

**History 192C:
Seminar in recent Interpretations of Asian history
Hiroshima as History**

Fall 2009; Monday / Wednesday 3:00-4:15; Library 126



"Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."
-- J. Robert Oppenheimer quoting *Bhagavad-Gita*

General Information

Prof. Jeffrey Dym

Office: Tahoe 3088

Office Hours: MW: 9:00-9:45; 1:30-2:30

And by appointment!

Office Phone: 278-4425

e-mail: Dym@csus.edu

CSUS Catalog Description

Reading seminar in recent scholarship and current trends in the interpretation of Asian history. Designed especially for History majors and present and prospective history teachers. Note: not open to lower division students. 3 units.

Course Description

To some people, history is nothing more than an unending series of names, places, events, and dates—what some might call “facts.” The serious student of history knows, however, that a deep understanding of a historical “fact” only comes from placing that fact within the context of other facts and applying cogent analysis. It is through interpretation that meaningful understanding arises. Some insist that history is objective and complain that historians are constantly rewriting history—a

complaint based on the supposition that historical understanding never changes. In reality, there is a never ending sublime reinterpretation of facts based on an ever evolving understanding of the world. Moreover, each historian's unique understanding of the world, affects his or her understanding and interpretation of history.

This course will primarily focus on two historical facts: at 8:15 on August 6, 1945 an atomic bomb exploded above Hiroshima, Japan, and at 11:02 on August 9, 1945 another atomic bomb exploded over the city of Nagasaki. Few events in world history have so clearly demarcated a drastic change in human civilization as the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Over the next 15 weeks we will examine how various people over the last 64 years have interpreted these events and how their understanding of these events have been influenced by the world in which they wrote. Gender, race, nationality, education, and political views are just a few of the factors that weave their way into one's analysis of history. We will try and uncover these elements in the writings about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that we will be reading and in your analytical writings on these readings. In addition, we will view a number of movies, video clips, photographs, and other audio-visual material to give us a visual history of what transpired. These audio-visual depictions will also reveal an evolution in how people have interpreted the bombings. We will also look at how the bombings have shaped the national identities of Japan and America.

Course Objectives

- To gain a deeper understanding of the nature of historical scholarship.
- To delve into the interpretation of history
- To gain a sense of how to read, think, and write critically about history.
- To understand how one's world view affects one's understanding of history as well as one's writing about history.

Required Texts

Everyone will read

Ienaga Saburo, *Pacific War, 1931-1945* (1979).

Max Hastings. *Retribution* (2007).

Gar Alperovitz. *The Decision to Use the Bomb* (1995).

Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (1999).

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan* (2005).

John Hersey. *Hiroshima* (1946; 1985).

Kyoko & Mark Selden, eds. *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (1989).

Takashi Yoshida. *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking."*

James J. Orr. *The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (2001).

Half the class will read one of the following

Lester I. Tenny, *My Hitch in Hell* (1995).

George L. Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (1994).

The following three articles can be accessed from the library via J-Stor

Martin J. Sherwin, "Hiroshima as Politics and History." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (Dec., 1995), pp. 1085-1093.

URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2945113>

Richard H. Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibition." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (Dec., 1995), pp. 1036-1063.

URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2945111>

Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum." *History and Theory*, Vol. 36, No. 4, (Dec., 1997), pp. 44-63

URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2505574>

Requirements and Grading Rubric

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| Class participation & attendance | 20% |
| Class presentation and discussion leader | 10% |
| Position papers | 60% |
| Final Paper | 10% |

Attendance

Attendance is expected at all class meetings. (How else can you learn?) Students should notify the instructor in the event of extended absence. Withdrawals will be permitted only up to the scheduled deadline.

No students may leave the classroom before the class hour ends unless I am informed before class of an unavoidable appointment.

All cellular telephones must be turned off or set on Silent Mode (what they call "Manner Mode" in Japanese). A disruption of class caused by your phone ringing will be held against you.

Readings

Since everyone is required to participate in the class discussion, it is imperative that you do the reading.

Class Participation

Class participation forms a major portion of your grade. Everyone is expected to be prepared and to participate in class discussion.

Discussion Leader

Every week one or two students will lead the class discussion on the reading. Discussion leaders must come to class prepared to lead the discussion with prepared discussion points. Discussion leaders do not have to turn in a paper for the book or articles they are leaders on.

Position Papers

Position papers should be double spaced and at least 600 words, but no more than 1000 words in length. Roughly two to three pages. These papers should contain a succinct summary of the thesis of the work and your critical reaction to it. Through the position paper you must show me that you have thought critically about the reading. Do not summarize the reading! Focus on the thesis of the reading and write a cogent and analytical paper that takes a position for or against the thesis and is supported with evidence. Position papers must take into consideration who the author is and what sources are used to back up the arguments. Position papers should be clearly organized and well written.

You must write a position paper for every reading, except for the one in which you are the discussion leader. For certain weeks I will guide you in terms of a focus for your paper. **I will not accept any late position papers.**

Final Paper

Considering all the historical works that you have read for this course and, to a lesser extent, those you have read while at Sacramento state, write a 1000-1500 word essay that answers the following question: “What is good historical writing?”

Academic Honesty

This course follows the CSUS Academic Honesty policy. If you are not familiar with California State University, Sacramento’s Policies and Procedures Regarding Academic Honesty, please read them. They can be found at:

<http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual>

In short, **CHEATING OR PLAGIARISM** will not be tolerated and may result in failure of the course and possible referral for academic discipline. I expect your position papers to be your own work. If they are not, beware!

“THE B- AGREEMENT”

I imagine that this will be one of the most demanding courses you will take while an undergraduate at Sacramento State. Thus, I would like to acknowledge the effort you put into the course. If you attend every class (you may miss one class with an excused absence (or more if you have the flu))* , hand in every paper on time, hand in “acceptable papers” (papers that address the assignment criteria (C or better)), and **actively** participate in every class discussion (you can not remain silent), then you

will earn at least a “B-” for the course, even if the grades you receive on the assignments are lower than a B-. Of course, if you earn high marks on your work your grade will be much higher. If, however, you miss more than one class, hand in even one paper late, or remain silent during discussions, then you will earn the grade that your work is marked. In short, do all of the work on time and participate in class and you will earn at least a B-.

* Do not come to school if you have or think you have the flu.

Course Outline and Schedule

| Week | Date | Themes | Readings, Papers, Classroom Topics |
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| Week 1 | Aug. 31 | Introduction to Course Hiroshima as an Affair to Remember | Introduction to Course Video: <i>Hiroshima Mon Amour</i> |
| | Sept. 2 | Hiroshima as an Affair to Remember | Video: <i>Hiroshima Mon Amour</i> |
| Week 2 | Sept. 7 | No Class: Labor Day | |
| | Sept. 9 | Background: The Pacific War | Book discussion of, and position paper due for: Ienaga Saburo, <i>Pacific War, 1931-1945</i> . |
| Week 3 | Sept. 14 | Background: The Pacific War | Video: <i>Victory in the Pacific</i> |
| | Sept. 16 | Background: The Pacific War | Video: <i>Victory in the Pacific</i> |
| Week 4 | Sept. 21 | Background: The Pacific War | Book discussion of, and position paper due, for: Max Hastings, <i>Retribution</i> , pp. 3-318, you can skip ch. 3. |
| | Sept. 23 | Background: The Pacific War | Video: <i>Wings of Defeat</i> |
| Week 5 | Sept. 28 | Political History: The Decision to Drop the Bomb | Book discussion of, and position paper due for: Gar Alperovitz, <i>The Decision to Use the Bomb</i> , Book One: The Decision, pp. 15-420. |

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| | Sept. 30 | Political History: The Decision to Drop the Bomb | Video: <i>Trinity and Beyond: The Atomic Bomb Movie</i> . |
| Week 6 | Oct. 5 | Political History: Japan's Decision to Surrender | Book discussion of, and position paper due for: Richard B. Frank, <i>Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire</i> . |
| | Oct. 7 | Political History: Japan's Decision to Surrender | Video: <i>Lifting the Fog: The Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki</i> . |
| Week 7 | Oct. 12 | Military History: The Decision to Drop the Bomb Reconsidered | Book discussion of, and position paper due for: Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, <i>Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan</i> . |
| | Oct. 14 | Military History: The Decision to Drop the Bomb Reconsidered | Video: <i>The Day After Trinity: J. Robert Oppenheimer & The Atomic Bomb</i> |
| Week 8 | Oct. 19 | Images of Destruction | Book discussion of, and position paper due for: John Hersey, <i>Hiroshima</i> . |
| | Oct. 21 | Images of Destruction | Slides and pictures of the aftermath Video: <i>A Mother's Prayer. Hiroshima</i> (BBC History of World War II series). |
| Week 9 | Oct. 26 | Victim's Voices: Victims of the Bomb | Book discussion of, and position paper due for Kyoko & Mark Selden, eds., <i>The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki</i> . |
| | Oct. 28 | Victim's Voices: Victims of the Bomb | Video: <i>Barefoot Gen</i> |
| Week 10 | Nov. 2 | Victim's Voices: Victims of the Bomb | Video: <i>Barefoot Gen</i> |

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| | Nov. 4 | Victim's Voices: Victims of the Japanese | Book discussion of, and position paper due for Lester I. Tenny, <i>My Hitch in Hell</i> , for those reading this selection. Video: <i>Japanese War Crimes: Murder Under the Sun</i> |
| Week 11 | Nov. 9 | Victim's Voices: Victims of the Japanese | Book discussion of, and position paper due for George L. Hicks, <i>The Comfort Women</i> , for those reading this selection. Video: <i>Japanese Devils</i> |
| | Nov. 11 | No Class: Veteran's Day | |
| Week 12 | Nov. 16 | The Making of History | Book discussion of, and position paper due for Takashi Yoshida, <i>The Making of the "Rape of Nanking"</i> |
| | Nov. 18 | | Video: <i>White Light, Black Rain</i> |
| Week 13 | Nov. 23 | NO CLASS: Furlough Day | Read Gar Alperovitz, <i>The Decision to Use the Bomb</i> , Book Two: The Myth, pp. 420-668. |
| | Nov. 25 | NO CLASS: Furlough Day | |
| Week 14 | Nov. 30 | Whose History is it Anyway?: Japan as Victim | Book discussion of, and position paper due, for: James J. Orr, <i>The Victim as Hero</i> . |
| | Dec. 2 | Whose History is it Anyway?: Japan as Victim | Video: <i>Gojira</i> |
| Week 15 | Dec. 7 | Making History Public: The Smithsonian Debates | Article discussion of, and position paper due that examines and discusses, Sherwin, Kohn, and Crane articles. |
| | Dec. 9 | Your Historical Assessment of the "Facts" | Course summation |

Final paper due in my office by 4:00 on Wednesday, December 16, 2009