World War II in Western Europe

**OSHER 599-001**

**Dates:** Tuesdays: January 12 – February 16  
**Time:** 9:30 – 11:30 am  
**Location:** Online via Zoom  
**Instructor:** Steve Hall

**Course Overview:**

*World War II in Western Europe* focuses on the specific events of the European campaign, but even more on the decisions that led to victory. We will carefully examine the pros and cons of the major decisions, the factors in play, and why the final decision was what it turned out to be. We touch lightly on the North African and Italian campaigns and examine in more detail the activities in Northern France and Germany. Additionally, we will discuss two separate topics: African Americans in WWII, and Women in WWII. The class is structured to allow and encourage significant participation and contribution from the students.

1. **Setting the Stage**
   a. The Situation: 1939 – 1941
      i. The British View: Churchill
      ii. The American View: Roosevelt
   b. The Campaigns: 1941 – June 1944
      i. Controversy #1: When and Where?
      ii. North Africa, Nov 42 (Operation Torch)
      iii. Sicily Jul 43 (Operation Husky)
      iv. Controversy #2: When and Where?
      v. Salerno, Italy Sep 43 (Operation Avalanche)
      vi. Anzio Jan 44 (Operation Shingle)
2. **D-Day...the Finest Hours of the U.S. Military**
   a. Subject matter:
      i. Political background leading up to the invasion
      ii. Planning for the invasion
      iii. Key decisions
      iv. Execution

3. **Break-out and the Race Across France**
   a. Subject Matter:
      i. Hedgerow country
      ii. Ste. Lo breakout
      iii. Liberation of Paris
      iv. Red Ball Express
      v. Market-Garden

4. **African Americans in World War II**
   a. Subject Matter:
      i. Selection vs. Induction
      ii. African-American Women in World War II
      iii. Red Ball Express
      iv. 761st Tank Battalion
      v. The Tuskegee Airmen
      vi. Results and Legacy
5. **Women in World War II**
   a. **Subject Matter**
      i. Women in Civilian Industry
      ii. WAACs/WACs
      iii. Army Nurse Corps
      iv. WASPS
      v. SPARs
      vi. WAVES
      vii. Red Cross
      viii. Spies
      ix. Results and Legacy

6. **Bastogne to Berlin: Victory**
   a. **Subject Matter:**
      i. Battle of the Bulge
      ii. Crossing the Rhine
      iii. Berlin: To go, or not to go
      iv. Aftermath