

565: 315 “Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb”  
Rutgers University  
Spring 2008

## Syllabus

Professor Paul Schalow  
Scott Hall Rm. 325  
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The U.S. nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 reverberate to this day in Atomic Bomb literature of Japan. In the course, students will read works of fiction and poetry by survivors addressing the atomic aftermath, view seven documentary videos describing the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, and study three feature-length films about the bombings. The goal is to develop an understanding of a literature of trauma that struggles to remember, represent, and redeem the dehumanizing effects of atomic warfare. All readings are in English translation.

Students are required to submit a one-page response sheet for each reading. Response sheets turned in on the due date earn 1 or 2 points, depending on my assessment of how well you have grasped the main points in the reading; late submissions are not accepted. Three five-page papers on assigned topics are required in the course of the semester. Final grades are based on fifteen response sheets (30%), three five-page papers (20% each), and attendance (10%).

Five required texts can be purchased at the Rutgers Bookstore, Ferren Mall.

1. ŌE Kenzaburō, *The Crazy Iris*
2. Richard MINEAR, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*
3. IBUSE Masuji, *Black Rain*
4. KURIHARA Sadako, *When We Say Hiroshima: Selected Poems*
5. John TREAT, *Writing Ground Zero*

## Class Schedule

24 Jan. Introduction to the course.

28 Reading: *The Crazy Iris*, ODA Katsuzō “Human Ashes” 63-84.  
**Due: Response sheet #1**

31 Reading: *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, HARA Tamiki “Translator’s Introduction” 21-40.  
Documentary film: “Hiroshima: City of Peace” (30 mins.)

4 Feb. Reading: *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, HARA Tamiki *Summer Flowers* parts 1 & 2 (“Summer Flowers” & “From the Ruins”) 41-78.  
**Due: Response sheet #2**

7 Reading: *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, HARA Tamiki *Summer Flowers* part 3 (“Prelude to Annihilation”) 79-113.  
**Due: Response sheet #3**

11 Reading: *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, ŌTA Yōko “Translator’s Introduction” 147-224.  
Documentary film: “Hiroshima: the Legacy” (30 mins.)

14 Reading: *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, ŌTA Yōko *City of Corpses* (“An Autumn So Horrible Even the Stones Cry Out” to “The City: A Tangle of Corpses”) 147-224.  
**Due: Response sheet #4**

18 Reading: *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, ŌTA Yōko *City of Corpses* (“Relief” to “Late Autumn Koto Music”) 225-273.  
**Due: Response sheet #5**

21 **Due: First 5-page paper.** Topic: Based on your reading of ODA Katsuzō’s “Human Ashes,” HARA Tamiki’s *Summer Flowers*, and ŌTA Yōko’s *City of Corpses*, describe the ways people died in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Be sure to give specific examples from each story and discuss how the emphasis differs in each text. Which text gave you the most vivid sense of what it was like to be in Hiroshima in the minutes, hours, days, and months after it was bombed?  
Documentary film: “Rain of Ruin: The Atomic Bombing of Japan” (70 mins.)

25 Reading: *The Crazy Iris*, ŌTA Yōko “Fireflies” 85-111.  
**Due: Response sheet #6**

28 Reading: *The Crazy Iris*, TAKENISHI Hiroko “The Rite” 169-200.  
**Due: Response sheet #7**

- 3 Mar. *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, TŌGE Sankichi “Translator’s Introduction” 277-300.  
Documentary film: “The Race for the Bomb” (45 mins.)
- 6 *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, TŌGE Sankichi *Poems of the Atomic Bomb* 305-369.  
**Due: Response sheet #8**
- 10 KURIHARA Sadako, *When We Say Hiroshima: Selected Poems*.  
**Due: Response sheet #9**
- 13 NAGAI Takashi, *The Bells of Nagasaki* (xerox).  
**Due: Response sheet #10**
- [March 15-23 Spring Break]
- 24 Documentary film: “Rain of Ruin: the Bombing of Nagasaki” (60 mins.)
- 27 **Due: Second 5-page paper.** Topic: Based on your viewing of five documentary films in class, give an account of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Explain the technology of two bombs and how they were developed. Describe the predominant perspective on the bombings that is presented in each documentary, and explain how that perspective impacts the film’s interpretation of the military and humanitarian dimensions of the events. You must address at least **three** of the five documentaries in your paper.  
Documentary film: “Children of Nagasaki” (45 mins.)
- 31 Reading: *The Crazy Iris*, HAYASHI Kyōko “The Empty Can” 127-143.  
**Due: Response sheet #11**
- 3 Apr. Reading: *The Crazy Iris*, INOUE Mitsuharu “The House of Hands” 145-168.  
**Due: Response sheet #12**
- 7 Reading: *The Crazy Iris*, SATA Ineko “The Colorless Paintings” 113-125.  
**Due: Response sheet #13**
- 10 Reading: *The Crazy Iris*, IBUSE Masuji “The Crazy Iris” 17-35.  
**Due: Response sheet #14**
- 14 Reading: IBUSE Masuji, *Black Rain*.  
**Due: Response sheet #15**
- 17 Film: IMAMURA Shōhei “Black Rain” (120 mins.)
- 21 Film: IMAMURA Shōhei “Black Rain” (cont.).
- 24 Film: NAKAZAWA Keiji “Barefoot Gen” (100 mins.)

28 Film: NAKAZAWA Keiji “Barefoot Gen” (cont.)

1 May Film: KUROSAWA Akira “Rhapsody in August” (98 mins.)

5 Film: KUROSAWA Akira “Rhapsody in August” (cont.)

8 May (Mon.) **Due: Final 5-page paper.** Topic: Briefly explain your preconceptions about the atomic bombings before you took this course, and then describe in detail your current thinking. Which genre or genres (fiction, poetry, documentary, feature-length film) did you appreciate the most, and why? Be sure to discuss at least one work from each genre that had the biggest impact in developing your new perspective.