

HIST2107

The Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, 1931 - 1952

6 credits - total learning hours: 150

Session C: July 16 – August 3, 2018

Mon to Fri, 10:00 to 13:00

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the history of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific. Focusing largely on military affairs and international relations, students will examine how established imperial powers were eclipsed by a new global economic order shaped by US-Soviet superpower rivalry. Students will gain a greater understanding of the significance of the war in Asia and the Pacific, and how its impact is still felt today.

Several key themes and questions will be explored to help students understand the war's significance. Why was it a total war? Why did it help create the Cold War? Part of the answer to these questions can be found by first examining Japanese aggression in China and the destruction of British and Japanese imperial power. The impact of geography and technology on the evolution of US military doctrine also played an important role. When technology was combined with racial hatred, the destructiveness of war intensified to a level never before experienced. During this conflict warfare became an activity that now threatens human existence. Thus, the ethics of war will also be discussed.

Aims and Objectives

- To develop student understanding of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific by reviewing various source materials.
- To develop students' critical thinking by reflecting on source material and discussing significant issues and themes with others. Written assignments will also strengthen reasoning and analytical skills while enhancing communication skills.
- By analyzing primary documents and completing the final term essay students will also develop important methodological skills to conduct research.

Learning Outcomes

After completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate greater understanding of military and geopolitical affairs of the Second World War era and how these issues influence society today.
- Critically analyze important historical issues and express their ideas effectively.
- Develop a useful methodology for subsequent historical inquiry.

Key Reading

William B. Hopkins, *The Pacific War: The Strategy, Politics, and Players that won the War*. Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2008. [HKUL ebook]

Field Trip

There will be a one-day study tour of Hong Kong battlefield sites. The class will meet (location TBA) for a briefing at 09:50 a.m., and will depart by 10:10. The first site to be visited will be Wong Nei Chong Gap and the final stop will be the Commonwealth War Graves Commission memorial and cemetery in Stanley (wrapping up about 15:00-15:30). Students should bring lunch and water, and wear appropriate footwear. This battlefield tour will proceed even in the event of light rain, so rain gear may also be necessary. If weather conditions are severe an alternate plan will be announced.

Assessment: 100% Coursework

Details are found on the assignment pages describing each of the following:

- 1) Document Analysis Essay – 1,250 to 1,500 words: 35%
- 2) Final Term Essay – 2,000 to 2,500 words: 50%
- 3) Performance: 15%

Late assignments will be downgraded. All assignments should be written in Calibri or Times New Roman font (12 point), double spaced. Source material must be cited in footnotes or endnotes, and included in a bibliography. Plagiarism is unacceptable.

Appointments

I can be contacted by e-mail at: david_macri@stjohns.hk or in my office at St. John's College.

Schedule

Class 1 – Introduction

Class 2 – Origins of the Pacific War

Class 3 – The Second China-Japan War – Escalation to Global War

Class 4 – The Pacific War Expands – The SWPA, 1941-1942

Class 5 – The Third Battle of Changsha and the Battle of Hong Kong, Dec 1941-Jan 1942

Class 6 and 7 – Historical Walk and Battlefield Study

Field Trip: Wong Nei Chong Gap & Stanley War Memorial (Details will be announced in class).

Class 8 – The Tide Turns: Midway, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea, 1942-1943

Class 9 – War of Annihilation and Society at War: Japan and America

Class 10 – The Southwest Pacific: From New Guinea to the Philippines, 1943-1945

Class 11 – The Central Pacific, 1943-1945

Document Analysis essay (hardcopy please) due in class.

Class 12 – The War in China-Burma-India [CBI] and Strategic Naval Warfare, 1942-1945

Class 13 – The Fall of Japan, 1945

Class 14 – Aftermath: The Chinese Civil War and the Korean War – 1946-1953

Class 15 – Summary and Review

Final essay (hardcopy please) due one week later.