In Wine and War, we discuss the effects of the World Wars on France and on the French wine industry. The catalyst for the course is the book “Wine and War” written by Don and Petie Kladstrup. The topics covered relate to both World Wars: We discuss the events that led to WWI and WWII; The Occupied Zone, the Vichy Government and the government in exile; The locations of the main battles that took place on French soil; The effects of the wars on the French wine industry.

The topics discussed in class stem from the following questions: Who operated the wineries and vineyards during the wars? What was the impact on the ordinary French wine drinker in the occupied north and under Vichy France? What happened to the French wine trade during the wars? What happened to France’s historic wine relationship with Germany, both during and after the wars?

The textbook, Wine & War, is an account of the fortunes and misfortunes of five prominent wine families during the two World Wars (The Huets of the Loire Valley, the Drouhins in Burgundy, the Hugels from Alsace, the Miaihles in Bordeaux and the de Nonancourts from Champagne). Members of these families relate how they survived the wars and tried to save their family businesses. At the same time, these families’ experiences cover various aspects of the World Wars: battle zones, prisoners of wars, hiding wanted victims, collaboration or resistance to the occupant.