

**Syllabus for Political Science 395**  
**Occupation and the Politics of Resistance in Western Europe, 1940-1945**

Spring 2017  
Baker

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Interest in World War II persists even after the passage of 70 years. The reasons for this abiding interest are not mysterious. There is a deeply-held belief among Americans especially that this was a war of good against evil. It's a reassuring narrative. Unlike the subsequent wars in which the United States took part only one conflict—the first Gulf War—seems to have enjoyed the moral luster of having been fought for a noble cause.

When the occupation of Western Europe by Nazi Germany is considered, there is still a good-versus-evil narrative to appeal to our desire for moral clarity but upon closer examination ambiguities and puzzling contradictions emerge. For one thing, the nature of the occupation varied considerably from one Western nation to another. We are not considering the Nazi occupation of Eastern Europe in which the doctrine of mass extermination prevailed and the Germans actually annexed territory. In Western and Southern Europe, the occupation varied from mild (in Denmark before 1943, Holland before 1943, and Norway until late in the war) to harsh in parts of France, Italy after 1943, and Yugoslavia.

In this course, we are interested in examining the reaction of the inhabitants of these countries to the experience of occupation. Was there open resistance from the beginning? Was the reaction one of accommodation and acquiescence and “passive” collaboration, or what the historian Stanley Hoffman calls “collaborationism”, an ideology-based affirmation of the occupying power.

Likewise, we will examine the various manifestations of resistance: civilian resistance; armed resistance (assassinations and sabotage); mass uprisings, and secret armies.

We also want to look at the “external relations” of the resistance movements, notably with Great Britain and later the United States as well as the governments-in-exile of some of the occupied countries located principally in London. Also important is the role of the neutrals: principally Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain.

Out of this, I hope we can develop a fuller and more nuanced sense of the reality of the resistance and rescue it from some of the heroic but often exaggerated, myths that surround the resistance movements and those who joined them. Likewise, we will want to find out the reasons why so many Europeans abstained, or who joined opportunistically when the outcome of the war became clear.

We will be assisted in our search for answers with the help of a number of theatrical films that depict the resistance movements in various countries. Every Europe country with a motion picture industry seems to have produced at least one good film about the resistance and some bad ones as well.

I will begin the class with an American film of such renown that many of its best lines of dialogue have been incorporated into common speech in this country. It is cracking good entertainment but not very good history.

**Exams:** There will be a midterm exam on Wednesday March 11; final exam TBA

**Readings:**

Readings will be from Bob Moore [ed.] Resistance in Western Europe (Oxford/Berg, 2000). This book is available at Barnes and Noble.

Strongly recommended but not required: James L. Stokesbury, A Short History of World

War II (New York: Harper, 2001). I advise those who are unfamiliar with 20th Century European history to purchase this book.

#### Schedule of Classes

Week One: (1/23) “Course Introduction. MAP Quiz

Week Two Readings: (1/30) Moore, Chapter 1 Film: “Casablanca” (USA)

Week Three: (2/6) Film: “Flame and Citron” (Denmark), Readings: Moore, Chapter 4 “Denmark”

Week Four: Film: (2/13) “Max Manus” (Norway) Readings: Moore, Chapter 8, “Norway”

Week Five: Film: (2/20) “Occupation: Holland, Documentary. Moore, Chapter 7

Week Six: Film: (2/27) “Solder of Orange” Holland)

Week Seven: (3/6) MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week Eight: (3/13) SPRING BREAK

Week Nine: (3/20) “Army of Crime” (France), Stanley Hoffmann article “Collaborationism in France in World War II”

Week Ten: (3/27) Film: “Army of Shadows” Readings: Moore, Chapter 7 (France)

Week Eleven: (4/3 Film: “Lacombe, Lucien” (France)

Week Twelve: (4/10) Documentary Film: “Eye of Vichy”

Week Thirteen (4/17): Film: “A Man Escaped” (France)

**Week Fourteen: (4/24) Film: "Sophie Scholl" (Germany)**

**Week Fifteen: (5/1) Discussion and Review**

**FINAL Examination: To Be Announced**