

Dr. Harry A. Butowsky
History 386 Section 002
East Building 201

George Mason University
Spring 2009
Wednesday 7:20 PM-10:00 PM

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Course Title: The History of World War II-The Pacific Campaigns

Course Description:

The war between Japan and the United States was in many ways a unique and unprecedented conflict waged on a scale never seen before in history. It began with a stunning display of Japanese carrier air power at Pearl Harbor and the assault by the Japanese military against all of the other nations and peoples of the Pacific. The war ended, almost four years later, with the dropping of the atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. In between these two events millions of people would die and millions more would fight in a conflict marked by unprecedented savagery and violence. The war altered the course of history for both Japan and the United States as well as the history of countries all around the Pacific basin. It is the purpose of this course to examine the history of World War II in the Pacific to determine the significance and meaning of the war for this generation of Americans.

Grading System:

All students in this course are required to take both the mid-term and final examination. More information on this will be given later.

Paper

I will offer all students the opportunity to do a research assignment for credit. Students interested in this option must talk to me and submit a research proposal by February 16, 2009.

Additional Information:

Lectures at the beginning of each class will provide background information and put the reading in context. General discussion will follow for the remainder of the time. Slides and other visual materials will be shown during class. Please note that I will ask questions so be sure to complete all required reading before coming to class. Classroom discussion will be considered in determining your final grade.

Required Books:

Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan

Walter Lord: Day of Infamy

Mitsuo Fuchida: Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan: The Japanese Navy's Story

Richard H. O'Kane: Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous WWII Submarine

Ralph L. Minker, An American Family in World War II

Robert Leckie: Okinawa: The Last Battle of World War II

John Hersey: Hiroshima

Lectures:

1. Introduction to the course. Discussion of the sites, locations, and events associated with the History of World War II in the Pacific. The role of geography in World War II in the Pacific.

2. The Roots of War: China, Japan and the United States

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun

3. From Versailles to Pearl Harbor: Development of the American Armed Forces -- War Plan Orange

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun

4. Japan Strikes -- Pearl Harbor

Readings: Walter Lord: Day of Infamy

Movie Assignment: Tora, Tora, Tora

5. Japan Victorious-Wake Island, Malaya, Guam, Philippines, Singapore, Destruction of the ABDA Fleet.

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun

6. The Carrier War-Phase I, Coral Sea, Midway, Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal

Movie Assignment: Midway

Readings: Mitsuo Fuchida: Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan

7. The Jungle War -- Guadalcanal, Buna and Port Moresby, Operation Cartwheel

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun

8. The Island War: The Gilbert, Marshall, Caroline and Marianas

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun

9. The Submarine War:

Readings: O'Kane: Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous WWII Submarine
Movie Assignment: Destination Tokyo

10. The Carrier War Part II: Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf and return to the Philippines

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun

11. The Home Front 1941-1945, Industry, Labor, Families, Race Riots. Internment of Japanese Americans

Readings: An American Family in World War II

12. China-Burma-India: The War in the Far East

Readings: Ronald H. Spector: Eagle Against the Sun

13. The War in the Pacific Continued: Japan's Defeat in the South, Iwo Jima and Okinawa

Readings: Robert Leckie: Okinawa: The Last Battle
Movie Assignment: Sands of Iwo Jima

14. Japan in 1945 -- Harry Truman and the decision to drop the Atomic Bomb, Summary Reflections: The Post War World

Readings: John Hersey: Hiroshima