
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