BRITISH STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
WORLD WAR II, THE EUROPEAN THEATRE IN LONDON
HISTORY 4933 & 4953

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Situated in Queen Mary College, University of London, the six hour credit course is a study of the salient military, diplomatic, political, and social aspects of the Second World War, European Theatre. It is a unique opportunity for students to gain “hands on” experiences in one of the critical epicenters of that monumental conflict, London. Because Great Britain was a major participant in the war, students will have direct access to many of the wartime landmarks and the varied weaponry. The course is divided into organized field trips across London and England and select lectures by noted experts in the field. It is a singular opportunity to absorb significant historical events where the action actually occurred in an enlightening and enjoyable way. The course is open to both history and non-history oriented students (electives option). And along with the $1,000.00 scholarship given to each MSU student, the History Department will give an additional $500.00 to history majors and graduate students enrolled at Midwestern State University.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:
◆ To spur students towards critical thinking and lively discussion over the principal causes, events and results of World War II.
◆ To expose students to the varied and sometimes complex activities and relationships of the belligerents and their leaders.
◆ To have students comprehend the unique British wartime predicaments and see how the island nation came to meet and overcome those challenges.
◆ To have students recognize and master essential war-related terms, issues and major themes.
◆ To offer students the opportunity to both learn and have fun in the month-long course; a happy mix of cerebral activity and a sense of wonder and delight in one of the great world cities, London.

FIELD TRIPS:

Historical field trips form an integral part of the course. In order for the students to get “a feel” for history, it is necessary to visit and experience select World War II related sites across London and England. These would include:
Allied Duxford Air Base and Museum near Cambridge which boasts one of the finest collections of old and new military fire power in the world. A side trip to Cambridge will be taken to go “punting” alongside the famous university.

British Cabinet War Rooms, the underground bunker complex where Prime Minister Winston Churchill directed the war effort. An adjoining Churchill Museum is both extensive and interactive.

British Parliament, the historic seat of the UK Government with students gaining access to the chambers of the House of Lords and House of Commons.

Bletchley Park, a secluded mansion where a team of code breakers broke the German military codes and thus hastened the end of the war.

The honey-combed secret Wartime Tunnels located within the famed White Cliffs of Dover on the English coast which acted as the first line of defense. Historic Dover Castle also will be called upon.

Canterbury, a once heavily bombed south English town which included sections of its venerated and towering medieval cathedral.

HMS Belfast, the one surviving WWII British Warship docked on the Thames River in which one is able to thoroughly investigate the vessel.

Additional provisional on-sight visits include an American WWII cemetery, the Royal Air Force Museum, the Royal Air Force Museum, the D-Day Museum and the National Army Museum.

Requirements:

Assigned Text: None
Assigned Readings: None

As the professor of record, I have determined, through years of involvement with British Studies, that too many books tend to spoil the broth of new life impressions and experiences for students studying abroad. Still, my students will have their hands full with a comprehensive Final Exam and completion of a serious research paper.

Research Paper:

Each student will produce a fifteen to twenty page paper over a WWII topic covering the European Theatre. It is urged that the work should be based in part on primary source materials drawn from local English research centers. Topics will be chosen in conjunction with the professor who will be on hand to aid students with their research endeavors. Notation can be either Turabian (Chicago) or MLA style. The research paper will not be due until the end of September thus giving students sufficient time to write the work upon their return home. It should be noted that some of my past study abroad students have gone on to present their finished papers at various professional conference s across the country.

Attendance and Class Participation:

Attendance at all lectures and field trips is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will result in one letter grade deduction from the final course grade for each time missed. Students also are expected
to be on time for all events. Chronic tardiness can only adversely affect your grade. Respectful behavior is also a given during my class times.

All students are expected to participate during class and be verbally engaged during field trips. Students also will be held accountable for all the presented material. Finally, it is very important to remember that you as a student are a guest of the UK in London and should always try to represent your country and respective school in the best possible light.

Final Exam and Grading:

Students will take a comprehensive essay-based Final Exam on the last scheduled day of class. The material will be drawn from the lectures, discussions, and field trips. The exam will constitute 45% of the final grade. The Term Paper will be 40% of the final tally while 15% will deal with class participation. It is hoped that all the students, through expanding and improving their minds, will be justly rewarded at the end