

History 640.01, Proseminar in Modern European History

"The Origins of World War Two"

Fall 2006, Mr. D'Agostino

T 1610-1855, HSS 102

Office hours: Th 1530-1730, SCI 267a (x87535)

Texts:

Boyce and Maiolo, Origins of World War Two: The Debate Continues
Duroselle, France and the Nazi Threat

The course is designed to explore controversies in the historical writing about the origins of World War Two. We will be especially interested in the effects of the great depression on the policies of the powers.

We will begin with a general discussion of the lessons of the appeasement experience as understood by political scientists, economists, and others. Then we will discuss selected chapters from the texts. This should produce a wide-ranging examination of all the problems of historical interpretation, including those associated with sources and documents.

During the first sessions the student should be homing in on a topic for the term paper. Students will then make presentations of their material for the seminar paper. At the end of the semester, the paper, about 3500-5000 words (15-20 pp.) in length, will be submitted. It will comprise 65% of the course grade. Attendance will be 10%. The rest of the grade will be based on class contribution.

The seminar is neither a survey course nor any kind of teaching vehicle. It is primarily the work of the participants, who will examine topics in (hopefully jolly) round table discussion. It is expected that participants will attend, unless they inform the instructor otherwise in advance of the meeting. Substantial credit toward the course grade will be given for contributions to the discussions.

Week 1

Discussion of the Revisionist Powers

Read: Leitz, Gooch, and Best, in Boyce and Maiolo (BM)

Week 2

Discussion of the Far East

Read: Garver and Kimball in BM

Week 3

- Discussion of Ideology and Propaganda
Read: Cassells and Taylor in BM
(You should have an idea for a paper topic by this time.)
- Week 4
Discussion of Appeasement
Read: Murray in BM
- Week 5
Discussion of France and the Great Depression
Read: Duroselle, chs. 7, 10
- Week 6
Discussion of the Immediate Origins of World War Two
Read: Duroselle, ch. 13
(You should have a title and a polished idea for a paper by this time.)
- Week 7
Review of topics, composition of schedule for presentations
- Week 8
Workshop on presentations
- Week 9
Workshop on presentations
- Week 10
Workshop on presentations
- Week 11
Workshop on presentations
Discussion of notes and bibliography
- Week 12
Workshop on presentations
Discussion of proofreading problems
- Week 13
Workshop on presentations
- Week 14
Workshop on presentations
- Week 15
Seminar papers due 12 December

