war as it affected and disrupted the lives of combatants and civilians. The book, unfortunately, is no longer in print. It is available from used book websites but is not among the holdings of the OPAL or OhioLink library systems. For a helpful website, go to <http://www.worldwar-2.net/>. See especially the timelines (organized by geography and by year) and the "casualties" page, which gives important demographic information about each combatant nation. Another engaging website is <http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/ww2Timeline/start.html>. Here you will find timelines and a variety of multimedia resources (maps, photos, recordings, etc.). Much of the history of this war was preserved through audio and visual recordings as well as through published writings, and many of these can be found on the internet. Use some discretion, but by all means wander around the web as you move through the course, and let me know when you've found a terrific website!

The following are the required texts for this course:

- Michael Bess. *Choices Under Fire: Moral Dimensions of World War II*. New York: Albert Knopf, 2006.
- Robert Ericksen and Susannah Heschel, Eds. *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999.
- Paul Fussell. *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Langdon Gilkey. *Shantung Compound: The Story of men and Women Under Pressure*. New York: HarperCollins, 1966.
- Rachel Goossen. *Women Against the Good War: Conscientious Objection and Gender on the American Home Front, 1941-1947*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Emmy Werner. *A Conspiracy of Decency: The Rescue of the Danish Jews*. Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2002.
- Connie Willis. *Fire Watch*. New York: Bantam Books, 1998.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation: This course is a seminar, and your active engagement with all class discussions and activities is essential. Every class session will include significant discussion of assigned texts or the research papers of your colleagues. The research papers will cover specific topics (see below for more information), but we will also collectively explore other issues through discussion of the assigned texts. These texts offer us access to some major questions and challenges facing Christians who lived during the period we are studying. You must come to class fully prepared to contribute to an informed and lively conversation about the complex matters before us. People have different conversational styles and varying approaches to meaningful participation, but I do expect the following from each of you:

- Come to class having read the entire assignment for the day.
- Before class begins, pray for whichever of the following you need:
 - The courage to speak up
 - The wisdom to know when to shut up
- Offer *informed* insights, observations, and reflections during the class discussion.
- Listen respectfully and respond appropriately to your colleagues.
- Make contributions that move the discussion further and deeper.

Class participation will contribute 25% to your final grade.

Research Papers:

Each student will be responsible for researching several aspects of Christian life during the Second World War as experienced in the context of one nation. You will select a nation on the first day of class, and become our resident expert on that place and culture. Your task will be to bring to the table the fruits of your research about particular issues. Your research will help to shape our conversations about Christian faith and the Second World War. The nations are:

- Canada
- China
- Germany
- Great Britain and its colonial possessions (including India)
- France and its colonial possessions
- Italy and the Vatican
- Japan
- Korea
- The Netherlands and the Dutch colonial possessions
- The Philippines
- Poland
- The Soviet Union

You will write two research papers for this course. Each paper will tackle a different aspect of the war as experienced in your selected nation; the specific topics are listed below on the class schedule. Each paper is to be 10-12 pages long (2500-3000 words), and must be based on competent scholarly research. In the discipline of history, this means that you must use primary sources where possible, along with academic studies of relevant material (in books or journal articles). In some instances, the sources will be limited in number or difficult to identify. I will give you whatever materials or leads I have when this is the case. Every paper must include a bibliography. Other information about writing standards is found on the "About Assignments" page of the CH 343 SharePoint site.

Each paper will serve as part of the foundation for a class discussion about a larger issue related to the Second World War. As you will see on the class schedule, the research papers are clustered in groups of three or four. Although the topics are distinct from one another, they are also, in every instance, broadly related to one another. The four persons who have written papers for a class session will also be expected to lead a two-hour discussion on that day. You will need to work with your co-leaders to generate discussion questions and devise a strategy for plunging the rest of your colleagues into a conversation about specific issues you have raised in your papers and about the broader questions that connect the topics you have researched to one another. ***Everyone in the class will have read all of the papers, so you are not to conceive this assignment as a class presentation.*** Your papers should provide all or most of the historical information your colleagues will need. Your task on the day of class is to draw the class into a fruitful conversation about the issues you have all identified as significant.

Please post your papers on the "Submit Assignments" page of the CH 343 SharePoint site. Papers must be posted by 5 P.M. on the Friday before the scheduled discussion. **Because your colleagues need sufficient time to read your papers before we discuss them in class, no late papers will be accepted.**

Each research paper will contribute 25% to your final grade.

Class Presentation: Beginning on February 11, each class session will include one presentation given by a member of the class. Your class presentation will focus on any topic of your own choosing that is connected with the nation you are researching. Please note, however, that you may not do a class presentation on any topic that you are already covering in one of your research papers. I want you to experience something of the breadth and complexity of wartime life as it affected Christians, and your presentation should move you in directions that differ from the material you are researching for your papers. I will be glad to suggest some ideas to you, but first see what your own research unearths. Some possibilities include a study of the life experiences of a person, an exploration of a specific event, an investigation of wartime use of media such as poster art or music or literature, an analysis of a primary source such as a sermon series or a diary, and so forth.

Your presentation should be 30-40 minutes long. Whenever possible, try to use appropriate technology, including audio or visual recordings, to help the class enter into the world view of your nation's experience of the war. You do not need to write an accompanying paper, but you must submit an annotated bibliography of the sources you have consulted in your research. (Note: an annotated bibliography is one that includes

your brief descriptive and evaluative comments on each of the sources you have used for the presentation, even the ones that proved not to be useful for you.)

The class presentation will contribute 25% to your final grade.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1/28 “Long Ago (And Far Away”): Introductions

2/4 “Coming In on a Wing and a Prayer”: War Comes to the World

Reading Assignments: Bess, *Choices Under Fire*, pp. 21-75
Willis, *Fire Watch*, 1-44

Class Activity: For this class session, our discussion will take place over an international potluck. Please bring food from your nation to share with your colleagues. In addition, you will also need to share basic information about your nation’s war experience. Here is what we all need to know:

- The geographical location of your nation (and, when relevant, its colonial possessions or non-self-ruling dominions) before the war began.
- A description of your nation’s impetus for war: When did the war begin for your nation? How and why did your nation get into the war?
- A concise timeline of major events of the war as they affected the life of your nation.
- Some indication of the Christian presence in your nation in the late 1930’s: Is there a national church? Are there other denominations? Is Christianity the majority religion, a minority faith, an oppressed church?
- Do you consider this to have been a “just war” for the people of your nation? (For a description of Just War theory and Criteria, go to: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/j/justwar.htm>)

2/11 “I Had the Craziest Dream”: Christian Theology and the Roots of War

Reading Assignment: Ericksen and Heschel, *Betrayal*, pp. 1-168
Class Presentation: TBA

2/18 “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition”: Christianity and Politics in a Time of War

Reading Assignment: Bess, *Choices Under Fire*, pp. 79-87, 166-178
Research Papers

- The Faith of May-ling Soong Chiang (Madame Chiang Kai-Shek) (China)
- Choices and accommodations in Vichy (France)
- The Vatican and the Jewish Question (Italy)
- Stalin and the Russian Orthodox Church (Soviet Union)

Note: Papers must be posted by 5 P.M. on Friday, February 15.

Class presentation: TBA

- 2/25 “Don’t Fence Me In”: Pacifists and Conscientious Objectors**
 Reading Assignment: Goossen, *Women Against the Good War*
 Class presentation: TBA
- 3/3 “I’ll Walk Alone”: Christian Faith and National Agendas**
 Research Papers:
 • Quakers in Germany (Germany)
 • The British Clergy Reconcile Themselves to War (Great Britain)
 • Testimonies of Japanese Christians (Japan)
 • Public Declarations of the Dutch Reformed Church (Netherlands)
Note: Papers must be posted by 5 P.M. on Friday, February 29.
 Class presentation: TBA
- 3/10 “Ac-Cent-Tchue-Ate the Positive”: Ethics and Community in War**
 Reading Assignment: Gilkey, *Shantung Compound*
 Class presentation: TBA
- 3/17 Holy Week Break--- No Class**
- 3/24 “Do Nothin’ Till You Hear From Me”: Time for Reflections**
 No assignments due today
- 3/31 “It’s Been a Long, Long Time”: Life at Home in the Violence of War**
 Reading Assignment: Bess, *Moral Choices*, pp. 88-110
 Research Papers:
 • The Anti-Fascist Resistance (Italy)
 • The Hunger Winter (Netherlands)
 • The Bataan Death March (Philippines)
 • The Warsaw Ghetto (Poland)
Note: Papers must be posted by 5 P.M. on Friday, March 28.
 Class presentation: TBA
- 4/7 “Straighten Up and Fly Right”: Neighbors Against Neighbors**
 Research Papers:
 • The Internment of Japanese Canadian citizens (Canada)
 • Polish Catholics and Anti-Semitism (Poland)
 • Mennonite Refugees from the Soviet Union (Soviet Union)
Note: Papers must be posted by 5 P.M. on Friday, April 4.
 Class presentation: TBA
- 4/14 “Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy”: On the Front**
 Reading Assignment: Fussell, *Wartime*
 Class presentation: TBA

4/21 Mid-Term Recess--- No Class

4/28 “I’ve Got My Love to Keep Me Warm”: Ministry in War

Reading Assignment: Bess, *Moral Choices*, pp. 111-165

Research Papers:

- Canadian Military Chaplains (Canada)
- Andre Trocmé and the Protestants of Le Chambon (France)
- Preaching and praying through the Blitz (Great Britain)
- Indigenous Church Leadership (Philippines)

Note: Papers must be posted by 5 P.M. on Friday, April 25.

Class presentation: TBA

5/5 “Now Is the Hour”: Good in the Face of Evil

Reading Assignment: Werner, *Conspiracy of Decency*

Class presentation: TBA

5/12 “I’ll Be Seeing You in All the Old Familiar Places”: Christ in the Horror

Reading Assignment: Bess, *Moral Choices*, pp. 198-335

Research Papers:

- The Missionary at the Rape of Nanking (China)
- Spiritual meditations of clergy in concentration camps (Germany)
- Christian Witnesses to Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan)

Note: Papers must be posted by 5 P.M. on Friday, May 9.

Class presentation: TBA

5/16 Last day of the semester