BRITISH STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
WORLD WAR II, THE EUROPEAN THEATRE IN LONDON
HISTORY 4933

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NATURE OF THE COURSE:

The class is a study of the critical military, political, and social aspects of World War II. It is a unique opportunity for students to gain “hands-on” experiences of the monumental events of the 20th Century in one of the great international cities of the world, London. Because Britain was a major participant in the conflict, students will have access to many vestiges of the last great war (1939-1945), be it classic tanks, planes or war related sites. Both the British National Archives and the Imperial War Museum have unmatched research materials and artifacts of the conflict. The course will be divided, generally speaking, into one-third guest lectures by the professor of record, one-third guest lectures by noted experts in the field, one-third on-site visits across both London and England.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

◆ To promote and develop an understanding of the variegated and sometimes complex activities and relationships of the various belligerents and their leaders. It will also examine the hardships endured by the civilian populations.
◆ To spur lively discussion and critical thinking over the causes of the war, the major military and political events and the many controversial issues surrounding the conflict.
◆ To develop an appreciation of the unique British wartime predicaments and understand how the nation came to meet and overcome those challenges.
◆ To further elevate one’s research skills concerning the utilization of primary research documents of the various British research centers.
◆ To make students appreciably smarter and more worldly, if not wiser, through their participation in the British Studies program.

FIELD TRIPS:

Historical field trips form an integral part of the course. In order for students to get “a feel” for history, it is necessary to visit select World War II sites across England. These would include the Allied Duxford Air Base, the Churchill Cabinet War Rooms and Museum, the Allied Code-Breaking site at Bletchly Park, the Halls of Parliament and the D-Day Tunnels at Dover.
READINGS:

Students are expected to complete assigned readings. The assignment centers on reading a monograph over a particular aspect of the war. In turn, they will write a book review over their work, preferably during their stint in London.

RESEARCH PAPER:

Each student will produce a ten to fifteen page term paper over a WWII topic of their choice. It is urged that the paper will be based at least partially, on primary source materials drawn from local research institutions such as the British National Archives. Topics will be chosen in conjunction with the professor who will aid students in the research process while in London.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will result in the reduction of the final letter grade. Discussion and questions are encouraged during each session. Students will be held accountable for all the material presented in class.

FINAL EXAM AND GRADING:

Students will take an essay-based Final Exam. The material will be drawn from the lectures, discussions, and field trips. The exam will constitute 50% of the final grade. The term paper will be 40% of the final tally while 10% will deal with class participation.