

## **CHURCHILL, ROOSEVELT, STALIN: THE WAR THEY FOUGHT AND THE PEACE THEY SOUGHT**

It was once said sarcastically about the Holy Roman Empire that it was neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire. The Grand Alliance, as it was called during World War II, was also said by postwar commentators to have been neither Grand nor an Alliance, but a makeshift, temporary truce, under the maxim, "The enemy of my enemy, is a friend." Indeed, when Hitler invaded Russia in the summer of 1941, Prime Minister Winston Churchill said to his private secretary, "If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons."

This course will explore the Alliance or, as some would have it, the temporary truce from after September 1, 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland until August 14, 1945, when Japan surrendered ending the war. We will also look at the aftermath and the onset of the Cold War. In any event, the three leaders did forge an arrangement that won the war. And, recent scholarship has argued that it was a near thing. The outcome of the war was not at all certain. While it is perilous these days to proceed down the path of "Great Man" history, the questions we will explore inevitably involve these leaders. It was by no means certain, for example, that anyone besides Churchill could have held out against the resurgence of appeasers in what the recent film, "Darkest Hour" explores so brilliantly. Roosevelt's decision to run for a third term in 1940 was perhaps another turning point, or hinge in the history of the war. We know less about Stalin, but there was always fear that he would sign a separate peace down to the beginning of 1943.

The course therefore will consider how the Big Three carried on both political and military warfare to secure victory by postponing final decisions on many issues. The sessions will begin with a look back to the breakdown of the post- World War I settlements with the rise of fascism in Italy, Hitler's triumph in Germany, and the discontents of Japanese empire builders. We will talk about Japan's forward movement in China and Manchuria, the Italian movement into North Africa. Then the road to Munich.

The next sessions will discuss FDR and Churchill at the 1941 Atlantic Conference, the aid missions to Russia in 1941 and 1942, and war time conferences in Moscow and London as the leaders finally come together at Cairo and Teheran. The second front was always the burning question during these years, whether as a military question, or the more complicated politics of the second front especially on Stalin's side. Then we will discuss Yalta, perhaps the most controversial conference of World War II. What was decided there, and what was left to military forces to decide -- in both Europe and Asia. The course will end with discussions of what happened after FDR's death -- did it change the course of history? Potsdam Truman's advisers and FDR's legacy. The atomic bomb and the end of the war and the alliance.

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**Leader:** Lloyd Gardner is professor emeritus of history at Rutgers University who has taught four previous courses at Evergreen on intelligence agencies and the spies who bedevil them.

**Thursdays:** 10:00 a.m. to noon, 8 weeks: February 25 through April 15

**Maximum:** unlimited